

Former Tsayatoh Chapter Accounts specialist pleads guilty to 16 counts of fraud

Written by gallupsun
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WINDOW ROCK, NAVAJO NATION – The Office of the Prosecutor, through the White Collar Crime Unit, announces that former Tsayatoh Chapter Accounts Maintenance Specialist, Roberta Silversmith, pleaded guilty to sixteen counts of fraud. The maximum penalty for a single violation of fraud is 365 days' imprisonment and/or a fine of \$5,000.

On March 22, the Navajo Nation filed sixteen criminal complaints charging Silversmith with fraud. The Navajo Nation detailed in the criminal complaints that Defendant Silversmith, while serving as the Tsayatoh Chapter AMS, devised a scheme where she issued sixteen checks to her son who never worked at the chapter between June 2016 and Jan. 2017. She then deposited the checks into her son's account and then transferred the check amount into her own personal bank account. The total amount taken by the Defendant was just over \$11,340.

On Aug. 19, Silversmith was arraigned in the District Court of Window Rock before Judge Cynthia Thompson. Silversmith pleaded guilty to all the charges. The District Court accepted Silversmith's guilty pleas, notified the parties that Defendant's sentencing will be at a later date, and ordered the Probation Officer to complete a pre-sentence report with recommendations. The prosecutor notified the court that he would file a sentencing recommendation.

The investigation was handled by the Office of the Prosecutor's White Collar Crime Unit Senior Investigator Frank Brown and prosecuted by Attorney Brandon K. Bitsuie.

To protect the Nation from such crimes, a Fraud Hotline has been created to accept tips and complaints about potential waste, fraud, and abuse of Navajo Nation programs. Professional staff are standing by to review information provided by phone to 1-844-747-2767 or by email at fraudline@nnooc.org

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