



**U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Texas**

**Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TWO HORIZON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON  
FOR MARIJUANA DISTRIBUTION OPERATION**

**United States Attorney Johnny Sutton** announced that 18-year-old Rene Humberto Perez and 19-year-old Rosalia Vega of El Paso were sentenced to 121 months and 46 months in federal prison, respectively, for their roles in a marijuana smuggling and distribution organization.

“The idea that a large scale drug smuggling operation could be run by local high school students is mind-blowing to most Americans. Unfortunately, that is exactly what occurred in this case. Instead of a graduation ceremony and hope for college, these students are on their way to federal prison,” stated United States Attorney Johnny Sutton.

In addition to the prison term, United States District Judge David Briones fined Perez \$2,000. Judge Briones also ordered Perez to be under supervised release for a period of five years; Vega, for three years after completing their prison terms. Both pleaded guilty in October of last year to all four counts in their indictment: conspiracy to import more than 1,000 kilograms of marijuana; importation of more than 1,000 kilograms of marijuana; conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than 1,000 kilograms of marijuana; and, possession with intent to distribute more than 1,000 kilograms of marijuana.

From September 2006 to August 2007, Perez, Vega and approximately 15 other individuals were involved in a conspiracy to smuggle in from Mexico and distribute more than 10,000 pounds of marijuana. Perez recruited Vega as well as other current and previous Horizon High School students to smuggle and transport marijuana loads from Juarez to El Paso then on to Oklahoma City. The marijuana typically was transported in gas tanks of vehicles. Co-defendant Ruben Delgado, age 39 of Del Valle, Texas, faces a minimum of twenty years in federal prison after pleading guilty to conspiracy to import more than 1,000 kilograms of marijuana. His sentencing is scheduled for April 24, 2008. The remaining defendants, mostly all of whom were drug couriers, were successfully prosecuted in either Federal or state court.

The case was investigated by agents with the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, United States Customs and Border Protection and investigators with the El Paso Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Richard Watts is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

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