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RAOUL: BERWYN MAN PLEADS GUILTY, SENTENCED FOR IMPERSONATING ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE EMPLOYEE TO DEFRAUD THE PUBLIC

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced a Cook County man was sentenced to seven years in prison for twice posing as an employee of the Illinois Secretary of State's office, offering government jobs and other favors for cash payments, and ultimately defrauding four Cook County residents of at least \$15,000.

Hugo Torres, 49, of Berwyn, Illinois, was sentenced by Cook County Circuit Court Judge John Fitzgerald Lyke Jr., after pleading guilty today to one count of theft by deception over \$10,000, a Class 2 felony, and one count of theft by deception over \$500, a Class 3 felony. Torres was sentenced to five years in Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) custody for the Class 2 felony and two years in IDOC custody for the Class 3 felony. Torres will serve the sentences consecutively.

"Defrauding the public by posing as a state employee and offering services for cash payments is unacceptable, and I am pleased this individual will be held accountable for taking advantage of the public," Raoul said. "I will continue to collaborate with the Secretary of State's office, law enforcement entities and state agencies to address fraud in all of its forms."

Raoul alleges at least four victims shared similar stories of being approached by Torres on two separate occasions. Torres claimed to be a supervisor with the Illinois Secretary of State's office looking to hire employees in various positions within the office. Torres typically charged \$400 in cash for fake application fees for a job exam. In some instances, Torres also falsely claimed he could provide assistance to obtain driver's licenses and help resolve traffic tickets in exchange for cash.

Torres was previously convicted in a similar scheme in which he posed as a supervisor for the Illinois Secretary of State and made phony promises of jobs with the Secretary of State's office. Torres has never been an employee of or affiliated in any capacity with the Secretary of State's office.

"I applaud Attorney General Raoul and his staff for their hard work in this case," said Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White. "For this individual to impersonate a government employee to defraud others out of their hard-earned money violates all laws of human decency. The sentencing sends the message that this type of criminal conduct will not be tolerated."

White urges the public to call the Secretary of State Police if ever approached by someone claiming to offer jobs, driver's licenses or any other state services outside of the Secretary of State's Driver Services facilities. The public is urged to report suspicious incidents to the Illinois Secretary of State Police at 630-693-0551, or contact the Office of the Inspector General at 217-785-2012.

According to Raoul, the cases included in today's sentencing represent the third and fourth time Torres has engaged in scams to defraud people by impersonating a Secretary of State employee. Torres is on parole after pleading guilty to a charge of Class 3 theft on Sept. 8, 2016 in Will County, and a charge of Class 3 theft on Nov. 27, 2018, in Cook County for engaging in similar schemes. That case is still pending with the Cook County State's Attorney's office.

Assistant Attorney General Amy Flynn handled the case for Raoul's Special Prosecutions Bureau. The case originated as an investigation by the Secretary of State Police.