



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
**CONSUMER &  
BUSINESS AFFAIRS**

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## PRESS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*  
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### **CHARGES FILED AGAINST IMMIGRATION CONSULTING BUSINESS AFTER DCBA AND L.A. CITY ATTORNEY JOINT INVESTIGATION**

A joint investigation by the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) and Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer resulted in charges being filed against Hermandad Mexicana Transnacional Inc. (Hermandad Mexicana). On at least two occasions, alleged actions by the business adversely impacted the immigration status of victims.

“The Los Angeles County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs is committed to educating, defending, and speaking up for the County’s most vulnerable residents,” said Brian J. Stiger, Director. “If you believe you’ve been a victim of an immigration service or any other scam, we want to help you.”

Gloria Dora Saucedo, 65, and her business Hermandad Mexicana Transnacional, Inc. (7915 Van Nuys Boulevard) were each charged with five misdemeanor counts including; three counts of failing to comply with the Immigration Consultants Act and two counts of unlicensed practice of law. Business associates Carmen Onchi, 27 and Maria Chavez, 33 were also charged with one count of unlicensed practice of law. If convicted, Saucedo faces up to five years in jail and \$32,000 in fines. The other defendants could face up to one year in jail and \$1,000 in fines.

Arraignment is scheduled for April 15, 2016 in Department 48 of the Criminal Courts Building. Deputy City Attorney Onica Cole is prosecuting the case.

In September 2012, DCBA received a complaint from a consumer alleging that she had paid \$4,275 to employees from Hermandad Mexicana for assistance in obtaining a U Visa. The customer allegedly did not receive any service and was later denied an immigration petition for failure to submit the requested documentation. Investigators  
(con’t)



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subsequently conducted three undercover investigations in 2014 and noted numerous violations of the Immigrant Consultant Act including employees allegedly providing legal advice on two occasions.

In a separate incident reported in February 2016, a victim paid \$2,500 to Hermandad Mexicana after consulting with the defendants in order to adjust her immigration status after her husband, a U.S. citizen, passed away in December 2014. The victim was later denied permanent residency after the business failed to inform the victim to appear for an interview with Immigration Services. As a result of this error, on December 30, 2015, the victim received a letter from the Social Security Administration cancelling her monthly benefits from her late husband due to her unlawful status in the United States.

Immigration consultants are not lawyers and have a very limited and specific role in helping someone complete the process to change their immigration status including completing forms, translating answers, securing supporting documents, submitting forms and making referrals to licensed attorneys. All consumers using an immigration consultant must be provided a written contract and no monies may be paid until the service has been completed. Immigration consultants must also post signs to make it clear that they are not licensed attorneys.

DCBA recently launched an awareness campaign to encourage consumers to contact us if they've been the victim of an immigration service scam. Ads will appear on buses throughout L.A. County.

Victims of Hermandad Mexicana are urged to call DCBA Investigators Annette Gonzalez at 323-881-7099 or Janet Godoy at 213-974-7241. Victims with similar complaints against other immigration service providers can contact DCBA at 800-593-8222, or file a complaint on [dcba.lacounty.gov](http://dcba.lacounty.gov). All of DCBA's services are free and anyone can file a complaint regardless of their immigration status.

*Since 1975, the County of Los Angeles Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) has been the local consumer protection agency serving Los Angeles County. We serve consumers, businesses, and communities through education, advocacy, and complaint resolution. We work every day to educate consumers and small business owners about their rights and responsibilities, mediate disputes, and investigate consumer fraud complaints. For more information, visit [dcba.lacounty.gov](http://dcba.lacounty.gov)*

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