



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

News Release

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For Immediate Release: June 26, 2003 News Release No. 2003-29

MAN JAILED FOR WELFARE FRAUD, IDENTITY THEFT

HONOLULU-Attorney General Mark Bennett announced today that on June 24, 2003, First Circuit Court Judge Karl K. Sakamoto sentenced Honolulu resident Darrell L. Tenette, 48, to seven months in jail as a special condition of five years probation for two counts of theft in the second degree and one count of identity theft in the second degree. Mr. Tenette was also ordered to pay \$9,070.00 in restitution to the State of Hawaii for fraudulently obtained welfare benefits between 2000 and 2002.

Tenette admitted obtaining a false identity and coming to Hawaii to commit welfare fraud. Tenette explained that California welfare offices have fingerprint machines and Hawaii does not fingerprint welfare recipients so he came to Hawaii.

This case demonstrates that fingerprinting deters individuals who would otherwise fraudulently obtain welfare benefits under multiple identities. While Hawaii does not yet fingerprint welfare applicants, it has a zero tolerance policy regarding welfare fraud and one of the strongest identity theft statutes in the country.

Theft in the second degree is a class C felony punishable by up to five years in prison and by a fine of up to \$10,000 or twice the pecuniary gain from the crime whichever is greater.

Identity theft in the second 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.

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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