JEANNINE M. PACIONI
District Attorney

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Jim Martin, Deputy District Attorney
Telephone: (831) 755-5321

SALINAS COUPLE PLED GUILTY TO
WELFARE FRAUD

People v. Margarita Luna-Mondragon : 19CR002705, and Jorge Navarrete Sanchez:19CR002706

SALINAS, California- Monterey County District Attorney Jeannine M. Pacioni announced today that on August 15, 2019, Margarita Luna-Mondragon, age 32, and Jorge Navarrete Sanchez, age 35, both residents of Salinas, pled guilty to felony welfare fraud. The plea was taken by Monterey County Superior Court Judge Carrie Panetta.

Between the months of May 2014 and June 2018, the couple was receiving CalFresh benefits (food stamps) and CalWorks benefits (cash aide) claiming that 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 both individuals were in fact employed during the entire fraud period. Both Luna-Mondragon and Sanchez misrepresented their employment and income status 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 $13,804.00.

Luna-Mondragon and Sanchez will be sentenced on September 26, 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