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# Press Release

## USCIS HELPS DEVELOP UTAH'S BIGGEST MARRIAGE FRAUD CASE *Agency Provides Invaluable Assistance to Multi-Agency Task Force*

SALT LAKE CITY – A federal grand jury indictment charging 24 individuals with numerous violations of federal law in connection with a sophisticated marriage fraud scheme was unsealed on August 7, 2006, in Salt Lake City's federal court. The charges stem from a scheme designed to allow Vietnamese nationals to use phony marriages in order to enter or remain in the United States. The 79-count indictment culminated an 18-month, multi-agency investigation.

"Maintaining the integrity of the immigration system is USCIS' top priority," said USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez. "We're proud to work with other components of the Department of Homeland Security and our partners in the law enforcement community to detect and eliminate fraud, helping ensure this nation's security."

The investigation began when Senator Orrin Hatch's, R-Utah, office received a citizen tip and referred the lead to the local USCIS office. As the investigation developed, USCIS personnel, working closely with their Immigration and Customs Enforcement counterparts, reviewed more than 1,000 documents related to the fraudulent marriages and performed marriage fraud investigations for all related cases. In addition to identifying individuals of interest, USCIS' Office of Fraud Detection and National Security (FDNS) retrieved relevant documents and established a database to maintain these cases for future use as evidence.

The defendants charged in the case allegedly recruited United States citizens to travel to Vietnam and enter into phony marriages to allow the illegal entry of the Vietnamese nationals into the United States. According to the indictment, some of the fraudulent marriages involved Vietnamese nationals who were already here. The charges in the indictment include conspiracy to defraud the United States; alien smuggling; marriage fraud; and aggravated identity theft.

– USCIS –

On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services became one of three legacy INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing our nation's security.