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# Exploited and Underpaid: Two Charged for Trafficking Elder Care Workers in Around-the-Clock Labor Scheme

## *Exploited Workes Owed More Than \$175,000 in Unpaid Wages*

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) announced human trafficking and wage theft charges today against two defendants who were taking advantage of the immigration status of their workers, forcing them to work around the clock without the pay required under California laws.

Rolando “Bobby” Solancho Corpuz, 57, and Maria Elsabel Sio Corpuz, 41, who are the administrators of two residential care facilities for the elderly in Vista and Escondido have each been charged with six counts each of wage theft and human trafficking.

“This case is a chilling example of human trafficking hiding in plain sight within our community,” DA Stephan said. “These defendants didn't just steal wages, they stripped away the dignity and fundamental rights of vulnerable individuals, leveraging their immigration status as a weapon of exploitation. The defendants forced human beings to work around the clock for a pittance, while pocketing \$175,000 of their hard-earned pay. In San Diego County, we will not tolerate the exploitation of those who care for our elderly, and we remain dedicated to ensuring that those who profit from human trafficking and theft of labor are held fully accountable.”

An investigation began after one of the workers contacted the Pilipino Workers Center to initiate a complaint against her former employers. The Pilipino Workers Center referred the investigation to San Diego County’s Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement who recognized elements of criminal violation of the law and transferred it to the San Diego District Attorney’s Office Workplace Justice team.

One victim worked at Rose Garden in Vista and Rose Garden Capo in Escondido from May 2023 until June 2024. The victim reported she was paid \$150 a day to work six to seven days a week,

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24 hours a day. The victim agreed to a monthly deduction from her wages with the understanding that the defendants would use those funds to retain an immigration attorney to help the victim become a legal permanent resident.

The victim was required to live at the facility and share a room with one of the patients. The victim would cook, clean as well as feed, bathe, and change the diapers of the patients. The victim was required to administer medication to patients as well as give patients insulin injections, even though the victim did not possess certifications or training that qualify her as a caregiver.

The victim contacted the immigration attorney and was told they were paid approximately \$3,900 despite the victim having had over \$19,000 withheld from her pay. The California Department of Industrial Relations performed an audit that determined the victim is owed over \$175,000 in unpaid wages.

The investigation revealed two additional victims of this labor trafficking scheme who reported similar working conditions and illegal pay. These individuals were also required to care for patients after their shift, providing care for the patients throughout the night.

The investigation concluded that these employees were paid daily wages, which was not in accordance with California minimum wage laws. In addition, they were required to work overnight due to the patients needing 24-hour care. They were not compensated for overtime or paid even the minimum wage for the 24-hour work shift.

“Pilipino Workers Center is standing with these courageous Filipino home care workers who are taking action to hold exploitative employers accountable so that other workers are not exploited in the same way,” said Aquilina Soriano-Versoza, Executive Director of the Pilipino Workers Center. “They are showing that it is possible for workers to file wage claims and win, and that the more workers stand up, employers will know there are real consequences to committing wage theft and other labor violations.”

Collaboration with other county agencies and community organizations helps bring these cases to light.

“Our partnership with the District Attorney’s Office is essential to making sure employers who exploit workers are held accountable,” said Branden Butler, Director of the County Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement. “When labor violations cross the line into criminal behavior, coordinated action is critical. These cases have profound impacts on workers and their families, and we remain committed to delivering meaningful justice and ensuring safe, fair conditions for every worker in San Diego County.”

The defendants were arrested on March 26. They pleaded not guilty at today’s arraignment and will be in court again on May 14 for a readiness hearing. If convicted, they face a maximum term of 19 years and four months in prison.

This case is the result of an investigation by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office Workplace Justice Unit. Deputy District Attorney David Vallero is prosecuting this case and District Attorney Investigator Yvette Gaines is the lead investigator. The investigation led to three search warrants that were simultaneously served and shows that there is a potential for many more victims of this labor trafficking and exploitation scheme. The DA's Office is calling on any former employees who believe they were a victim to come forward. Reports can be made by calling or emailing Investigator Gaines at 619-531-3515 or [Yvette.Gaines@sandiegoda.gov](mailto:Yvette.Gaines@sandiegoda.gov).

The DA's Office requested the assistance of Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division to be on site to ensure the elderly residents of the Rose Garden facilities were receiving proper care.

Rose Garden Vista, located at 1266 Pleiades Dr., Vista, and Rose Garden Capo, located at 28688 Mountain Meadow Road, Escondido.

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*About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office*

*The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.*