

Widow, feds settle suit

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Byline: Jeremy Redmon

Staff

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Body

The **widow** of a Mexican native who died while in the custody of **federal** immigration authorities in Georgia has reached a settlement with the government in the \$1 million wrongful death lawsuit she filed in March.

Attorneys representing the **federal** government, Sara Hernandez-Gonzalez and her late husband, Roberto Medina-Martinez, are declining to disclose the terms of their settlement. They intend to finalize their agreement by September and then file papers to dismiss the case, court records show.

"I am pleased that our efforts were able to result in a successful resolution of the claims arising from the death of Roberto Medina-Martinez," Brian Spears, one of the plaintiff's attorneys, said in an email Wednesday. "Although his wife and children continue to mourn the loss of his life, they are ready now to move forward."

In her lawsuit, Hernandez-Gonzalez said her late husband died from myocarditis --- or an inflammation of the heart muscle --- because of the **federal** government's negligence.

In a response to her lawsuit last month, the government denied negligence and said it "did not breach any duty of care in connection with the allegations" in the lawsuit.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement rejected an earlier claim for \$1 million from Hernandez-Gonzalez in September, telling her attorney that he had "failed to establish that any negligent or wrongful act or omission of a **federal** government employee caused this alleged incident."

In January of 2009, police arrested Medina-Martinez in North Carolina for driving without a license and speeding. Medina-Martinez was a Mexican citizen who had entered the country illegally in 2001, ICE records show. He was transferred to an ICE detention center in Stewart County. He died at St. Francis Hospital in Columbus on March 11, 2009.

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