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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: 10/13/08
Re: Fourteen Convictions in Welfare Fraud
and Related Cases in September 2008

For More Information Contact:

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that fourteen defendants were found guilty during the month of September 2008 of having committed Welfare Fraud or closely related crimes as a result of their failures to reveal on their applications for Cash Aid, Food Stamps, or Child Care benefits that they were not eligible for such benefits. Ten of these defendants entered pleas to felony charges and four pled to misdemeanors. The cases were investigated by the Stanislaus County Community Services Agency's Special Investigations Unit.

Melinda Drymon was convicted of felony welfare fraud and sentenced to sixteen months in state prison. She was also ordered to pay \$4,009 in restitution. This case was investigated by SIU Investigator Aaron Lundquist.

Saroeun Moun was convicted of felony welfare fraud, placed on 5 years of formal probation and sentenced to 270 days in jail. Moun was ordered to pay \$6,554 in restitution. This case was investigated by SIU Investigator Agustin Alberto.

Renee McCullough was convicted of felony welfare fraud, placed on 5 years formal probation and sentenced to 1,200 hours of community service. The court suspended a sentence of four years in state prison and ordered McCullough to pay \$5,920 in restitution. This case was investigated by SIU Investigator Valeria Reynoso.

Sylvia Spearman was convicted of felony second degree burglary, placed on 3 years formal probation and sentenced to 134 days in jail. Spearman was ordered to pay restitution. This case was investigated by SIU Investigator Agustin Alberto.

Irene Arellano was convicted of felony welfare fraud, placed on 3 years formal probation and sentenced to serve 120 days in jail. She was ordered to pay \$5,706 in restitution. This case was investigated by SIU Investigator Eva Hepler.

Beth Ann Johnson was convicted of felony welfare fraud, placed on 5 years formal probation and sentenced to 480 hours of community service. She was ordered to pay the remaining \$6,800 of her original overpayment as restitution. This case was investigated by SIU Investigator Alice Longoria-Gonzalez.

Sarah Davila and Edmond Keene, co-defendants, were convicted of felony welfare fraud, were placed on 5 years formal probation and sentenced to 240 and 480 hours of community service, respectively. They are also ordered to repay \$13,536 in restitution. This case was investigated by SIU Investigator Clara Juarez.

Debbie Gutierrez was convicted of felony welfare fraud, placed on 5 years formal probation and sentenced to 240 hours of community service. She was ordered to pay the remaining \$8,031 of her original overpayment as restitution. This case was investigated by SIU Investigator Martha Gutierrez.

Dorothy Wright was convicted of felony welfare fraud, placed on 5 years formal probation and sentenced to 240 hours of community service. She was ordered to pay the remaining \$3,117 of her original overpayment as restitution. This case was investigated by SIU Investigator Martha Gutierrez.

Tracy Videll was convicted of misdemeanor welfare fraud, placed on 3 years of probation and sentenced to serve 90 days in jail. She was ordered to pay \$4,570 restitution. This case was investigated by SIU Investigator Janet Trapp.

Rebecca Craig was convicted of misdemeanor welfare fraud, placed on 3 years probation and sentenced to 920 hours of community service. She was ordered to pay restitution. This case was investigated by SIU Investigator Janet Trapp.

Arthur Macias was convicted of misdemeanor welfare fraud, placed on 18 months probation and sentenced to 120 hours of community service. Mr. Macias had already paid his overpayment in full at the time of sentencing. This case was investigated by SIU Investigator Martha Gutierrez.

Alishia Tolbert was convicted of misdemeanor welfare fraud, placed on 3 years probation and sentenced to 120 hours of community service. Tolbert had already paid her overpayment in full at the time of sentencing. This case was investigated by SIU Investigator Valeria Reynoso.

The sentences in welfare fraud cases vary depending upon each defendant's criminal history, the amount he or she has defrauded the Stanislaus County Community Services Agency, whether he or she has made voluntary repayments, the nature of the misrepresentations, and the age of the case. The original amount these fourteen defendants had collectively defrauded the Community Services Agency was \$111,228. To report welfare fraud, contact the County Community Services Agency's Special Investigations Unit at 209-558-2020.