



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Southern District of Mississippi

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**NINE DEFENDANTS PLEAD GUILTY TO FEDERAL IDENTITY
FRAUD CHARGES INVOLVING EMPLOYMENT AT HOWARD INDUSTRIES**

STAN HARRIS, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi, and Special Agent in Charge MICHAEL A. HOLT, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, announced that nine defendants -- MIGUEL BARTOLOME-PEREZ, RIGOBERTO ESCALANTE-RODRIGUEZ, DOROTEO FERNANDEZ-SOTO, PAULA GOMEZ, MARIA MONTALVO-GUZMAN, FERNANDO HERNANDEZ-VIRGEN, TOMAS JUAREZ-PEREZ, ANGEL RODRIGUEZ-FLORES, and PEDRO SIMON-VAZQUEZ -- who were formerly employed under assumed names at the Howard Industries electrical transformer plant in Laurel, Mississippi, pleaded guilty to federal identity fraud charges today.

All nine defendants entered their guilty pleas in separate cases earlier today before United States United States District Judge Keith Starrett in federal district court in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Based on their guilty pleas, the nine defendants each face a maximum sentence of five years of imprisonment, a maximum

fine of \$250,000, and a period of supervised release of up to three years.

Along with Acting United States Attorney STAN HARRIS, Assistant United States Attorney GAINES CLEVELAND and MIKE HURST are the prosecutors in charge of the case.

Mr. HARRIS praised the efforts of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement for its diligent work in the investigation of this matter.

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