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PRESS RELEASE

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District Woman Pleads Guilty to Defrauding the STAY DC Tenant Assistance Program

WASHINGTON – Khin Phoo Ngon, 27, of Washington, D.C., pleaded guilty yesterday in Superior Court to six felony counts arising from her defrauding a Covid-19 tenant assistance program of more than \$245,000, announced U.S. Attorney Matthew M. Graves for the District of Columbia, FBI Special Agent in Charge David J. Scott of the Washington Field Office Criminal and Cyber Division, and D.C. Inspector General Daniel W. Lucas.

According to the government's evidence, to which Ngon admitted in her plea, in 2021 Ngon submitted seven fraudulent applications to the Stronger Together by Assisting You (STAY DC) program, a DC government program established in 2021 to help cover unpaid rent and utilities for renters suffering hardship from the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time she submitted all seven applications, Ngon was the sole tenant of an apartment at 1111 New Jersey Ave SE in the District. Two of her fraudulent applications listed her actual address and stated accurate information about unpaid rent she owed, but falsely stated that her 2020 income was \$17,270 and that her projected 2021 income was \$12,000. In 2020, however, Ngon had actually received income well in excess of \$57,650, the STAY DC program's minimum qualifying threshold for a household of one, and was on pace to exceed that threshold for 2021 when she submitted both applications.

Ngon also submitted two applications in which she listed her residence as 3210 ½ O Street NW, an apartment she had moved out of in the summer of 2020 with her rent paid in full. Ngon attached a fictitious lease to that application and falsely stated in her application that she was residing at the O Street address and owed 19 months of unpaid rent. Based on that fraudulent application, Ngon received \$37,000 from the program.

In her guilty plea, Ngon also admitted to submitting two STAY DC applications in her stepfather's name without his knowledge or permission. Ngon falsely stated in those applications

that her stepfather lived at 3632 N Street NW in the District and owed tens of thousands of dollars in back rent. In fact, Ngon's stepfather lived in Virginia, and had never lived at that address. Ngon admitted that she attached stolen and doctored documents to both applications, including her stepfather's expired driver's license and federal and DC tax return documents. Ngon fraudulently obtained \$82,800 from these two applications.

Finally, Ngon admitted to submitting a seventh STAY DC application, on behalf of an associate of hers. Ngon created a fraudulent lease document for an apartment at 450 Massachusetts Avenue NW, falsifying the lease term and monthly rent due. Based on those and other fraudulent representations, the STAY DC program issued Ngon's associate a check for \$78,200. Through a series of transactions involving other individuals, Ngon received at least \$38,500 of those funds.

Ngon pled guilty to two counts of First-Degree Felony Fraud, two counts of First-Degree Felony Theft, and two counts of First-Degree Identity Theft. Her plea included the admission that, in total, she defrauded the DC government out of approximately \$246,020.

The Honorable Jason Park accepted Ngon's guilty plea and scheduled sentencing for August 9, 2024.

This case was investigated by the FBI's Washington Field Office and the District of Columbia Office of Inspector General. The case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Micah Bluming, on detail from the DC Office of the Attorney General to prosecute matters involving fraud and public corruption.

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