



Department of Justice

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FORMER SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT OF GOVERNMENT FUNDS

Atlanta, GA - HERIBERTO SANABRIA, 55, of McDonough, Georgia, a former Social Security Administration official, pleaded guilty today in federal district court to charges of theft of government funds.

Acting United States Attorney F. Gentry Shelnett said of the case, "The public expects government workers to work for the government, and not use the system for their own personal gain. The Social Security Administration's Office of Inspector General and other government agencies will continue to keep a sharp eye on taxpayer money, and this office will take any appropriate steps to make sure those who take that money pay the price of justice."

Guy Fallen, Special Agent in Charge of the Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General said, "The integrity of federal employees is a matter of great importance. Mr. Sanabria repeatedly violated the public trust through his actions. The Social Security Administration and its Office of the Inspector General are fully committed to identifying and prosecuting corrupt employees at every level. Thankfully, the vast majority of Social Security Administration employees are dedicated public servants who steadfastly administer the Social Security Programs each and every day."

According to Acting United States Attorney Shelnett and the information presented in court: SANABRIA was the former Region IV Manager of the Social Security Administration-Civil Rights Equal Opportunity Office in Atlanta, Georgia. In his position SANABRIA was responsible for oversight and management of the region's equal employment opportunity program which encompassed complaint processing, alternative dispute resolution, diversity programs, sexual harassment and statistical analysis. SANABRIA also managed an office of 15 employees and provided EEO training and guidance to senior management officials.

The evidence showed that from March 2004 through March 2007 SANABRIA, through his personal consulting and conference planning company, "North and South Together" d/b/a "NST Group," facilitated bi-annual regional workshops for the Combined

Federal Campaign (CFC). The NST group negotiated a contract with the National CFC Committee to conduct CFC bi-annual regional workshops for 5% of the regional workshops gross registration revenues. The NST Group also negotiated contracts with host hotels and venues to receive 10% commission from workshop registrant's accommodation fees. SANABRIA and the NST Group hosted CFC regional workshops in: San Diego, California; Miami, Florida; Palm Springs, California; San Antonio, Texas; Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Seattle, Washington; and New Orleans, Louisiana. The Social Security Administration requires all employees to receive approval to perform outside work activity before embarking on a venture that may present a conflict of interest between official duties and the outside work activity. SANABRIA did not receive approval from the Social Security Administration to perform outside work activity.

The evidence showed that even though all of SANABRIA's work with the NST Group constituted "outside private work" activity, SANABRIA billed the Social Security Administration for the expenses associated with his work with the NST Group as well as his time for conducting the CFC workshops. Specifically, SANABRIA submitted travel vouchers to the Social Security Administration and received compensation in the amount of \$11,028.57 to cover transportation, lodging, and meal expenses incurred while conducting the CFC workshops. Additionally, time and attendance rosters indicated SANABRIA was in pay status as a federal employee while conducting the CFC workshops. An audit conducted by the Social Security Administration Center for Human Resources determined that SANABRIA should have been charged 336 hours of annual leave for work he performed for the NST Group while in pay status with the federal government. Based on SANABRIA's salary 336 hours of annual leave equaled \$17,029.68. The total fraud loss in this case was \$28,058.25.

SANABRIA pleaded guilty today to a Criminal Information charging eight counts of theft of government funds. He could receive a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison for each count and a fine of up to \$250,000. 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.

A sentencing date is set for June 22, 2009, at 10:30 a.m. before United States District Judge Thomas W. Thrash, Jr.

This case is being investigated by the Social Security Administration-Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

Special Assistant United States Attorney Loranzo M. Fleming is prosecuting this 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.