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PRESS RELEASE

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SALINAS COUPLE PLED GUILTY TO WELFARE FRAUD

People v. Leticia Santana: 18CR009952, and Ulises Garcia: 18CR009953

SALINAS, California- Monterey County District Attorney Jeannine M. Pacioni announced today that July 18, 2019, Leticia Santana, age 43, and Ulises Garcia, age 48, both residents of Salinas, pled guilty to felony welfare fraud. The plea was taken by Monterey County Superior Court Judge Mark Hood.

Between the months of August 2013 and June 2014, the couple was receiving CalFresh benefits (food stamps) and CalWorks benefits (cash aide) claiming they needed these benefits to support their children as they were both unemployed. A subsequent investigation by the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Monterey County District Attorney's Office revealed that Garcia was in fact employed during the entire fraud period. Both Santana and Garcia misrepresented his income to DSS, as well as on the requisite reporting forms for these programs. The household income was well above the level required to be eligible to receive any benefits. The couple's misrepresentations resulted in an overpayment of benefits of \$12,120.00.

The couple will be sentenced on August 29, 2019. Both face 3 years of formal felony probation, up to 365 days in jail, and will be ordered to pay back the loss directly to the Department of Social Services.

It is illegal to use benefits belonging to another or benefits obtained using misrepresentations. Monterey County Department of Social Services along with the Monterey County District Attorney's Office has a welfare fraud tip line. If you have information regarding welfare fraud you can leave an anonymous tip at (831)755-3224.

This case was investigated by the Department of Social Services and District Attorney Investigator Jose Lopez.