



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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EVENT: Guilty Plea

Defendant: Secelia Joseph

**FORMER FEDERAL EMPLOYEE PLEADS
GUILTY TO FRAUD**

A former employee of the Social Security Administration entered a plea of guilty today to one count of defrauding the Social Security Administration of over \$77,000, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today.

Mr. Murphy was joined in the announcement by William J. Cotter, Special Agent In Charge of the Chicago Field Division of the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General.

Secelia Joseph, age 59, of Southfield, Michigan entered the guilty plea in United States District Court in Detroit before Judge Nancy G. Edmunds .

The information presented to the court at the time of the plea showed that Joseph committed the fraud between November, 2003 and March, 2006, while she was employed as a Claims Representative for the Social Security Administration. Joseph committed the fraud by accessing the Social Security Administration computer data base and altering the records of at least sixteen Social Security beneficiaries. This caused the Social Security Administration

computer to create benefit payments, which Joseph electronically diverted to bank accounts of individuals participating in the fraudulent scheme. Joseph received part of the stolen money.

Under the terms of the plea agreement, Joseph faces up to 27 months imprisonment and a fine of up to \$50,000.00. Joseph will also be required to make full restitution to the Social Security Administration.

United States Attorney Murphy stated that, "This crime is especially offensive because it was committed by an employee of the Social Security Administration. Millions of Americans depends on Social Security for their livelihood, so it is important that they have faith and trust in the honesty of its employees."

The investigation of this case was conducted by the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Pamela Thompson.