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May 18, 2018

MADIGAN: BERWYN MAN CHARGED WITH IMPERSONATING ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE EMPLOYEE & STEALING THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that a Berwyn man was arrested and charged with posing as an employee of the Illinois Secretary of State's office, offering government jobs and other favors for cash advance payments, and ultimately defrauding seven Cook County residents of at least \$5,000.

Hugo Torres, 44, was arrested and charged with one count of theft by deception over \$500, a Class 3 felony, for posing as a supervisor for the Illinois Secretary of State and making phony promises of jobs with the Secretary of State's office, the ability to expedite processing of their Illinois drivers' licenses, and the ability to resolve their traffic tickets in exchange for cash advance payments. Torres has never been an employee of or affiliated in any capacity with the Secretary of State's office.

"This brazen fraud stripped people of money and highly personal information," Madigan said. "I appreciate the assistance of the Secretary of State's office in bringing Mr. Torres to justice."

"I applaud Attorney General Lisa Madigan for bringing charges against this man and the Secretary of State Police for their work on the case," said Secretary of State Jesse White. "It's offensive that anyone would impersonate a Secretary of State supervisor to scam members of the public out of their hard-earned money. I urge the public to call the Secretary of State police if confronted by anyone offering jobs, driver's licenses or any other state services outside of our Driver Services facilities. If you see something suspicious, please report such incidents to Illinois Secretary of State Police at 630-693-0551 or contact the Office of the Inspector General at 217-785-2012."

Madigan alleged there were at least seven victims of Torres' scheme who shared similar stories of being approached by the defendant at various gas stations in Chicago. He identified himself as "Jose Lopez" and claimed to be a supervisor with the Illinois Secretary of State's office looking to hire maintenance workers. Torres typically charged \$150 in cash for fake application fees for a job exam. In some instances, Torres also falsely claimed he could hire people's family members, provide assistance to obtain driver's licenses and help resolve traffic tickets in exchange for cash.

Torres is being held at the Cook County jail. He is currently on probation in Will County after pleading guilty to Class 3 theft on September 8, 2016, for engaging in similar schemes. Madigan alleged Torres continued his schemes in Cook County after his plea in Will County.

Assistant Attorney General John Walz is handling the case for Madigan's Special Prosecutions Bureau. The case originated as an investigation by the Secretary of State Police.

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