

Iowa meat-processing plant employees plead not guilty to aiding, abetting charges

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Body

CEDAR RAPIDS -- Two Agriprocessors Inc. human resource **employees pleaded not guilty** Wednesday afternoon in U.S. District Court to **aiding and abetting** illegal immigrants.

Laura Althouse, 38, of Postville, is **charged** with **aiding and abetting** document fraud and **aiding and abetting** aggravated identity theft.

Althouse works in the company's human resource department and has payroll duties at the kosher meatpacking **plant** in Postville. Althouse is accused of helping a supervisor assist **employees** with the completion of new applications, in new names and using newly acquired false identification documents, according to a criminal complaint.

The incident allegedly occurred May 11, a day before a federal immigration raid resulting in more than 300 convictions on **charges** related to identity theft.

Karina Freund, 29, of Fayette, is **charged** with harboring and **aiding and abetting** the harboring of undocumented aliens. She works in the company's human resource department and was implicated by former, undocumented **employees** who claimed she helped obtain false identification documents for them, according to criminal complaint.

If convicted, Althouse faces up to 12 years in federal prison and Freund faces up to five years.

Both women also face more than 9,000 simple misdemeanor **charges** of child labor law violations filed by the state. They **pleaded not guilty** last week to those **charges**.

A trial date for the federal **charges** is set for Nov. 17 for both women.

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