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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday October 27, 2006

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**STATEMENTS MADE BY EL PASO COUNTY ATTORNEY JOSÉ R.
RODRÍGUEZ REGARDING THE CASE OF THE 16-YEAR-OLD GIRL
ACCUSED OF DRUG TRAFFICKING.**

“I am very concerned about the problem of teens trying to bring drugs into the U.S. I believe the best way to fight this problem is to balance education, through community outreach programs, with vigorous prosecution of serious juvenile cases. This is why our office has made strong efforts to educate the teens in their schools about the consequences of getting involved with drug trafficking. We have distributed to many of the local schools a 15-minute documentary, produced by our office, on the consequences of getting involved with drug trafficking; we have done public presentations about the issue, and we have been talking to parents in community meetings. If we don’t do these things, we might as well entrust the future of our kids to the drug cartels.”

“Since 2002 we have seen a downward trend in the number of juveniles accused of transporting illegal drugs at the ports of entry. However, we cannot let down our guard and relax our efforts which, I believe, contributed to the reduction of this type of crime.”

“It is not appropriate or ethical to speculate about the severity of possible sentences in cases that have not even gone to trial because the accused juveniles have not yet been found delinquent. Furthermore, in any juvenile case the severity of the punishment is not decided by our office, but by either a jury or the court.”