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Document and Benefit Fraud

07/25/2019

Chicago 'con man' sentenced to 10 years in federal prison for defrauding more than 200 aliens

CHICAGO — A convicted “con man,” who operated a fraudulent immigration services business that defrauded hundreds of illegal aliens, was sentenced Wednesday to 10 years in federal prison.

This sentence was announced by the following agency heads: U.S. Attorney John R. Lausch Jr., Northern District of Illinois; Special Agent in Charge James M. Gibbons, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Chicago; and Inspector in Charge Craig Goldberg, U.S. Postal Inspection Service in Chicago.

James Keegan, 57, of Cicero, Illinois, fraudulently offered immigration advocacy services, including guaranteed U.S. permanent resident status, in exchange for a fluctuating fee that averaged \$3,000 per applicant.

Keegan falsely claimed that he formerly worked as an attorney for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and that he still had connections there who could quickly approve U.S. permanent resident applications to obtain legal status.

More than 200 illegal aliens paid Keegan more than \$687,000; many of these fees were paid in cash at Keegan’s storefront office in Berwyn, Illinois.

In reality, Keegan was never an attorney, he had not worked for DHS, and he never filed any immigration applications on behalf of his “clients.”

Keegan spent all of the fraudulently collected fees on personal expenses, including gambling losses.

Keegan pleaded guilty in March to one count of wire fraud.

According to evidence in this case, Keegan carried out the fraud scheme during a nine-month period in 2017.

Keegan attempted to conceal his scam by creating fake approval notices, and he attempted to purchase bogus immigration documents.

A law enforcement search of Keegan’s computers and cellphone revealed that he sought to purchase 35 blank residency cards from an online provider of novelty identification documents.

At the time of his immigration fraud scheme, Keegan was on court supervision after recently being released from federal prison for a prior conviction involving investment fraud.

U.S. District Judge John Robert Blakey, Northern District of Illinois, imposed the sentence.

Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Christine M. Young, Northern District of Illinois, prosecuted this case.

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