



CALIFORNIA WELFARE FRAUD INVESTIGATORS *INTERCOM*

Representing Professional Fraud Fighters

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P.O. BOX 1738, PLACERVILLE, CA 95667

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Benefits of Membership

- Increased professionalism
- Standardized minimal training standards
- UCOWF Membership
- One voice in Sacramento
- POST accredited training
- Legislative lobbying for anti-fraud laws
- Newsletter

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Inside this issue:

President's Message	1
Vice President	2
Immediate Past President	3
Zone I Director	4
Toulumne County DSS	4
Zone II Director	5
Membership News	5
Zone II Director	6
Scotts Valley Tribal TANF	6
Zone III Director	6
Zone IV Director	7
Butte County DA	7
Zone V Director	7
Zone V Director	8
Director at Large	8
Legislative Updates	9-11

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**DON FISCH
PLACER COUNTY**

GREETINGS ~

The end of 2010 brought many changes to our Association. Ralph Alvarado retired from his position with Contra Costa County after thirty-eight years of dedicated service. For many years, Ralph has loyally served our Association and was instrumental in bringing many positive changes and new ideas to CWFFIA. Ralph's leadership was pivotal in fostering relationships with other law enforcement and welfare fraud associations, such as UCOWF and CDAA. Fortunately for us, Ralph has decided to remain with Contra Costa County as a retired annuitant, and as such, he has also committed to remain involved in CWFFIA as the Immediate Past President. Ralph has been very busy coordinating various tasks for our upcoming joint training conference with UCOWF.

In similar news, Elizabeth Beck, Chief Investigator with Stanislaus County, left her county employment to begin a new career in the private sector. Most of you know how dedicated Liz was to CWFFIA – serving as one of the Zone III directors, she was a major player participating in planning several of our past conferences, serving in the capacity of a curriculum development coordinator, and ensuring everything was in order for POST accreditation. Although she had many accomplishments, Liz spearheaded the efforts in getting the Zone III regional meetings off-the-ground and securing a solid membership from the central valley.

With the two departures above, I am very pleased to announce an addition to our

Executive Board as well as welcome two new board members. Guy Christian has graciously agreed to step up and serve as our Vice President. Since Guy has become involved in CWFFIA, it is very clear that he does not waste any time getting things done. In the coming year, Guy has agreed to run point for us by continuing to build upon our partnership with CDAA. Denise Caudillo from Merced County has been appointed to serve out the remainder of Guy's term as Zone I Director. Carol Velez from San Mateo County has been appointed to serve out the remainder of Elizabeth's term as Zone III Director. Denise and Carol attended the Winter Board Meeting and have already demonstrated their value to our board.

Our Winter Board Meeting was held in Garden Grove in early February. Although we are only three months into 2011, the board is committed to making the most of this year. Maribel Nava from Orange County facilitated the 2011 training curriculum development meeting at her office this past December. Many board members as well as Kristina Zaragoza from Riverside County got together and brainstormed ideas for our upcoming training conference. Our curriculum is set and most of the details have been ironed out. Expect more information in our next Intercom! UCOWF's President, John Bumford, participated in our Winter Board Meeting and has expressed a commitment to continue working closely with our board ensuring the success of our conference.

Continued on pg 2 - President's Message

Continued from pg 1 - President's Message

The training conference will be held in Garden Grove the first week of October – it will be an excellent time to bring your family to Southern California and enjoy the weather and all things Disney.

In 2011, we will explore new opportunities for CWFIA. We are very fortunate that one of our members from Sonoma County, Dee Dee Lundquist, is very active with PORAC. Dee Dee has encouraged CWFIA (as many of us already belong to PORAC) to meet with PORAC and

see how both associations can partner to strengthen our groups.

In closing, please remain involved in CWFIA. Check out our website: www.cwfia.org and register and use our message board. I strongly encourage you to contact me or any board member to express your thoughts or concerns on how we can improve our association.

Stay safe!

**GUY CHRISTIAN
VICE PRESIDENT
TULARE COUNTY**

Who's an ADVOCATE?

What is an "Advocate"? The American Heritage Dictionary defines an advocate as follows: "To speak in favor of, recommend, (1) A person who argues for a cause: supporter or defender. (2) A person who pleads on another's behalf; intercessor". It further defines "Advocacy: as, "Active support, as of a cause, idea, or policy.

Newspapers, news magazines, radio, television and of course the internet give open forums to any "Advocacy Group" advocating for something. They each have a cause which they believe is more important than any other, and rightly so. How could you be a good advocate if you did not believe in what you are supporting and for what you are advocating?

Our country was founded by advocates, a group of people who believed strongly enough that change was needed to make life better. The Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution came into being by a group of men who were dedicated and advocated for an idea that founded our country.

Times have changed. Now documents don't have to be sent by horseback or carried by a messenger who walked over trails for weeks. With just a few keystrokes advocates can take their case to millions of people via the internet, news media and "talk radio". You don't necessarily have to be right, just persistent. Somebody, somewhere will pass along your words. Most recently we have had issues regarding the infamous Electronic Benefits Transfer card, EBT to those of us who work in the industry. The use of these cards on cruise ships, casinos, and shops on Maui as well as other curious locations has spawned criticism. "Welfare Advocates" were quick to defend those whom they so strongly advocate for, never a word acknowledging that someone might actually misuse their benefits. After all, those they advocate for would never consider cheating the system.

That is one side of advocacy, but let's look at another side. You don't hear much about this type of group, they're more like an endangered species. You know, not often seen and rarely heard making waves. I am speaking of those of us who work in the "program integrity" arm of public assistance. Most advocates look at us as the "bad guys", those who are only here to instill fear in the hearts of their recipients.

It's time for us to wake up. Welfare Fraud Investigators are just as much "advocates" as any other group. The major difference, we don't just work one side of the fence. Our job is not to prove or disprove fraud; **it is to find the truth.** Often the truth proves the innocence of a recipient, they simply committed no fraud. Other times the truth reveals "fraud" and leads to the denial of benefits, discontinuances, sanctions and prosecutions. This is where things get confusing for "welfare advocates", they either ignore the truth of what we do, don't understand what we do, or simply don't care. Either way, if we're not only on their side of the fence, we're the enemy.

In reality, we support their cause by being advocates for two separate groups of people. First, we're advocates for the taxpayers who pay for the program. I know, taxpayers seem to be the forgotten part of the formula. But they are out there; the attendant at the car wash, the nurse, the clerk at Wal-Mart. The check they take home looks just like ours, those deductions for taxes affect them just as they do us. Everyone knows, Americans are the most generous people in the world. American taxpayers don't mind helping when there is a definite need; but, they tend to get very unhappy when a program misuses their hard earned money.

Secondly, we are advocates for those people who are in need of assistance, follow the regulations and are not committing fraud.

Continued on pg 3 - Advocates

Continued from pg 2 - Advocates

If we turn our back on fraud, if we fail to address the issue, if we allow someone to receive benefits they are not entitled to, we are failing taxpayers and recipients alike. Without a solid system which provides "Program Integrity" the support of taxpayers will disappear. I can think of nothing more catastrophic to this program than the loss of confidence and support of taxpayers.

Several years ago I went with an investigator to conduct an interview on an unreported income case. The interview was conducted in the living room of the recipient's home. During the interview the recipient confessed she had not reported her income to the welfare department. The investigator asked why. She responded that welfare just didn't pay enough to feed her children and if she reported the income her monthly cash grant would be reduced. This is one of those cases I have trouble being very sympathetic about. She had her cell phone on the couch during the interview. In the living room was a flat screen television (although not a 55 inch monster), an Xbox with controllers and a Dish Network receiver.

Somehow the priorities between food and shelter for her children and fun and entertainment had become clouded. We have all had similar experiences, some make you grit your teeth, say a few thought provoking words and shake your head. This is not the person I want to advocate for; this is the person who will shine an ugly light on the program. This is one of the people who will be labeled as "cheater" and will be the center piece of a future newspaper story.

Who do I want to advocate for? How about the family who completes their documents correctly and on time? The parent with two children who does everything they can to support them, and never stops looking for a job. The grandparents or aunt and uncle who are the "non-needy caretakers" of a child whose parents are drug addicts and just cannot take care of their kids. Today we are seeing a whole new group of people enter welfare offices throughout the state. People who have never been on assistance but due to hard economic times have lost a job, a home, and the security it offers. Many come with hat in hand, heads down, are embarrassed about their situation, and are anxious for Welfare-to-Work to find them employment. Just as we have had those cases where we walk away shaking our heads, there are cases where your investigation leads to facts which confirm the recipient is not committing fraud.

In November 2010 there were 157,795 requests for fraud investigations in California. Fraud units were able to investigate 23,835 or about 15% of those requests. Of the 23,835 cases investigated evidence sufficient to support fraud was found in 6,677 of them, roughly 28%. This 28% is where the main focus of program integrity is aimed; it's where we work every day. Being the best at what you do will reduce fraud and at the same time protect those who are in real need. Let's face it, you're no longer just an investigator. Like it or not, the work you do makes you an advocate; it's just a part of what we do.

**RALPH ALVARADO
IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY**

Greetings and Good-Byes from the Rectangular Office...

After 38 years of working in the welfare department, I decided to retire from the Contra Costa County Employment & Human Services Department effective December 31, 2010. I have also stepped down as President of our wonderful association, leaving the President's position to our dynamic Vice-President Don Fisch.

President Fisch has been by my side for my entire presidency and I know he will continue to work hard for our association.

THANK YOU for allowing me to lead this association during the past four years.

Stay safe, represent CWFIA proudly and I'll see you in Garden Grove this October!



**DENISE CAUDILLO
ZONE I DIRECTOR
MERCED COUNTY**

I am excited to get started as a Zone Director and board member for CWFIA. I look forward to working with the members to promote our organization and what it stands for. For this issue, I'm sharing a press release regarding a case that began as an IHSS fraud referral

The Merced County District Attorney's Office announced the disposition on the case against a DEFENDANT, who was charged with welfare fraud, Medi-Cal fraud, defrauding the Merced County Housing Authority, perjury, and filing a false claim. On January 27, 2011, the DEFENDANT was sentenced to 16 months in the California Department of Corrections on the felony charge of filing a false claim.

The DEFENDANT'S plea brings to a close a nine month investigation by the Merced County District Attorney's Office during which it was discovered the DEFENDANT illegally received over \$132,000 in aid from various County and State sources, including the California Department of Social Services, the Merced County Human Services Agency, the California In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program, and the United States Housing and Urban Development Agency's Housing Choice Voucher program. Further investigation revealed the DEFENDANT had been submitting false timecards to IHSS for health care services since 2009, failing to report her income to her eligibility worker from IHSS since 2001, and defrauding the Housing Authority since 2003 by failing to report the same income to that agency.

The DEFENDANT brought attention to her case when she filed a Fair Hearing to appeal the decision to remove Protective Supervision from her 20 year old son, the IHSS recipient she cared for. It was discovered her son had moved out of her home and was living with his girlfriend and their baby almost 9 months prior to the appeal.

During regular cross checks of different systems for information, it was found that she also received Food Stamps and CalWORKs and never reported the IHSS income of over \$2000 per month to her eligibility worker. It was also found that she never reported her IHSS income to the Housing Authority. This DEFENDANT had no prior criminal history.

The DEFENDANT was very vocal in her defense - she contacted every department head from the Human Services Agency to the state senator, however her efforts did not convince anyone to listen to her claims of innocence.

The DEFENDANT also refused to speak with the DA investigator. The DEFENDANT then applied for Food Stamps again and was able to receive them for an additional 2 months due to continuations in restitution and sentencing hearings. Additionally, the DEFENDANT questioned the correct CalWORKs overpayment amount, insisting that the child support paid by her ex-husband should be counted as payment. The DEFENDANT then stated a bankruptcy in 2005 took care of her debts before that date; neither attempt to stall worked in her favor. She was successful in getting her sentencing hearing continued twice before the judge no longer entertained her last minute excuses to postpone.

This case presents an example of what can happen when a person is not completely truthful with the agencies from which they are receiving aid. When a person is convicted of defrauding the County and State, they face penalties such as being disqualified from receiving public assistance benefits for a year or more and being placed on a statewide list with the In-Home Supportive Services program being banned from being a care provider for 10 years.

**INV. MARIANNE CARYL
TUOLUMNE COUNTY**

Woman Sentenced For Welfare Fraud

In October 2010, a Sonora woman was sentenced to six months in Tuolumne County Jail for fraudulently accepting almost \$30,000 in food stamps issuances and Medi-Cal benefits over the course of a five year period.

According to court documents, the SUBJECT received \$28,728 in food stamps and medical care from the county by telling welfare officials that the father of her two teenage daughters has been absent from the home.

Investigator Marianne Caryl, of the Tuolumne County Social Services Department reported the father, a truck driver, lived at the residence and contributed to the household. Investigators were alerted to the discrepancy in May 2009 by eligibility staff that raised a red flag over something the SUBJECT provided to the department.

Continued from pg 4 - Woman Sentenced

A search warrant was issued, which revealed more evidence, including paperwork discovered at the home, Caryl said. The fraud had been ongoing since August 2004. The SUBJECT'S lawyer asked that his client be sentenced to 60 days in jail, since both she and the father were jointly liable. The SUBJECT'S lawyer also stated the

county would be repaid and that there was no call for restitution in the sentencing.

Superior Court Judge Eric DuTemple did not grant the lesser sentence. Six months is considered a medium-length sentence, with nine months being the longer term, Caryl said.

**LARRY ARANY
ZONE II DIRECTOR
RIVERSIDE COUNTY**

Seven Arrested for Stage II Child Care Fraud Totaling Over \$500,000

Two former Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE) child care liaisons and five other suspects have been charged with Stage II Child Care fraud. On December 2, 2010, investigators from Riverside County Department of Public Social Services and the Riverside County District Attorney's Office arrested five suspects. The remaining two suspects surrendered the following week.

Child Care funds for her own use. The remaining defendant's alleged fraud was discovered during the investigation of the two RCOE employees.

The seven defendants face a variety of charges including embezzlement by a public officer, grand theft and conspiracy to commit fraud. Their cases are currently pending adjudication.

"These defendants not only took money from taxpayers, they took funds from a program intended to assist needy families," said District Attorney Rod Pachecho (now retired). "The greed of these seven people kept families and children across this county from getting the help they need."

The lead investigator for the 16 month investigation was Benjamin Carrillo, Welfare Fraud Investigator, Riverside County DPSS. Inv. Carrillo was assisted by five other DPSS welfare fraud investigators and one Riverside County DA investigator. Attorneys in the DA's office also supported the investigative team. Riverside County Office of Education staff assisted the investigation.

One former RCOE child care liaison is alleged to have fraudulently diverted Stage II Child Care funds to four family members as well as diverting funds for her own use, including paying for day care for her own son. The four family members have also been charged in this case.

Author's Note: As reported in *"Catch-22s in Detecting Child Care Fraud: Fragmented and Illogical System Hinders Department of Education"* published by the California Senate Office of Oversight and Outcomes, October 14, 2010, there are many impediments, many disincentives for the investigation of Stage II Child Care fraud. This case only came together as a joint effort of the three entities: RCOE, DPSS, and DA.

This fraud began in 2001 and didn't end until 2009, when the investigation began. The scheme involved opening recently closed child care cases, changing the child care provider to a relative of the RCOE child care liaison, and frequently, adding fake children to the cases. One of her relatives received more than \$314,000 for child care services he did not provide.

The "Catch 22s" report can be found at: <http://www3.senate.ca.gov/deployedfiles/vcm2007/senoversight/docs/child%20care%20report.pdf>

The second former child care liaison is alleged to have created a false identity for a child and placed this child on a child care case in order to fraudulently divert Stage II

Special thanks to John Hall, Public Information Officer of Riverside County District Attorney's Office for providing press releases on which portions of this article was based.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS!

Beginning with the 2011-2012 annual membership renewal period, agencies will have the option of paying AGENCY MEMBERSHIP DUES for their staff. CWFIA will generate an invoice to the requesting agency once the agency has provided a list containing the names and job titles for those whom membership dues are being paid. The cost of an agency membership per individual is \$30 for an active membership and \$15 for an associate membership. The new membership renewal form will be on the website soon. If you have any questions, contact Jean Yurkovic at (530) 957-4153 or by emailing to jyurkovic@cwfia.org.

**LARRY ARANY
ZONE II DIRECTOR
RIVERSIDE COUNTY**

On February 28, 2011, the Milwaukee, Wisconsin Journal Sentinel published an article titled "States are Vulnerable to Child Care Fraud," written by Raquel Rutledge.

Rutledge reported that U.S. Government Accountability Office staff used false ID's, deceased individuals' Social Security numbers, bogus jobs and fake employers in an undercover sting operation. Staff members submitted fraudulent child care applications in five states: Illinois, Michigan, New York, Texas and Washington. The applications were approved in four of the five states. Only Illinois caught the fraud, and denied the child care application.

Much of the article focuses on the lack of adequate criminal background checks and/or the need for criminal background checks.

The Milwaukee Journal has published other articles on child care fraud over the past few years.

The complete article can be found at:
<http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/watchdogreports/103686229.html>.

**ZACHARY RAY
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
SCOTTS VALLEY TRIBAL TANF**

Hello, my name is Zachary Ray and I am the Family Advocate Manager and Compliance Officer for Scotts Valley Tribal TANF in Contra Costa County. Tribal TANF was authorized under welfare reform in 1996 by President Clinton. There are currently 64 programs nationwide, including 17 in California. Tribal TANF represents 43 of the 58 counties in the state.

Each program is administered by a different Tribe, so communication and cooperation can be complex on both sides. I am going on my fourth year with Tribal TANF and I love serving Native people. My multiple positions cover a plethora of duties and responsibilities, but when it comes to fraud, I perform the majority of the investigations for my program. I was introduced to CWFIA's past president, Ralph Alvarado, last fall at the quarterly State/Tribal TANF meeting in Sacramento. We were able to develop a great relationship that has been able to open up many resources to both parties.

From this connection, I was introduced to the annual conference in South Lake Tahoe last October. After attending, I realized how little we know about each other

and also, how much we need to work together to accomplish the same goal, which is program integrity.

I am a new member of CWFIA and very interested in expanding the networking resources between county programs and Tribal TANF's across the state. In an effort to do so, my program has proposed to facilitate a class at this year's conference on the specifics of Tribal TANF. We hope to inform members on the basics of Tribal TANF and share networking data in order to connect our programs.

In the meantime, if anyone has questions regarding my programs collaboration with our county or general questions about Tribal TANF, you may contact me by phone at (925) 363-4778 or email zray@svtribaltanf.org. I look forward to working with the association and building connections statewide.

I would also like to thank the CWFIA Board of Directors for all of the encouragement and support I received at the Winter Board meeting in Garden Grove in early February.

**MELISSA LEE
ZONE III DIRECTOR
STANISLAUS COUNTY**

As usual, with so many changes in regards to welfare fraud, they can be difficult and challenging to keep up with. Zone III is no exception. It was with a great deal of sadness for our organization and, specifically, Stanislaus County, that we said goodbye to Chief Investigator Elizabeth Beck at the beginning of this year. Although, we wish her all the best in her new endeavors, her knowledge,

wisdom and eloquence will be sorely missed.

On a much more positive note, we would like to welcome Carol Velez from San Mateo County as the new Zone III Director filling the CWFIA board seat Elizabeth vacated. We look forward to working with Carol and cultivating an even better relationship with all of the counties represented in Zone III.

**JOHN MARTIRE
ZONE IV DIRECTOR
MENDOCINO COUNTY**

Greetings from Zone IV

On February 17, we had a northern California regional meeting in Maxwell. There was a very good turnout with representation from 9 counties, despite 2-4 inches of snow on HWY 20. Topics discussed included Out of State EBT usage, counterfeit General Assistance checks, IHSS fraud issues and a State Fraud Bureau update.

If you haven't attended any of your local regional meetings, you should really make it one of your priorities. Roundtable discussions almost always lead to interesting and productive discussions!

If you have not heard, Lake County is once again forming

their own SIU after years of contracting services from the Sheriff's Office. Rick Higinbotham is the new Supervising Investigator and I wish him all the best. And yes, he was given a CWFIA membership application!

Lastly, I want to remind everyone that I am Chair lead of the Public Affairs Committee for CWFIA. If you have a local issue or idea needing CWFIA PR work, please let me know. I would be happy to create a press release and get the word out. No idea is too big or too small!!! You can contact me at (707) 467-5856 or email me at martirej@co.mendocino.ca.us.

Until next time, please be safe out there!

IHSS FRAUD CONVICTION

*Submitted by Shane Rubinoff
Butte County DA*

Two defendants, a mother and daughter, were convicted in a \$190,000 IHSS fraud case in which they had been claiming hours for services they never provided. The lead Investigator in the case was Tonya Huston who was assisted by Investigative Assistant Riki Johnson.

According to the Deputy District Attorney assigned this case:

The two defendants pled no contest to felony violations of W&I Code 14107(b)(1) for submitting fraudulent claims

for payment on IHSS provider timecards to the Butte County Department of Employment and Social Services (DESS). Both mother and daughter failed to provide services to the IHSS recipients they claimed on their timecards. Consequently, the two defendant's received approximately \$190,000 to which they were not entitled.

The mother admitted to an over \$65,000 special allegation pursuant to Penal Code 12022.6(a)(1). That special allegation was dismissed with respect to her daughter. The cases have been referred to the Probation Department with a scheduled court date of May 3rd for probation reports and sentencing recommendations.

**CLARA FERRAL
ZONE V DIRECTOR
LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

The Importance of Training

In order to maintain a high level of fraud prevention and investigation, it's important for counties to recognize the importance the Fraud Incentive Funds can provide. Continued fraud training of staff is an ongoing endeavor. To meet those needs, counties can use the Incentive Funds available for staff and investigative training. In turn, training helps reduce fraud and provide an effective deterrence against future fraudulent actions.

Investing in fraud training for staff greatly assists in maintaining the positive morale of staff that was hired to complete a specific duty. Ongoing training also gives up-to-date information on current technology while making available resources necessary to complete job tasks.

Last year Los Angeles County successfully prosecuted several individuals for child care fraud. In addition to the more than one million dollar child care fraud case out of Los Angeles County, there were several investigators who worked diligently in the investigative aspects of the case, securing evidence needed to successfully prosecute those involved in this massive fraud case. This case resulted in full restitution of the overpayments, with court fines being imposed and jail and/or prison time ordered.

A great deal of appreciation and thanks goes out to the dedication and hard work of these investigators involved in these cases.

**VALESKA ESCOBAR
ZONE V DIRECTOR
LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

Welfare Fraud Ringleader Sentenced to Prison

The ringleader of a childcare scheme that collected more than \$1.3 million in fraudulent government payments has been sentenced to ten years in state prison and ordered to make full restitution to the agencies as stated by the District Attorney's Office.

Deputy District Attorney Tamia Hope of the Public Assistance Fraud Division reported that Defendant1 was sentenced Monday, December 21, by Los Angeles Superior Court Judge, William Pounders, after she pleaded no contest in June to 12 counts of grand thief and 27 counts of perjury by declaration in two separate cases. Judge Pounders, said he "was shocked by the monstrous greed" demonstrated by the 42-year old Corona woman. Judge Pounders, ordered her to pay more than \$1.3 million in restitution to DPSS, Crystal Stairs, Drew Child Development Corporation, and the Center for Community and Family Services.

Defendant1 led a ring of 19 people who falsely supplied employment information and billed the state and federal agencies for childcare services never rendered. The complex scheme operated for 6 1/2 years from June 2000 through October 2006.

A former Los Angeles resident, Defendant1, was arrested in 2007 by investigators with the D.A.'s Bureau of Investigation. Defendant1 claimed to operate the Family Day-care Center in Los Angeles. However, records showed Defendant1 stopped providing childcare at that location in April 2002. Authorities said she continued receiving government funding even though she no longer provided childcare services. As part of the scheme, she also provided fraudulent employment records so 14 parents could qualify for childcare payments from the governments Welfare-to-Work program.

Defendant2 has pled guilty to all charges and has agreed to a sentence of 4 years State Prison in exchange for testifying against Defendant1.

The following defendants had already been sentenced in this case: Defendant3 was sentenced to 5 years state prison, Defendant4 was sentenced to 2 years state prison, Defendant5 was sentenced to 180 days in county jail, Defendant6 was sentenced to 42 days in county jail, Defendant7 was sentenced to 2 years probation and Defendant8 was sentenced to 5 years probation and 180 days community service.

**RANDY FEDAK
DIRECTOR AT LARGE
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

Twitter Dumb

Greetings from the Central Coast! As most of you probably already know, the times they are a changing. If we think about how much technology has changed from when our parents were growing up and compare it with how much technology has changed in the past fifteen years the differences are astonishing. I recently had to describe to a child what exactly a phone booth was! Now I have to bribe that same kid to help me figure out how to program my voice mail on my cell phone. The point I'm trying to make is that the "X" and "Y" Generations not only are very proficient at communicating electronically but they also seem to have a need to communicate electronically. These new Gen "X" and "Ys" aren't complete if they aren't involved in some shape or form with "Facebook", "My Space", "Twitter", and many have their own personal websites for one reason or another. These players are becoming the new face of public assistance and along with that comes the new face of welfare fraud.

The collective name for this type of communication is called Social Media. The best part of it from the standpoint of an investigator is that the participants will frequently broadcast personal information about themselves such as where they live, where they work, how much money they earn, and of course who they live and socialize with. Through these social media sites it is easy to obtain up to date information that wouldn't be complete without commemorating significant events such as a marriage or a birth of a child. No news would be complete of course without photos of the events! Our participants are providing us with a wealth of information within the touch of few key strokes. Wouldn't it be great if our investigators could navigate these media sites with as much ease as our clients? What if we could gather information that contradicted what was being reported to our eligibility staff and use it against those who would commit fraud?

Continued on pg 9 - Twitter Dumb

Continued from pg 8 - Twitter Dumb

Help is on the way in the form of tools and hands on training that will make investigations that much easier. The training will be held October 4, 5 & 6, 2011 at the CWFIA annual training conference to be held in Garden Grove, California. CWFIA, UCOWF, and the SEARCH GROUP of Sacramento are teaming up to provide an interactive class complete with a computer lab that you won't want to miss. I look forward to seeing everyone there and remember, "Tweeing" is not just for the birds anymore!

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES KARL PHILLIPPS CWFIA SECRETARY

We have progressed into the 2011 – 2012 Legislative session. To date there are 1392 Assembly bills that have been introduced and 465 Senate bills. I have narrowed it down to 17 Assembly bills and 7 Senate bills that could have an affect on how we do our jobs. Here is a summary of each of them:

AB 1 (Perez) - This bill would re-appropriate \$60,000,000 in unobligated balances appropriated in the Budget Act of 2009 to the State Department of Education for CalWORKs Stage III child care services. The bill would also require SDE to use those funds for families that were receiving, or would have been eligible to receive CalWORKs Stage III childcare services before, or after October 31, 2010. This bill was moved to the inactive file on February 7, 2011.

AB 6 (Fuentes) - This bill would: (1) repeal the provisions requiring applicants for CalWORKs and CalFresh Programs to submit to fingerprint imaging under SFIS; (2) repeal the requirements relating to quarterly reporting and prospective determination grant amounts, and would instead impose similar requirements for a semi-annual reporting period, operative July 1, 2012, to be implemented no later than January 1, 2013, except as prescribed. The bill would also require the department to establish an income reporting threshold for CalWORKs recipients as specified; (3) the bill would, to the extent permitted by federal law, require CDSS, in conjunction with the State Department of Community Services and Development, to design, implement and maintain a utility assistance initiative, under which CDSS would be required to grant applicants and recipients of CalFresh benefits a nominal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) benefit, as specified; (4) provide that the continuous appropriation required for this would not be made for purposes of implementing this bill. This bill was submitted to the Human Services Committee on January 24, 2011.

AB 26 (Donnelly) - This bill would prohibit public officials and agencies from adopting a policy that limits or restricts the enforcement of federal immigration laws or that restricts the sharing of a person's immigration status, as specified. The bill would allow any person to bring an action against an entity to enforce these provisions. There is significantly more to this bill and it is worth looking up. This bill was submitted to the Judiciary Committee and the Public Safety Committee on January 27, 2011. This could impact our dealings with undocumented applicants. Visit http://leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/asm/ab_0001-0050/ab_26_bill_20101206_introduced.html for more information.

AB 78 (Mendoza) - This bill would, notwithstanding existing provisions of law relating to elections, call an election for the purpose of placing before the voters of the state an advisory question asking whether the President and the Congress of the United States shall create a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who have worked in this country for at least 5 years, have no felony convictions, have learned to speak English, and have paid all taxes for which they are responsible. The bill would require the Secretary of State to communicate the results of this election to the President and consolidate this election with the statewide direct primary election of June 5, 2012. This bill was submitted to the Judiciary Committee on February 10, 2011.

AB 308 (Amniano) - This bill would declare the legislative intent that law enforcement officials adopt and implement the policies and procedures regulating eyewitness lineup identifications that are recommended by the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice in order to ensure that eyewitness identification procedures in California minimize the chance of misidentification of a suspect. This bill would require the Department of Justice and the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, on or before July 1, 2012, to develop guidelines in consultation with local law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, defense attorneys and other legal experts, as specified, in order to ensure the reliability eyewitness identifications, as specified. This bill may be heard in committee on May 12, 2011.

Continued on pg 10 - Legislative

Continued from pg 9 - Legislative

AB 402 (Skinner) - This bill would authorize a school district or a county superintendent to incorporate into the School Lunch Program application packet specified notifications related to the CalFresh program, including a notification that if a pupil qualifies for free school lunches, he or she also may qualify for the CalFresh program. This bill would permit a request for the applicant's consent for the pupil to participate in the CalFresh program, if eligible, and to have information on the School Lunch Program application shared with the local agency that determines eligibility under the CalFresh program, as specified. May be heard in committee on March 17, 2011.

AB 493 (Perea) - This bill would require the EBT system to prevent use of EBT cards by recipients to access cash benefits outside of California, except to the extent prohibited by federal law. The bill would specify that it would not be construed to prohibit the use of an EBT card to access CalFresh benefits, as authorized by federal law. May be heard in committee on March 13, 2011.

AB 596 (Carter) - The bill would require the State Department of Education to collaborate with welfare rights and legal services advocates to develop and adopt regulations and other policy statements to provide CalWORKs recipients of child care the same level of due process and procedural protections as are afforded to public assistance recipients, as specified. May be heard in Committee on March 19, 2011.

AB 730 (Grove) - This bill would require a recipient of CalWORKs aid to undergo drug testing on a periodic basis, as a condition of continued eligibility. The bill would specify those substances for which drug testing would be conducted. The bill would require a recipient who fails a periodic drug test to successfully complete a one-year drug treatment program. The bill would discontinue the individual's aid under the CalWORKs program upon failure of the individual to participate in testing or to successfully complete the required drug treatment program. The bill would require the department to seek any federal approvals necessary for the implementation of the bill. Because counties administer the CalWORKs program, by increasing county duties, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program. May be heard in Committee on March 20th, 2011.

AB 808 (Skinner) - This bill would require the county welfare department to mail a transitional CalFresh benefits recipient a periodic reporting form at the same time that the final month of transitional benefits are issued. The bill would require the department to revise the form to ask the recipient whether continued benefits are desired after the transitional benefits terminate, and to direct the recipient to complete the reporting form, as specified. The completed reporting form would be considered an application for continued CalFresh benefits. By imposing additional requirements on counties in administering the program, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program. This bill may be heard in committee on March 20th, 2011.

AB 833 (Yamada) - This bill would, commencing January 1, 2012, revise the exceptions to the maximum aid payment provisions described above, also referred to as the Maximum Family Grant rule (MFG), to include an exception for a child who is disabled, pursuant to specified federal law. This bill may be heard on March 20th, 2011.

AB 949 (Gorell) - This bill, when an applicant or recipient commits specified offenses in connection with applying for or receiving CalWORKs benefits, would require that the fine applicable under existing law be doubled, and would require the additional amount collected as required by the bill be paid to the county treasurer in the county in which the judgment is entered. The bill would require the county treasurer to deposit half of the amount received pursuant to the bill into the county general fund and the other half into the appropriate account for the benefit of the county District Attorney's office or the county's Special Investigative Unit (SIU) established for the purpose of investigating welfare fraud. This bill may be heard in committee on March 20th, 2011.

Continued on pg 11 - Legislative

Continued from pg 10 - Legislative

AB 959 (Jones) - This bill would revise time periods applicable to rescinding a discontinuance notice for CalWORKs benefits, to allow a recipient, before the last day of the calendar month following the discontinuance, to submit a complete quarterly report, and to allow a county to determine the existence of good cause for the failure to submit a complete report. The bill would authorize the county to restore the recipient's benefits if he or she submits a complete report within that designated time, as specified. This bill also would revise the definition of good cause for purposes of these provisions. This bill may be heard in committee on March 20th, 2011.

AB 1140 (Donnelly) - This bill would revise the requirements for providing aid under the CalWORKs program by replacing the existing time limits on receipt of aid with a 6-month limit, operative 90 days after the effective date of the bill. This bill would extend the provisions for ineligibility for county assistance to a child who is ineligible for CalWORKs aid due to the 6-month time limit required by the bill, or due to the imposition of a sanction or penalty, as specified. This bill would make various conforming changes and would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to conform other CalWORKs program provisions to a 6-month time limit on aid. This bill may be heard in committee on March 20th, 2011.

AB 1182 (R. Hernandez) - This bill would delete existing requirements for assessing the value of a motor vehicle for purposes of CalWORKs program eligibility. The bill would exclude the value of a licensed motor vehicle from consideration when determining or redetermining CalWORKs eligibility. This bill may be heard on March 20th, 2011.

SB 12 (Corbett) - This bill would appropriate \$250,000,000 from the General Fund, for transfer by the Controller to Section A of the State School Fund, for restoration of funding for CalWORKs Stage III child care. The bill would declare that it makes an appropriation for the usual current expenses of the state, thereby taking immediate effect. Refer to AB 1 (At top of this article). This bill was referred to the Committee on Education on January 20, 2011.

SB 43 (Liu) - This bill would require a county that elects to participate in the FSET program to screen CalFresh work registrants to determine whether they will participate in, or be deferred from, the FSET program, and would describe the criteria for deferral. The bill would authorize a CalFresh work registrant who is deferred from mandatory participation in FSET to request to enroll in the program as a voluntary participant. The bill would require a county that participates in the FSET program to screen work registrants to determine whether they will participate in, or be deferred from, the FSET program, and would authorize a deferred work registrant to request to enroll in the FSET program as a voluntary participant. The bill would defer an individual from mandatory placement in the FSET program under designated circumstances. This bill, commencing October 1, 2012, would require a county that elects to participate in the FSET program to allow work registrants who are mandatorily placed in the program to meet the work requirements of the mandatory placement through self-initiated workfare, as defined. This bill would require a county that elects to participate in the FSET program to demonstrate in its FSET plan how it is effectively using FSET funds, as specified, but would not be construed to require a county to offer a particular component as part of its FSET plan. The bill would impose specified requirements on these counties with respect to the use of FSET and other federal funds and the implementation of FSET and other workfare programs.

SB 417 (Dutton) - This bill would require the EBT system to be designed to prevent use of EBT cards by recipients for the purchase of alcohol or tobacco products. The bill would require that its provisions not be construed to prohibit the use of an EBT card to access SNAP benefits, as authorized by federal law. May be heard in committee on March 19, 2011.

There are several other bills coming that you may want to look at. They are to do with Public Employees Retirement Calculations and changes to the calculation periods. Some of them are: AB 89 (Hill), AB 329 (Dickinson), SB 27 (Simitian), SB 115 (Strickland), SB 322 (Negret/McCleod). They all could be important to your future.

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