



DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

News Release

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FLORIDA MAN SENTENCED FOR FILING FALSE TAX REFUNDS

HONOLULU — On February 25, 2008, Christopher E. Burns was sentenced before the Honorable Judge Richard W. Pollack for receiving false refunds in the amount of \$71,438 over two years. Burns, a former Hawai'i resident, was charged with three counts of false and fraudulent statements, two counts of theft in the first degree and one count of attempted theft in the first degree. All are class B felonies subject to a fine up to \$100,000 per violation and a term of imprisonment for three years.

Burns is a former military electrical engineer who had relocated to the mainland several years ago and falsely filed three resident net income tax returns electronically for tax years 2004 through 2006. He received refunds of \$35,703 for 2004 and \$35,735 for 2005, which were all deposited electronically into a mainland bank account. He made a third attempt to receive yet another large refund in 2006, which was suspended by the tax department. A Honolulu Grand Jury indicted Burns in June 2007 on all felony counts. He was living in Florida at the time of the indictment and was extradited back to Honolulu last August. Unable to post bail, he remained in custody until his sentencing.

Judge Pollack denied Burns' no contest plea and found him guilty on all felony counts. He was ordered to pay restitution of \$71,438, placed on five-years probation and serve a period of incarceration of six months. He was however, released from custody and given credit for time already served. Burns was also allowed to apply for probation jurisdiction in the state of Florida.

(more)

With more and more people filing returns electronically every year, the department is making every effort to prevent these types of fraudulent returns from being processed. This was the department's first successfully prosecuted case involving false income tax returns and refunds filed electronically by someone who lived out of state.

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