

JUSTICE NEWS

Attorney General Jeff Sessions Delivers Remarks Announcing Arrests from Operation "Double Trouble"

Boston, MA ~ Thursday, July 26, 2018

Remarks as prepared for delivery

Thank you, Andy.

Good morning and thank you all for being here.

I want to thank U.S. Attorney Andy Lelling for the fabulous work that he is doing for the people of this Commonwealth. This is my second visit to this office, but my first since Andy became U.S. Attorney.

I'm excited to see this office thrive under his leadership and I know that he understands the importance of his position. He has spent the better part of two decades serving in the Department of Justice and he has done terrific work—taking on the drug cartels, drug traffickers in Eastern Europe, as well as bringing to justice the leader of a \$3 billion pyramid scheme.

The public servants in this office are doing great work. Just a few weeks ago, you arrested a Dominican national in the city of Lynn who is wanted for murder back in the Dominican Republic.

And that was the day after you put an MS-13 leader behind bars for 19 years for racketeering. Altogether you've convicted 49 different defendants as part of that case. The reach of this important U.S. Attorney's office goes beyond Boston, beyond the United States, it is worldwide.

We are challenging you – unleashing you to be even more effective.

I am here today to announce a law enforcement action in Massachusetts against crimes committed predominantly by illegal aliens.

I'd like to explain our policies and why these cases are important. By most estimates, 11 million people are in this country illegally. That is a population the size of Portugal or the state of Georgia, our eighth most populous state.

With an estimated 180,000 illegal aliens, the Greater Boston area is one of the top 12 metro areas in America in terms of illegal alien population. That means that there are about as many illegal aliens in the Boston area as the total population of Worcester, which is Massachusetts' second biggest city.

According to these estimates, one out of every 30 people in the Greater Boston area is an illegal alien.

And I want to be clear about this: we are talking about illegal immigration, not legal immigration.

In the United States, we have the most generous immigration laws in the world. We take 1.1 million people on a path to citizenship every year. Another 700,000 come here to take jobs. Another half a million come here to take spots in our colleges and universities.

Accepting illegal immigration would be a disservice to these legal immigrants who played by the rules, waited their turn, and respected our laws, customs, and way of life. You don't get to come to America unlawfully.

Not all of those who are here illegally have committed additional crimes here—but many of them have.

By definition, every single one of these crimes should have been prevented.

For example, Mirta Rivera, a nurse in Lawrence, Massachusetts, was shot to death in her sleep. When police arrived on the scene, they found a bullet hole in the ceiling, and upstairs they found drugs, guns, and illegal aliens from the Dominican Republic.

Mirta Rivera was the grandmother of a nine-year old girl. Mirta should still be alive today. This crime should not have happened.

I've met personally with families like the Maloney family and the Grossi family, who are both from Milford. The Maloney family is missing their son Matthew, who was killed by an illegal alien who was driving drunk with a four-year old child in the truck with him.

The Grossi family is missing their brother Richard, who was also killed by an illegal alien who was allegedly driving drunk.

These families are in mourning. They will never be the same again.

These families have been separated from their children permanently.

One very common offense committed by illegal aliens is identity theft.

With a few exceptions, illegal aliens cannot have Social Security numbers. And so, in many cases, they steal them—usually so that they can take jobs they are not entitled to.

But some illegal aliens steal identities to get money from the government.

Under federal law, illegal aliens cannot receive most cash benefits. They are totally ineligible for programs like Medicare and Social Security.

And so, many of them lie and defraud the taxpayers of this country—including the hard-working people of Massachusetts. Across this city and across America, teachers, truck drivers, and construction workers are going to work and paying taxes that are being stolen from the public treasury by fraudsters and criminals.

These government programs are intended to help poor or elderly American citizens—not those who are trespassing in this country. This kind of fraud is a theft from our seniors, a theft from the taxpayer, and a theft from the needy.

And so I am here today with these prosecutors and investigators to announce a major law enforcement action in Massachusetts regarding crimes committed predominantly by illegal aliens.

And before I say anything more about that, I would remind everyone that the defendants in this case—as in every case—are presumed innocent until proven guilty. The allegations that I will present today are just that: allegations.

Today I am announcing Operation Double Trouble, which is being led by Homeland Security Investigations' Boston office—specifically its Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force.

Members of the task force reviewed Medicaid billing data and found more than 110 potential cases where two people with the same name and the same Social Security number—one in Puerto Rico and one in Massachusetts—were receiving Medicaid.

In some cases both people with the same identity were receiving medical services on the same day in both jurisdictions, 1,600 miles away from each other.

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The alleged fraudsters in this case are primarily Dominican nationals residing in Massachusetts. Their alleged victims are predominantly American citizens in Puerto Rico.

The defendants include a convicted drug trafficker who was allegedly receiving unemployment benefits and living in taxpayer-funded housing.

According to the allegations, he stole the identity of an American citizen displaced by the recent hurricanes in Puerto Rico.

Just imagine if you lost your home and your possessions and then you found out that an illegal alien had stolen your identity.

After he lost his house, the innocent Puerto Rican victim applied for a housing subsidy from the government and was told that he was already receiving one—1,600 miles away in Massachusetts.

One defendant in this case is a convicted heroin trafficker who has also been convicted of drug trafficking in a school zone, as well as a firearm offense. When he was arrested as part of this fraud case, he was allegedly dealing fentanyl—the number one killer drug in Massachusetts and across America today.

The investigation also revealed that many of the defendants have driver's licenses and four are illegal aliens registered to vote.

As part of this operation, law enforcement officers have executed search warrants and arrest warrants in Boston, Lawrence, Lynn, Revere, Salem, Malden, and Springfield, as well as in Houston, Texas.

Out of the 28 charged, 21 are in custody, 22 are in this country illegally. Nineteen have arrest records for everything from breaking and entering to assault and battery on a police officer. Most are not reporting income to the Commonwealth.

In total, we allege that these defendants defrauded the American taxpayer of more than a quarter of a million dollars, including \$200,000 in health care.

I want to thank all of the members of the Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force: Homeland Security Investigations, the Inspectors General at HHS, HUD, Social Security and the Department of Labor, the Massachusetts Auditor, the U.S. Postal Service, and especially the outstanding Massachusetts State troopers. These public servants have helped investigate these cases and discover evidence of criminal activity.

Once again I want to thank Massachusetts's fabulous U.S. Attorney Andy Lelling and team, who is doing great work. And I especially want to thank our local police officers who are here and those who executed the warrants across the Commonwealth today.

And I want to remind the public once again that the defendants in this case are innocent until proven guilty.

This Operation is ongoing. We are going to continue to pursue cases of identity theft against the American people here in Massachusetts and wherever they take place. Thank you.

Speaker:

Attorney General Jeff Sessions

Component(s):

Office of the Attorney General

