

## **Justice files charges against man who illegally claimed more than \$650,000 from the Department of Veterans Affairs**

**May 9, 2012**

Prosecutor Maricarmen Rodriguez Barea, director of the Public Integrity Division of the Economic Crimes and Affairs Office of the Comptroller for the Puerto Rico Department of Justice (DOJ) announced that criminal charges were filed today against a veteran who used a fake social security card to illegally obtain over \$650,000 in compensation and pension from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

The investigation revealed that Joseph Santiago Román 70, presented a false social security card to the Department of Veterans Affairs in order to be eligible for pension benefits and compensation offered by the Department.

Santiago Román was able to fraudulently obtain \$652,508 through July 2, 2009, when payments to the defendant were suspended after an internal audit revealed the fraud.

A probable cause hearing for an arrest was held today before Judge Jeanine Meaux Pereda of the Judicial Center of Arecibo, who found cause for the crimes of aggravated misappropriation, misrepresentation, fraud, and possession and transfer of false documents and set bail at \$4,000.

The case was presented by Commonwealth Prosecutor Brenda Rosado Aponte, of the Public Integrity Division, Economic Crime and Affairs Office of the Comptroller of the DOJ, in collaboration with Puerto Rico State Police Agent Jesus Mercado and Special Agent Kenneth Velazquez of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

