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## **News Release**

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### **Ceylon woman pleads guilty to stealing \$45,814 in Social Security benefits**

MINNEAPOLIS— Yesterday in federal court, a woman from the southern Minnesota community of Ceylon pleaded guilty to stealing more than \$45,000 in Social Security benefits. Tammi Marie Palmer, age 50, pleaded guilty to one count of making a false statement for use in determining eligibility for Social Security benefits. Palmer, who was indicted on April 12, 2011, entered her plea before United States District Court Judge John R. Tunheim.

In her plea agreement, Palmer admitted that on January 31, 2008, she made a false statement to the Social Security Administration to determine if she was eligible to receive supplemental social security income benefits on behalf of her two disabled sons. Specifically, Palmer failed to disclose that her then-husband was living with her and was earning wages. The indictment filed in this case alleges that Palmer was responsible for similar omissions during at least six hearings. Those omissions are material because the benefits received were subject to household-income limits. As a result of her false statements, Palmer obtained approximately \$45,814.45 in unentitled supplemental social security benefits between June of 2003 and January of 2009.

For her crime, Palmer faces a potential maximum penalty of five years in federal prison. Judge Tunheim will determine her sentence at a future hearing, yet to be scheduled. This case is the result of an investigation by the Social Security Administration-Office of Inspector General. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kimberly A. Svendsen.

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