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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MERCED WOMAN ARRESTED IN EMBEZZLEMENT SCHEME

Investigators from the Merced County District Attorney's office arrested Merced resident Marlyn Brevia, 47, today on charges of embezzling approximately \$130,000 from over 140 low-income families. The embezzlement took place between 2000 and 2004, and the arrest followed an 18 - month investigation. According to Supervising Investigator Wayne Hutton, the investigation began when representatives of Apartment Investment and Management Company (AIMCO) notified the District Attorney's office of suspicions that Brevia had been embezzling rent monies from the tenants of an apartment complex AIMCO had managed in South Merced.

AIMCO is a nation-wide property management company that specializes in managing government subsidized housing. Brevia had been employed by AIMCO for approximately 10 years as the manager of the Merced Commons apartment complex. "AIMCO learned of the problem when the apartment manager who replaced Brevia was asked by a tenant what the tenant's rent payment would be that month," said Investigator Jesse Valdez of the District Attorney's real estate fraud unit. "Because the rent is government subsidized, the tenant's portion is based on what his or her monthly income is," said DA Investigative Assistant Diane Goins.

The new manager discovered that the tenant had rental payment receipts signed by Brevia for higher dollar amounts than were recorded in the AIMCO computerized property management system. "Brevia would tell tenants that their share of the rent was \$350, when in fact they were required only to pay \$250. Brevia would record the \$250 payment into the AIMCO system and pocket the rest", said Investigator Valdez.

AIMCO, HUD and the California Finance Housing Agency all conducted audits of these transactions. The audits determined that Brevia had falsely inflated the rent of over 140 tenants by more than \$130,000 over the last 4 years. Supervising Investigator Hutton, who oversees the real estate fraud unit, said, "Brevia was in a position of power over these low-income families. Government subsidized rentals are hard to come by, and there is always a waiting list. I am sure the tenants felt they had to pay whatever amount Brevia requested. If they didn't, they faced the real possibility of losing their subsidized apartment and having to go back on the waiting list. It's clear that Brevia used her position to steal from these low-income families."