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THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
EASTERN DISTRICT *of* CALIFORNIA

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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, June 9, 2022

## **Federal Agent Charged with Making False Statements in Connection with a Personal Relationship with a Victim Witness**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A federal grand jury in San Francisco returned a three-count indictment today against Melissa Saurwein, 43, of Martinez, charging her with making false statements, U.S. Attorney Phillip A. Talbert announced.

According to court documents, Saurwein, who is a Special Agent with Homeland Security Investigations, made false statements to the Office of the U.S. Attorney and to the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General to conceal a personal romantic relationship she had with a witness in a case that was previously prosecuted in the Northern District of California, *United States v. Job Torres Hernandez*, 4:17-cr-462-JSW. The judgement in that case was vacated on the motion of the government due to the conduct of Saurwein. The U.S. Attorney's office for the Northern District was recused from this case, which is proceeding in the United States District Court in San Francisco.

This case is the product of a joint investigation by the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office of Professional Responsibility. The U.S. Attorney's office for the Northern District was recused from this case, which is proceeding in the U.S. District Court in San Francisco. Assistant U.S. Attorney Audrey B. Hemesath is prosecuting the case.

If convicted, Saurwein faces a maximum statutory penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Any sentence, however, would be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of any applicable statutory factors and the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables. The charges are only allegations; the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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**Component(s):**

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