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WEST VIRGINIA WOMAN ADMITS TO STEALING SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

Concealed Marriage and Husband's Income from Social Security Administration

CHARLESTON, W. Va. – A Lincoln County, West Virginia woman pled guilty today to filing a false social security claim in order to continue receiving disability benefits from the Social Security Administration (“SSA”). Leslie R. Nelson, 36, of Ferrellsburg, West Virginia, faces up to five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and an order of restitution when she is sentenced on March 20, 2011.

According to court documents, Nelson applied for and began receiving disability benefits from the SSA in October 1993. In March of 2003, Nelson married and resided with her husband. Aware that her benefits were based, in part, on her income and living arrangements, Nelson concealed her marriage from the SSA. As part of her plea agreement, Nelson stipulated that in March 2009, she made a false statement to the SSA claiming she had not resided with her husband since March 12, 2003. As a result, Nelson fraudulently received over \$30,000 in benefits she was not entitled to receive.

The U.S. Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, conducted the investigation. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Erik S. Goes and Special Assistant United States Attorney Perry McDaniel.

This case is being prosecuted as part of the U.S. Attorney's Initiative to Combat Theft of Government Benefits. The Initiative is designed to protect public funds and to prosecute those who steal benefits from public programs or agencies such as the Railroad Retirement Board, US Veterans Administration, Social Security Administration, and the Department of Labor.

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