



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
Taxation and Revenue Department
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Lovington Accountant Sent To Prison For Filing False Tax Returns

HOBBS – Irene Foster, a 55-year-old Lovington accountant, received three years in prison for filing false tax returns using identities of clients, friends and family.

In August, Foster pleaded guilty to one count of false statement and fraud and one count of computer access with intent to defraud or embezzle, and pleaded no contest to another 13 counts of similar charges.

Fifth Judicial District Court Judge Gary Clingman, who accepted the plea, sentenced Foster to 21 years on Monday, but suspended all except for three years. He also ordered her placed on supervised probation for five years after he release from prison, and to make restitution.

In July 2007, Foster was charged with 12 counts of false statement and fraud and 12 counts of computer access with the intent to defraud or embezzle. According to a criminal complaint, Foster, a bookkeeper and tax return preparer, knowingly and willfully filed false and fraudulent New Mexico personal income tax returns using the names of clients, friends, family members, as well as fictitious names on the twelve returns.

The complaint also alleged that Foster used valid and invalid Social Security numbers on the returns, and in some cases used the Social Security numbers of deceased individuals. The Complaint further alleges that some of the Social Security numbers belonged to individuals who neither lived in New Mexico nor earned income in New Mexico.

The complaint further states that Foster knowingly and willfully accessed a computer and the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department's Internet-based electronic filing program, in order to electronically file the twelve false and fraudulent returns.

The New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department's Tax Fraud Investigations Division conducted the investigation resulting in the defendant's plea agreement with the State.

To report suspected tax fraud against the State of New Mexico, call the Tax Fraud Hotline at 1-866-457-6789.