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April 8, 2015

MADIGAN: DHS WORKER ARRAIGNED ON CHARGES OF THEFT, OFFICIAL MISCONDUCT

Chicago — Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that an Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) caseworker was arraigned on charges of theft and official misconduct for allegedly stealing over \$35,000 in assistance for needy families.

Tarcia Watkins, 46, of South Holland, pleaded not guilty today in Cook County Criminal Court to one count of theft, a Class 1 felony, punishable by four to 15 years in prison, and one count of official misconduct, a Class 3 felony, punishable by two to five years in prison.

Madigan alleged that Watkins routinely issued herself duplicate LINK cards loaded with state funds earmarked for needy families in Illinois. Watkins, a human services casework manager, allegedly used the duplicate cards to make withdrawals at various ATMs. From 2013 to 2014, records show a pattern of repeated withdrawals from the duplicate cards totaling \$35,930.

"The defendant's acts cheated not only the taxpayers who fund the programs she was entrusted to manage but also those who rely on these vital state services," Madigan said.

Bond was set for Watkins at \$50,000. Her next court appearance is May 7, 2015.

Assistant Attorney General Kilby MacFadden and Associated Director James S. Dorger are handling the case for Madigan's Public Integrity Bureau.

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