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**Immediate Release**  
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Travis County District Attorney Rosemary Lehmburg today released the following statement:

Shortly after noon today, investigators from the Travis County District Attorney's Public Integrity Unit arrested Louanne Aponte at Houston Intercontinental Airport as she exited a flight from Caracas, Venezuela. Aponte returned to the United States voluntarily after negotiations between her attorney and the District Attorney's Office. She is being transported to the Travis County jail and will be booked this afternoon on several outstanding arrest warrants.

Aponte was the Executive Director of the Austin non-profit organization, Family Connections. She fled to Venezuela in February after auditors from Texas Health and Human Services discovered financial irregularities during an audit of the organization. Since that time, the Public Integrity Unit has been conducting a criminal investigation into funds taken from Family Connections. HHSC auditors and investigators and staff from the Austin city auditors office have assisted with the investigation. Family Connections board members and employees have cooperated with the investigation.

During the investigation it was discovered that Aponte had also served as Treasurer of another non-profit organization, the Texas Association of Childcare Resources and Referral Agencies (TACCRA). Further investigation determined that she had taken funds from that organization as well.

In April of this year, six felony charges were filed against Louanne Aponte. The bonds on those charges total more than \$1.5 million. Those charges are: first degree felony Theft (bond set at \$500,000) and first degree felony Misapplication of Fiduciary Property (bond set at \$500,000), related to funds taken from Family Connections; second degree felony Theft (bond set at \$250,000) and second degree felony Misapplication of Fiduciary Property (bond set at \$250,000), related to funds taken from TACCRA; and two separate state jail felony charges of Tampering with a Governmental Record (bond set at \$15,000 in each case) related to forged audit reports provided to HHSC by Aponte.

The cases against Aponte will be presented to a Travis County grand jury in the next few days.

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