



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

News Release

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New Jersey Resident Jailed for Welfare Fraud

HONOLULU-Attorney General Mark Bennett announced that on September 15, 2003, First Circuit Court Judge Karen S.S. Ahn sentenced former Honolulu resident Gregg R. Jorgensen, 49, to six months in jail as a special condition of five years probation for one count of theft in the first degree. Mr. Jorgensen used the fictitious names William D. Zogg and Philip D. Pallone in order to fraudulently obtain public assistance benefits under all three identities at the same time between 1996 and 2001. Jorgensen was also ordered to pay restitution to the State of Hawaii in the total amount of \$84,819.70 with credit for more than \$21,000.00 in restitution payments already made.

This case resulted from an anonymous tip to welfare fraud investigators. When the tip was confirmed, Jorgensen was indicted by the Oahu grand jury and extradited from South Amboy, New Jersey. The State of Hawaii has a zero tolerance policy regarding welfare fraud. Perpetrators who commit welfare fraud are routinely found, extradited, and prosecuted for this crime.

Theft in the first degree is a class B felony punishable by up to ten years in prison and by a fine of up to \$25,000 or twice the pecuniary gain from the crime whichever is greater. In addition, individuals who use multiple identities to fraudulently obtain multiple issuances of food stamp benefits are automatically disqualified from participating in the food stamp program for a minimum of ten years and in some cases for life.

During the fiscal year ending June 30, 2003, the Department of the Attorney General and county prosecutors successfully prosecuted 112 individuals for felony offenses involving the theft of more than \$1,786,000.00 in various forms of public assistance including financial assistance, food stamp benefits, child care benefits and medical benefits. An additional 990 individuals were administratively disqualified from receiving public assistance benefits because of intentional program violations involving more than \$875,000.00 in benefits that they were not legally entitled to receive.

Anyone having information concerning possible welfare fraud should call the Welfare Fraud Hotline at 808 587-8444. Calls to the Hotline save the State of Hawaii millions of dollars every year.

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