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Tuesday, September 17, 2019

Chinese National Pleads Guilty to Running 'Birth Tourism' Scheme that Helped Aliens Give Birth in U.S. to Secure Birthright Citizenship

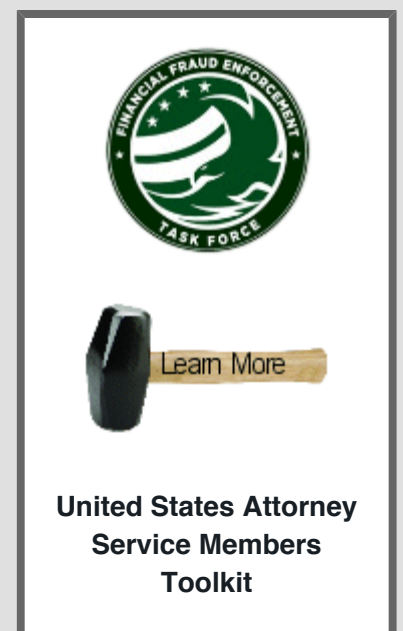
SANTA ANA, California – A Chinese national pleaded guilty today to federal criminal charges for running an Orange County-based “birth tourism” business that catered to wealthy pregnant clients and Chinese government officials, charging them tens of thousands of dollars to help them give birth in the United States so their children would get U.S. citizenship.

Dongyuan Li (), 41, of Irvine, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit immigration fraud and one count of visa fraud. Li was one of 19 defendants named in a [series of indictments](#) unsealed earlier this year. She is the first of the charged operators of birth tourism businesses to plead guilty. The remaining defendants either are pending trial or are fugitives.

Li admitted in her plea agreement that, from 2013 until March 2015, she operated a birth tourism company in Irvine and in China called You Win USA Vacation Services Corp. You Win would assist pregnant foreign nationals – typically from China – to travel to and remain in the United States to give birth so their children would receive birthright U.S. citizenship, according to the plea agreement.

According to a January 2019 federal grand jury indictment against Li, You Win advertised that it had served more than 500 Chinese birth tourism customers seeking U.S. birthright citizenship for their children. The indictment details that Li used 20 apartments in Irvine, charged each customer between \$40,000 and \$80,000, and she received \$3 million in international wire transfers from China in two years.

Some You Win customers coached by the company made false statements on



their visa applications and to U.S. immigration officials, Li’s plea agreement states. Li also admitted that the customers were advised on how to pass the U.S. Consulate interview in China, including by falsely stating that they were going to stay in the United States for only two weeks, when in reality, they planned to stay for up to three months to give birth.

Li further admitted that her customers bypassed U.S. immigration controls by booking two flights – the first from China to Hawaii and the second from Hawaii to Los Angeles International Airport – because they thought it would be easier to clear U.S. Customs through Hawaii. Li’s customers also were coached how to trick U.S. Customs at ports of entry by concealing their pregnancies, according to the plea agreement.

In October 2013, Li made a \$30,965 rent payment for Irvine apartments used in her birth tourism operation, and in November 2013, she made a \$30,321 rent payment for those apartments, the plea agreement states.

As part of her plea agreement, Li agreed to forfeit more than \$850,000, a Murrieta residence worth more than \$500,000, as well as several Mercedes-Benz vehicles.

United States District Judge James V. Selna scheduled a December 16 sentencing hearing, at which time Li will face a statutory maximum sentence of 15 years in federal prison.

This case was investigated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations and IRS Criminal Investigation. The Irvine Police Department provided substantial assistance.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Charles E. Pell of the Santa Ana Branch Office.


Component(s):
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Mortgage Settlement Information

SunTrust Mortgage Settlement Information
Well Fargo Mortgage Settlement Information

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