



## DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

### News Release

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GOVERNOR

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#### **WELFARE FRAUD CRACKDOWN CONTINUES**

HONOLULU-Attorney General Mark Bennett announced that:

On September 23, 2003, First Circuit Court Judge Sandra A. Simms denied a motion made by Honolulu resident Asoaga F. Afoa, 63, to defer his plea of no contest to one count of theft in the second degree and adjudged him guilty of that offense. Mr. Afoa was placed on probation for five years and ordered to pay restitution to the State of Hawaii in the amount of \$1,633.50.

Investigation by the Department of Human Services revealed that in 2001, Asoaga F. Afoa, who is also known as Raymond Afoa, fraudulently obtained food stamp benefits by concealing income from his employment as a cab driver.

On September 23, 2003, First Circuit Court Judge Marie N. Milks denied a motion made by Waikiki resident Linda Polo, 38, to defer her plea of no contest to one count of theft in the second degree and adjudged her guilty of that offense. Mrs. Polo, the mother of six children, was placed on probation for five years and ordered to pay restitution to the State of Hawaii in the amount of \$4,071.00. She was also ordered to perform 100 hours of community service. Investigation by the Department of Human Services revealed that in 2002, Mrs. Polo concealed from the government that she was pregnant and that the father of the then unborn child was co-defendant Larry Howard, also known as Larry Sterio, and that Larry Howard had undisclosed income and assets. Larry Howard was sentenced to five years of probation and one year in jail for his role in this offense on April 22, 2003.

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.

The State of Hawaii has a zero tolerance policy regarding welfare fraud. Individuals convicted of welfare fraud related felony theft offenses are automatically disqualified from participation in the food stamp program for a minimum of one year and, in some cases, for life.

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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