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Defendant gets 2-year sentence for filing false tax return

CHICAGO - A Chicago man was today sentenced to two years in prison for trying to file a false tax return and get a refund of more than \$6,000.

Steve Henley, age 27, of Chicago, pleaded guilty in Cook County Circuit Court today to felony theft and was sentenced to two years in prison. A co-conspirator, Larniecia Smith, age 24, of Chicago, pleaded guilty in June and served 49 days in jail and was given two years probation.

“People need to know that tax fraud will not be taken lightly in the state of Illinois. These two individuals tried to cheat the system and to cheat that state of Illinois out of revenue. I am pleased that they were brought to justice,” said Revenue Director Brian Hamer.

Henley pled guilty to felony theft today that he and coconspirator Smith had submitted false W-2s to the Illinois Department of Revenue on their website tax.illinois.gov. Both filed W-2s for calendar year 2004 at Staff Plus, Inc., a company where neither conspirator worked. Based on their phony W-2s, each claimed they were each due a \$6,185 refund.

The fraud was originally detected by the Department of Revenue’s anti-fraud program and the case was referred to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation which investigated the case and brought it to trial. The Illinois Attorney General’s Office prosecuted the case.

“My office, in coordination with the Department of Revenue and the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, will continue to aggressively prosecute those who attempt to defraud the state of Illinois,” Attorney General Lisa Madigan said.

As a result of the guilty plea Henley, who has been incarcerated since his arrest on July 11, 2007, was sentenced to two years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. Larniecia Smith had plead guilty on June 27, 2007 and was sentenced to a period of two years felony probation after having served 49 days in custody as a result of this crime.