



Department of Justice

United States Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2012

CONTACT: PAO DARYL FIELDS
(210) 384-7440

FORMER EL PASO COUNTY COMMISSIONER WILLIE GANDARA, JR. SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON

In El Paso this afternoon, former El Paso County Precinct 3 Commissioner Guillermo "Willie" Gandara, Jr., age 37, of El Paso, was sentenced to 78 months imprisonment on federal drug trafficking and money laundering charges announced United States Attorney Robert Pitman, DEA Special Agent in Charge Joseph M. Arabit, ICE-HSI Acting Special Agent in Charge Dennis Ulrich, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection Chief Patrol Agent Scott A. Luck, El Paso County Sheriff Richard Wiles and El Paso Police Chief Greg Allen.

In addition to the prison term, U.S. District Judge Frank Montalvo ordered that Gandara pay a \$300,000 fine and be placed under supervised release for a period of three years after completing his prison term. Judge Montalvo also ordered that Gandara forfeit to the Government \$120,061, the value of Gandara's property located 1000 Coker Road in Socorro, TX, as well as two vehicles and approximately \$8,000 cash seized by authorities at the time of Gandara's arrest.

"The public has the right to expect their elected officials to conduct themselves according to the highest ethical standards. Mr. Gandara violated the public's trust on many levels and he is facing severe consequences as a result," stated United States Attorney Robert Pitman

On August 17, 2012, Gandara pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute 50 kilograms or more of marijuana and one count of maintaining property for the distribution of marijuana. By pleading guilty, Gandara admitted that from November 2010 until the present, he conspired with others to possess approximately 56 kilograms of marijuana that was destined for Chicago, IL. Gandara also admitted to allowing two separate loads of marijuana to be transferred from one vehicle to another on his property in Socorro, TX.

"DEA and its law enforcement partners are committed to holding drug traffickers, regardless of their position, accountable for the harm they cause in our communities. We also will not allow the actions of unscrupulous officials to tarnish the honorable work that so many public servants perform each day in the El Paso area. This case serves as a warning to those who, by engaging in illegal activity, would violate the public trust they are sworn to uphold," stated DEA-El Paso Division Special Agent in Charge Joseph M. Arabit.

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“ICE-HSI, together with our federal law enforcement partners, will continue to stand steadfast and commit our resources to battle drug trafficking organizations as well as target the dangers they pose to public safety and border security,” said Dennis A. Ulrich, acting special agent in charge of ICE-HSI El Paso. “This joint investigation has thwarted a criminal enterprise, and illustrates that no member of this community is above the law.”

This case was investigated by agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations together with the U.S. Border Patrol, El Paso Police Department and the El Paso County Sheriff’s Department.

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