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**THREE FAMILY OWNERS OF CHICAGO CANDY BUSINESS
CHARGED WITH FILING FALSE FEDERAL INCOME TAX RETURNS**

CHICAGO — A woman and her two sons who own a Chicago candy business were charged today with federal tax offenses alleging that they filed false federal individual income tax returns by substantially under-reporting their wages and taxable income. The defendants, **Maria Elena Hernandez** and her sons, **Raul Hernandez, Jr.**, and **Rodrigo Hernandez**, were each charged with one count of filing a false federal income tax return in a criminal information that was filed today in U.S. District Court, announced Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and Alvin Patton, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division in Chicago.

The three defendants, together with another person who was not charged, own Mari's Candy, Inc., located at 2266 South Blue Island Ave., Chicago, which manufactures and distributes Mexican candies and spices to wholesale and retail business, according to the charges.

Maria Hernandez, 65, of Homer Glen, Raul Hernandez, 49, of Orland Park, and Rodrigo Hernandez, 40, also of Homer Glen, will be ordered to appear for arraignment at a later date in Federal Court.

According to the charges, all three defendants received cash or checks from Mari's Candy that they did not report as income. For calendar year 2007, all three defendants filed tax returns reporting wages of \$31,200 and no taxable income, when, in fact, they each knew that their actual wages and taxable income substantially exceeded the amounts they reported.

Filing a false federal tax return carries a maximum penalty of three years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. In addition, defendants convicted of tax offenses face mandatory costs of prosecution and remain civilly liable to the Government for any and all back taxes, as well as a potential civil fraud penalty of up to 75 percent of the underpayment plus interest. If convicted, the Court must determine a reasonable sentence to be imposed under federal statutes and the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Angel Krull.

The public is reminded that an information contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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