

PRESS RELEASE

Poway Man Sentenced to Prison after Concealing Mother's Death for 32 years, Stealing Over \$800,000 in Government Benefits

Friday, October 27, 2023

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of California
Kelly.Thornton@usdoj.gov

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY – October 27, 2023

SAN DIEGO – Donald Felix Zampach, who concealed his mother's death in 1990 then stole more than \$800,000 in government benefits intended for her, was sentenced in federal court today to 24 months in prison.

Zampach pleaded guilty to money laundering and Social Security fraud in June 2023. According to his plea agreement, Zampach's mother died in Japan in 1990. At the time of her death, she was receiving a widow's pension from the Social Security Administration and an annuity from the Department of Defense (DoD). Zampach maintained his mother's bank accounts for over three decades after her death, forged her signature on certificates of eligibility to keep her government benefits in pay, and filed forged federal income taxes.

Zampach admitted that between November 1990 and September 2022, he received at least \$830,238 intended for his mother. Zampach used his mother's identity to fraudulently open credit accounts with at least nine financial institutions, causing losses of more than \$28,000. Zampach laundered the stolen monies in part to pay off the mortgage on his Poway home.

Zampach was ordered to pay \$858,876.28 in restitution and to forfeit more than \$830,000, including his home.

“This is theft on a grand scale,” said U.S. Attorney Tara K. McGrath. “Mr. Zampach stole from service members and those who dutifully pay into Social Security, expecting that when their time comes to retire, the money will be there. Thanks to the diligent efforts of our Social Security Administration partners, Mr. Zampach must pay back what he stole, and be held accountable for this decades-long crime.”

“Mr. Zampach's sentencing culminates a more than 30-year fraud scheme that he knowingly and willingly implemented to the detriment of the American taxpayer by unlawfully obtaining Department of Defense and Social Security benefits,” said DoD Inspector General Robert P. Storch. “My office, working through its Defense Criminal Investigative Service and with our law enforcement partners, will continue to vigorously investigate and prosecute criminal activities that siphon away the invaluable resources entrusted to the DoD.”

“Mr. Zampach intentionally withheld material information from the Social Security Administration (SSA) to fraudulently obtain more than \$250,000 in SSA benefits. This sentence holds him accountable for his devious, decades-long fraud,” said Gail S. Ennis, Inspector General for SSA. “In total, he stole more than \$800,000 in public money; and my office will continue to partner with law enforcement to investigate those who defraud SSA and government agencies. I thank the investigators, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey D. Hill for their successful efforts in investigating and prosecuting this crime.”

This case was prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey D. Hill.

DEFENDANT**Case Number 23cr1268-CAB**

Donald Felix Zampach

Age: 65

Poway, CA

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Money Laundering – Title 18, U.S.C., Section 1956(a)(1)(B)(i)

Maximum penalty: Twenty years in prison and \$500,000 fine

Social Security Fraud – Title 42, U.S.C. Section 408(a)(4)

Maximum penalty: Five years in prison and \$250,000 fine

AGENCIES

Social Security Administration – Office of the Inspector General

Department of Defense – Office of the Inspector General – Defense Criminal Investigative Service

Updated October 27, 2023

Topic

FINANCIAL FRAUD

Component

[USAO - California, Southern](#)

Press Release Number: CAS23-1027-Zampach

Related Content

PRESS RELEASE

Second Executive Admits Participating in \$150 Million Fraud on Qualcomm

SAN DIEGO – Ali Akbar Shokouhi, the primary investor of a technology company sold to Qualcomm for over \$150 million, pleaded guilty in federal court today, admitting his role in...

October 5, 2023

PRESS RELEASE

Imperial County Dentist and Former Office Manager Plead Guilty in Multi-Million Dollar Medicare Fraud

October 4, 2023

PRESS RELEASE

Former Union President Sentenced in Connection with \$36,000 Embezzlement

SAN DIEGO – Felix Luciano, former President of Local 2805 chapter of the American Federation of Government Employees and former Department of Homeland Security officer, was sentenced in federal court...