NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Distribution

December 5, 2011

André Birotte Jr.
United States Attorney
Central District of California

Thom Mrozek, Public Affairs Officer
(213) 894-6947
thom.mrozek@usdoj.gov
www.justice.gov/usao/cac

Bay Area Woman Sentenced to 18 Months in Prison for Bilking I.R.S. Through Tax Returns That Claimed 20 Non-Existent Dependents

LOS ANGELES – A former Los Angeles resident was sentenced this afternoon to 18 months in federal prison for filing fraudulent federal income tax returns that claimed deductions for 20 non-existent children who were supposedly all born on the same day.

Norma Coronel, 40, of Livermore, California, who is an illegal alien from Mexico, was sentenced today by United Stated District Judge Manuel Real. In addition to the prison term, Judge Real ordered Coronel to pay $302,186 in restitution to the Internal Revenue Service.

Coronel pleaded guilty in September to three felony counts – aiding and assisting in the preparation of fraudulent federal income tax returns, fraudulently using Social Security numbers obtained with false information, and theft of government property.

In a plea agreement filed in this case, Coronel admitted that in 2003 she applied for and obtained Social Security numbers for at least 20 fictitious children, falsely claiming that the children had been born to her at a Los Angeles hospital on December 11, 2002. Using these bogus identities, Coronel prepared and filed fraudulent federal tax returns for family members and friends that claimed dependent deductions and fraudulently sought refunds.

Coronel admitted in the plea agreement that she had frequently directed the IRS to send the refund checks to her own residence or to accounts that she controlled.

Coronel either failed to provide the taxpayers with copies of the returns that she had filed, or gave them copies of fake returns that had never been filed. As a result, the taxpayers were not aware that Coronel had filed fraudulent returns in their names or that Coronel was using the returns to obtain the refunds for her own benefit.

Coronel has been in custody since she was arrested in this case in July.

The investigation of Coronel was conducted by IRS - Criminal Investigation; the Treasury Department's Office of Inspector General for Tax Administration; and the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General.

CONTACT: Assistant United States Attorney Paul H. Rochmes
Tax Division
(213) 894-2413

Release No. 11-168