



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PHOENIX WOMAN ADMITS THEFT OF SOCIAL SECURITY FUNDS

PHOENIX - Laura Calleen Reeves, 48, of Phoenix, pleaded guilty in federal district court today to Theft of Government Funds before U.S. District Court Judge Roslyn O. Silver. Reeves admitted that she stole money from the Social Security Administration from January 1, 1997 through February 28, 2006 because she received approximately \$43,730 in disability benefits for which she was not eligible.

Reeves committed the theft by continuing to receive and retain Social Security Administration (SSA) Title XVI Supplemental Security Income Disability Benefits and SSA Title II Disability Benefits for herself for work disabling conditions, even though she was no longer eligible for the benefits. Reeves was not eligible for the benefits because she owned and operated floral, craft and painting related enterprises full time from her residence. Reeves admitted she performed a number of tasks for her businesses including growing flowers, preserving flowers for display, painting residential murals and other paintings, appearing on television to promote her businesses and employing several people to work for her. Reeves also agreed to repay the remaining balance of the stolen funds, approximately \$38,722.

Sentencing is set before Judge Silver on Monday, January 5, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. A conviction for Theft of Government Funds carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, a maximum fine of \$250,000 or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Silver will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General. The prosecution is being handled by Frederick A. Battista, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-07-1328-PHX-ROS
RELEASE NUMBER: 2008-267(Reeves)

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