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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Asst. AG Devoron Hill

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Las Vegas woman convicted and sentenced for Welfare Fraud

On July 27, 2012, 34-year-old Monica Martinez, of Las Vegas, Nevada, was convicted and sentenced for fraudulently applying for and receiving Alaska Public Assistance benefits and Alaska Unemployment Insurance benefits. Superior Court Judge Michael Wolverton sentenced Martinez to 36 months jail with 18 months suspended, with a five-year probation period. Martinez was also ordered to pay restitution to the State of Alaska totaling \$40,810.14. Additionally, she is disqualified from future participation in the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program (ATAP) for a period of 12 months and from participating in the Food Stamp Program for 24 months as she has prior Intentional Program Violations.

The conviction and the sentence stem from an investigation conducted by the Division of Public Assistance (DPA) Fraud Investigation Unit. The investigation revealed that from December 2006 through December 2008, Martinez failed to disclose substantial resources to DPA while receiving public assistance benefits. The resources included bank accounts with monthly balances in excess of \$20,000.00. Martinez also failed to declare her management and ownership of two personal care attendant businesses which billed Alaska and Nevada Medicaid in excess of \$728,000.00 from 2004 through 2009. Martinez claimed to DPA she was destitute and disabled. The losses incurred to Alaska Public Assistance Programs due to Martinez' false declarations were calculated to be \$34,282.14. The restitution ordered with respect to her fraudulent receipt of Alaska Unemployment Benefits totaled \$6,528.00. Martinez was receiving Alaska Unemployment Insurance benefits while she was employed in Las Vegas. This case was filed in August 2009 however Martinez, who was aware of the investigation, had already absconded to Las Vegas to avoid prosecution. She was extradited to Alaska on a Fugitive from Justice Warrant in April 2012. Her prior criminal history includes a 2005 federal felony conviction for drug-related money laundering.