

NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

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PUBLIC SAFETY UNCOVERS DRIVER LICENSE FRAUD

MONTGOMERY — Driver license fraud investigators of the Alabama Department of Public Safety have arrested a Jefferson County Revenue Department employee in connection with a scheme to sell Alabama driver licenses to illegal immigrants. State trooper investigators charged Tolentino Junior Falcon, 24, of Homewood, with possession of a forged instrument, a Class C felony. Falcon was arrested Friday without incident at Jefferson County's satellite office in Homewood, and transported to the Jefferson County Jail.

Public Safety Director Col. Mike Coppage cited the work of trooper fraud investigators and the cooperative efforts of Jefferson County officials and Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the investigation's success.

"This is an important cooperative investigation, involving three levels of government agencies," said Coppage. "It clearly underscores the value of a driver license today and our efforts to ensure the integrity of Alabama's driver licensing system."

Coppage said Public Safety has a "serious attitude" about driver license fraud and security. "We are fighting to protect the integrity of the driver license system, which, in turn, helps ensure homeland security and protects the banking and retail industries."

Lead investigator Tpr. Ronni Fetty said Falcon provided forged driver license paperwork to foreign nationals whose illegal status makes them ineligible for an Alabama driver license, charging each as much as \$2,000 per license. Fetty said Falcon chose his customers from among Spanish-speaking individuals seeking services at Jefferson County's satellite office in Homewood, where Falcon was employed as a laborer.

Assisting Public Safety in the continuing investigation are the Jefferson County Revenue Department and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

If convicted, Falcon faces up to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$5,000.

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