



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

News Release

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Welfare Fraud Crackdown Continues

Attorney General Earl I. Anzai announced today that:

On August 15, 2002, Hawaiian Paradise Park residents Rachel Rita Ramo, 26, and Dennis L. Segovia, Jr., 25, were arraigned on an Oahu grand jury indictment charging them with one count of theft in the first degree for fraudulently obtaining public assistance benefits having a value exceeding \$20,000 while they were residing on Oahu between 1997 and 2000. The defendants pled not guilty. Trial was set for October 21, 2002.

On August 14, 2002, the Oahu grand jury returned six unrelated indictments charging seven defendants with felony thefts for fraudulently obtaining public assistance benefits having a cumulative value exceeding \$108,000. Bench warrants authorizing the arrests of the defendants were issued. Additional information will be provided when the arrests have been made.

On August 12, 2002, First Circuit Court Judge Karen S. Ahn denied the request by Honolulu resident Carolyn Flanders, also known as Carolyn Jorgensen, to defer her plea of guilty to one count of theft in the second degree, convicted her of that offense, and sentenced Flanders to five years probation with the special conditions that she perform 100 hours of community service and pay restitution in the amount of \$15,488.00 to the State of Hawaii. Between 1998 and 2000, Flanders, 44, fraudulently obtained public assistance benefits by concealing from welfare authorities her marriage and the income and assets of her spouse. While the court did not impose a jail term on Flanders, the fact that Flanders spent 79 days in jail before being released on bail was considered at sentencing.

On August 8, 2002, former Pearl City resident Valerie M. Lepisi, 28, was arrested in San Diego, California by Deputy Sheriff Lisk of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department concerning an Oahu grand jury indictment charging her with one count of theft in the second degree. Ms. Lepisi is accused of fraudulently obtaining public assistance benefits while residing on Oahu between 1999 and 2000. The State of Hawaii has requested the extradition of Ms. Lepisi. The Criminal Justice Division of the Department of the Attorney General wishes to acknowledge the efforts of Deputy Sheriff Lisk and the San Diego County Sheriff's Department in finding and making the arrest of Ms. Lepisi.

Indictments are accusations only. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in court. Anyone having information concerning possible welfare fraud crimes should call the Welfare Fraud Hotline at (808) 587-8444. Telephone calls to the Welfare Fraud Hotline are taken seriously and save the State of Hawaii millions of dollars every year.
