



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
Taxation and Revenue Department
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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Judge Sentences Woman to 13 Years on State Tax Fraud Charges

(Santa Fe, NM) – Following a pre-indictment plea today, First Judicial District Court Judge Stephen Pfeffer sentenced Versavela Macias of Placitas to 13 years on tax fraud charges brought by the First Judicial District Attorney’s Office. During the proceeding, Macias pleaded guilty to 16 counts of tax fraud and admitted to violating her probation in a prior embezzlement case. Pfeffer suspended 11 years of the sentence, meaning that Macias will serve a total of two years in prison. In addition, she was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$19,720 and will be subject to two years’ parole and five years’ probation following her release.

In her Criminal Information filing, Deputy District Attorney Peggy Jeffers charged Macias with 32 counts each of false statement and fraud and computer access with intent to defraud or embezzle. The charges follow a criminal investigation by the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department’s Tax Fraud Investigations Division. Taxation and Revenue Department Secretary Jan Goodwin created the Tax Fraud Investigations Division in January 2003 to deter and prosecute violations of tax law.

Macias admitted to filing multiple false New Mexico personal income tax returns under her own name and those of her husband, children and acquaintances over a four-month period in 2004 and to using a computer to file the fraudulent returns. The returns claimed refunds totaling \$114,436, with individual claims ranging from \$671 to \$6,589. Macias actually collected only \$19,720 as the Department rejected many of the fraudulent returns.

At the time she committed the tax fraud, Macias was on probation for embezzling \$34,022.35 from an employer in July 2001. She was also on probation pursuant to a conviction in the Thirteenth Judicial District on fraud charges and had been ordered to make restitution of \$11,022 in that case. Because of Macias’ prior embezzlement conviction, Jeffers petitioned the court to sentence her as a habitual offender. Judge Pfeffer agreed, mandating an additional year to the sentence.

In her statement before the court, Macias admitted to having a drug and gambling problem and recognized a need for therapy and counseling. Pfeffer recommended she participate in the Therapeutic Community treatment program while incarcerated.

In an unrelated case before the court today, Pfeffer sentenced Kenneth D. Dennis of Albuquerque to three years probation for failing to file New Mexico personal income tax returns for tax years 2001 and 2002. Dennis pleaded guilty to two counts of attempts to evade or defeat tax and two counts of false statements and fraud. The court ordered Dennis to pay restitution in the amount of \$7,812 plus all penalties and interest required by statute. The charges against Dennis were also brought by the First Judicial District Attorney's Office as a result of an investigation by the Tax Fraud Investigations Division.

Secretary Goodwin praised the efforts of the First Judicial District Attorney's Office and the Tax Fraud Investigations Division. She stated, "These convictions send a clear message that the Taxation and Revenue Department is committed to ensuring that tax fraud and evasion are detected and prosecuted to the full extent of the law." She also encouraged anyone who suspects tax fraud to call the state Tax Fraud Hotline at 1-866-457-6789.

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