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Woman who impersonated attorney to defrauded clients seeking immigration services sentenced to federal prison

LOS ANGELES – A Lynwood woman who stole the identity of a New York attorney and filed immigration petitions on behalf of foreign nationals who believed she was a legitimate lawyer has been sentenced to 15 months in federal prison.

Jessica Godoy Ramos, 37, was sentenced Wednesday by U.S. District Judge Dolly M. Gee. After she completes the 15-month prison term, Ramos will spend six months in home detention.

Calling the crimes “despicable,” Judge Gee additionally ordered Ramos to pay \$29,693 in restitution to 16 identified victims.

The case is the result of a probe by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), with substantial assistance from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services’ (USCIS) Fraud Detection and National Security Directorate and the San Gabriel Police Department.

Ramos pleaded guilty in November to one count of mail fraud.

Ramos accepted tens of thousands of dollars from dozens of aliens who sought her services in an attempt to obtain legal status in the United States. Using the name of the genuine attorney, she filed immigration petitions on the behalf of some aliens, but in other cases she never performed any services for her clients. Ramos also created counterfeit immigration parole documents to make it appear that she had successfully represented the aliens.

According to court documents, Ramos’ clients initially believed she was a legitimate immigration attorney, but several became suspicious when she directed them to appear at USCIS offices for interviews – but they did not have any scheduled appointments.

“[Ramos] bilked scores of the most vulnerable members of our society out of their hard-earned money by falsely claiming that she was a lawyer and could help them with their immigration issues,” prosecutors wrote in sentencing documents filed with the court.

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