



# Department of Justice

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## **DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY EMPLOYEE CONVICTED OF ALIEN HARBORING, TAKING A BRIBE, AND COMPUTER INTRUSION**

### ***Former Immigration Adjudicator with Citizenship and Immigration Services Convicted on 12 Counts***

Atlanta, GA -Late this afternoon, a federal jury returned a guilty verdict against HASMUKH PATEL, 54, of McDonough, Georgia, on a dozen counts related to a fraud and bribery scheme and a conspiracy to encourage and induce aliens to come to and reside in the United States. The jury deliberated for a little over an hour.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said of today's jury verdict, "This defendant's federal position gave him the power to decide whether some foreigners could receive the benefits of permanent residency and, ultimately, citizenship. He abused his authority and knowledge of how visas are obtained to bring in two foreign nationals in violation of the law. While the great majority of federal employees are honest and hard-working, any who violate the law and abuse their authority face federal prison. This defendant's greed and dishonesty have now put him on prison's doorstep."

Wayne H. Salzgeber, Special Agent in Charge, Special Investigations Division, Office of Inspector General (OIG), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), said, "Hasmukh Patel's actions violated the public trust and today's verdict holds him accountable for his conduct. Our office will continue to vigorously pursue all allegations of public corruption within the Department. Today's verdict is the culmination of a collaborative investigation among DHS OIG, U.S. State Department Diplomatic Security Service (DSS), U.S. Department of Labor OIG and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)."

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: Witnesses testified that from March of 2005 through August 2007, PATEL took actions to bring a foreign national couple to this country based on fraudulent work visas. PATEL was found guilty of submitting fraudulent visa applications to the Department of Labor and to the Department of Homeland Security. As part of the scheme, a witness testified, he paid PATEL \$100,000 to bring his brother and sister-in-law into the United States. PATEL had stated in the visa application that the foreign national woman would work in his home, caring

for his wife, but she never did. Evidence at trial established that the couple instead went to Brunswick, Georgia, to work in the family convenience store. PATEL wrote a series of checks to the visa recipient to make it appear that the woman worked in his home, when she did not.

Witnesses from the United States Consulate in Mumbai, India, testified that PATEL called the consulate to vouch for the veracity of the visa application, informing a consular official he was employed by the Department of Homeland Security, Citizenship and Immigration Service. Consular officials later alerted investigators that the defendant was attempting to bring in another couple on the same type of temporary work visa. The evidence showed that PATEL also accessed his DHS computer to see if he or a visa recipient were under investigation.

PATEL was convicted on the conspiracy charge of encouraging aliens to illegally reside in the United States, and on substantive counts of taking a bribe in return for being influenced to commit a fraud on the United States, encouraging and inducing two aliens to enter and reside in the United States for his own private financial gain, making false statements to the U.S. Department of Labor and the Department of Homeland Security, and exceeding his authorized access on his government computer. This trial lasted two weeks.

PATEL could receive a maximum sentence of 49 years in prison and a fine of up to \$1,750,000. In determining the actual sentence, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders. Sentencing is scheduled for June 23, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. before United States District Judge Clarence Cooper.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, United States Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service, and Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

Assistant United States Attorneys Susan Coppedge and William McKinnon are prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan).