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# MEDIA RELEASE

**LISA A. SMITTCAMP, DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

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## **FORMER DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES EMPLOYEE CHARGED WITH THEFT FROM EBT RECIPIENT ACCOUNTS**

The Fresno County District Attorney's Office has filed charges against Desiree Henriette Ortiz (40, of Fresno) for her actions in stealing cash and food benefits from EBT recipient accounts.

It is alleged that Ms. Ortiz while employed by the Fresno County Department of Social Services (DSS), used her access to EBT recipient information to steal funds from their accounts. It is further alleged that Ms. Ortiz accomplished this by using the information that she had stolen to change the passwords to the accounts, and subsequently used the funds in those accounts for her own personal benefit. DSS estimates that the total amount of loss due to the reimbursement of stolen benefits was \$97,375.05. The investigation into Ms. Ortiz was brought on after an internal audit was conducted by the Fresno County Department of Social Services.

The Felony Complaint filed in the Superior Court alleges that Desiree Ortiz committed:

- One (1) Count of COMPUTER ACCESS AND FRAUD [Penal Code §502(c)];
- Twelve (12) Counts of IDENTITY THEFT [Penal Code §530.5(a)];
- One (1) Count of IDENTITY THEFT - POSSESSION OF INFORMATION WITH INTENT TO DEFRAUD [Penal Code §530.5(c)(3)]

If convicted of all charges and allegations, Ms. Ortiz faces a maximum of 11 years and 8 months in local custody.

Desiree Ortiz was cited on Friday, May 31, 2024, and given a date to appear for her arraignment on Wednesday, July 10<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 am in Department 32 of the Fresno County Superior Court. This matter is being prosecuted by the Fresno County District Attorney's Public Integrity Unit.

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