



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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FIVE ARRESTED IN AUSTIN-BASED VISA FRAUD SCHEME

United States Attorney John E. Murphy and Special Agent in Charge Jerry Robinette, U.S. ICE Homeland Security Investigations, announced the arrests of an Austin area businessman and four other individuals in connection with a H-2B visa fraud scheme.

Today, agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested 54-year-old Jose Ramiro Vicharely of Cedar Park, TX, President and Executive Director of International Staffing Solutions, Inc., doing business as Texas Staffing Resources (TSR); his wife, 28-year-old Irma Lopez Vicharely; his daughter, 32-year-old Angela Paola Faulk and her husband, 25-year-old Servando Gonzalez, Jr., of Austin; and, former TSR account manager 43-year-old Pedro Saul Ocampo Munguia of Pflugerville, TX.

On Thursday, a federal grand jury seated in Austin returned an indictment charging the defendants with conspiracy to commit visa fraud and conspiracy to encourage aliens to illegally enter and reside in the United States. Jose and Irma Vicharely, Angela Faulk, and Pedro Ocampo Munguia are also charged with various counts of encouraging an alien to illegally enter and reside in the United States for purposes of financial gain.

The indictment alleges that the defendants have conspired since August 2004 to knowingly obtain H-2B visas under false pretenses. According to the indictment, the defendants approached several Austin businesses and offered to obtain H2B visas for foreign nationals to come and work for their companies or for undocumented aliens already working in their companies. Oftentimes unbeknownst to the employers, the defendants would then submit fraudulent I-129 petitions with forged signatures or bogus supporting documentation requesting significantly more foreign workers than required or requested by employers. The indictment also states that the defendants would sell excess slots on I-129 petitions to other undocumented aliens in the Austin area for between \$1,500 and \$2,200 per slot. Furthermore, the indictment alleges that the defendants also traveled to Mexico to help undocumented aliens prepare and submit immigration forms, coach them as to what to say when interviewed by U.S. Consulate officials and collect final payments from undocumented aliens.

Finally, the indictment seeks a \$1 million monetary judgment as well as the forfeiture of U.S. currency located in three bank accounts and several vehicles believed to have been purchased with proceeds derived from the alleged criminal activity. The indictment was unsealed today.

Upon conviction of conspiracy to commit visa fraud, the defendants face up to five years in federal prison; up to 10 years in federal prison on each of the remaining counts.

Assistant United States Attorney Garth Backe and Dan Guess are prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government. **An indictment is merely a charge and should not be considered as evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.**

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