



Department of Justice

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Eastern District of California

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STOCKTON WOMAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR EMBEZZLING FROM SAN JOAQUIN CHILD CARE REFERRAL AGENCY

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that MARY THONGDEE, 25, of Stockton, was sentenced by United States District Judge Frank C. Damrell Jr., to 18 months in prison, to be followed by three years of supervised release. She was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$253,360.87. The defendant pleaded guilty on December 15, 2008, to embezzling the funds from the Family Resource and Referral Center, an organization that receives funds from the San Joaquin County Human Services Agency to pay child care providers for services rendered to qualifying parents on public assistance.

This case is the product of a joint investigation by the FBI and the San Joaquin County District Attorney's Office.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Benjamin B. Wagner, who prosecuted the case, Judge Damrell, in rejecting a request by the defendant for a shorter prison sentence, said that the offense was extremely serious.

THONGDEE's co-defendant, her cousin LAPHONE VONGKEO, 32, also of Stockton, worked as a Payment Provider Analyst at the Family Resource and Referral Center and is alleged to have caused the issuance of over 80 embezzled checks worth over \$283,000 between November 2004 and July 2007. VONGKEO is scheduled for trial before Judge Damrell on September 1, 2009. VONGKEO is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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