

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, October 7, 2021

Dominican National Sentenced for Social Security Misuse and Theft of Government Money

BOSTON – A Dominican national was sentenced today in federal court in Boston for false representation of a Social Security number and theft of government money.

Ramon Hiciano, 64, a Dominican national previously residing in Roxbury, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Leo T. Sorokin to 15 months in prison and three years of supervised release. Hiciano was also ordered to pay restitution of \$84,610 and will be subject to deportation proceedings upon completion of his sentence.

Hiciano used the identity of a Puerto Rican citizen to apply for and receive federally funded MassHealth benefits, Section 8 housing assistance and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). Between January 2016 and August 2020, Hiciano used the victim's identity to fraudulently receive approximately \$58,093 in MassHealth benefits, \$20,780 in Section 8 housing assistance benefits and \$5,736 in PUA benefits.

The charge of false representation of a Social Security number provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. The theft of government money charges provide for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Jermaine Jack, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, Boston Field Office; Matthew B. Millhollin, Acting Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; Philip M. Coyne, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations; Nikitas Splagounias, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations – Labor Racketeering and Fraud, New York Field Office; and Suzanne M. Bump, State Auditor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts made the announcement today. Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen Burzycki of Mendell's Major Crimes Unit prosecuted the case.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

Component(s):

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