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JUSTICE NEWS

**Department of Justice**

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, April 7, 2010

**Detention Officer Sentenced for Repeated Sexual Abuse  
of Detainees**

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department announced today that U.S. District Judge Gray H. Miller sentenced Robert Luis Loya to three years in prison and five years of supervised release for violating the civil rights and the sexual abuse of females in his custody. Loya, a former guard at the Port Isabel Detention Center in Los Fresnos, Texas, pleaded guilty in September 2009, to a six-count criminal information charging him with three counts of abusive sexual contact and three counts deprivation of rights under color of law.

In his guilty plea, Loya, 43, who lives in Rio Honda, Texas, admitted that on several occasions in March and April 2008, he snuck into medical isolation rooms at the detention center infirmary to grope female patients. He frequently volunteered for infirmary duty so that he would be alone with the victims and his victims were usually asleep when he entered the room. Loya lied to his victims, assuring them that he had been ordered to examine them by a physician and instructing them to disrobe. He then touched intimate parts of their bodies in a sexual manner. Loya admitted that his actions caused the victims psychological pain and embarrassment.

Loya worked at the detention center for six and-a-half years as a guard and was employed by a private company that contracted with the United States government. When confronted by agents from U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement's Office of Professional Responsibility, Loya admitted to sexually touching five different women.

"Correctional officers are given a great deal of power in order to carry out their critical responsibilities, but this officer abused that power to violate the civil rights of individuals under his supervision. Our laws protect the constitutional rights of all individuals, including those in state or local custody," said Assistant Attorney General Thomas E. Perez of the Civil Rights Division. "We will vigorously prosecute any guard or detention officer who uses his position of trust to prey upon vulnerable individuals."

"Loya flagrantly violated the most vulnerable of victims who have a right to expect to be safe and protected from harm while in custody and most certainly from one with the duty to provide those protections," said José Angel Moreno, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Texas. "This office will aggressively investigate and prosecute those who violate the civil rights of others to ensure that expectation. Nothing less can be tolerated."

The case was investigated by Senior Special Agent Arturo Martinez of the Office of Professional Responsibility of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Trial Attorney Michael J. Frank of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division and Assistant U.S. Attorney Ruben R. Perez prosecuted this case.

10-380

Civil Rights Division

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