

Name: Alert ID: TMML2024035952350 LAS VEGAS (KSNV) — China limits how much money one person convert into foreign currency each year. Two Las Vegas men who helped gamblers bypass that limit have found themselves in deep trouble with the IRS. Las Vegas residents Bing Han and Lei Zhang have pleaded guilty to Operation of Unlicensed Money Transmitting Business, the IRS announced on Monday. According to the IRS, China-based customers would transfer money into Han and Zhang's Chinese bank accounts. In return, the men would transfer an equal amount of money in US Dollars their customer's US-based accounts. The two would then receive a commission for the money transferred. Han and Zhang both say that casino hosts would regularly introduce customers to them. These customers, who were not legally allowed to convert more than \$50,000 worth of Chinese Yuan each year, wanted more money to gamble with. Han and Zhang were more than willing to oblige. The casino hosts, the IRS stated, would often receive a cut of the commission. These actions, the IRS says, violated both China's capital controls and the United States' anti-money-laundering laws. "The United States stands vigilant against the constantly evolving ways in which individuals and organizations seek to operate outside the conventional financial system," said U.S. Attorney Robert S. Brewer. "Violating United States anti-money laundering laws not only endangers the integrity of the global financial system, but doing so hinders the ability of law enforcement officers to confront criminal conduct including money laundering and narcotics trafficking." DEA Special Agent in Charge John W. Callery says that these laws are in place to prevent drug trafficking organizations from laundering money. "Although Mr. Han and Mr. Zhang did not admit to transacting narcotics proceeds in their unlicensed money transmitting businesses, we know that drug trafficking organizations are willing to use a variety of businesses to launder proceeds from the sales of drugs," said Callery. "DEA and our outstanding partners will continue to investigate illicit financial transactions and anyone who may operate businesses that stand to profit from illegal drug sales." Han and Zhang both face a maximum of five years in prison. Han is scheduled to be sentenced on May 1, and Zhang is scheduled to be sentenced on May 4. Both face a maximum of 5 years in prison. No information about the casino hosts, or which resorts they worked for, was released by the IRS. It's unclear whether any of the hosts are being investigated.