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O'AHU WOMAN ANITA VALDEZ CHARGED WITH LABOR TRAFFICKING

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HONOLULU, HI – Attorney General Anne Lopez announced today that Anita Valdez was criminally charged for allegedly committing labor trafficking. Valdez, 53, was charged with three counts of Labor Trafficking in the First Degree.

According to the Indictment, Valdez allegedly obtained the complainant for labor or services by fraud and deception and withheld the complainant's government-issued identification documents with the intent to impede the complainant's movement. Valdez allegedly operates a farm that sells produce on O'ahu.

The case was charged by the Department of the Attorney General's Special Investigation and Prosecution Division after an investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Homeland Security Investigations, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Valdez was arrested by Honolulu Police on Wednesday.

"Labor trafficking is an incredibly serious crime," said Attorney General Anne Lopez. "I appreciate the work of our federal partners to investigate labor trafficking crimes here in Hawai'i. My office will always stand ready to help our federal, state and county partners prosecute those who take advantage of vulnerable people."

"An important part of the mission of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General is to investigate allegations of labor trafficking involving the use of coercion or force. We will continue to work with the U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division, Homeland Security Investigations, and our other law enforcement partners in Hawai'i to investigate these types of allegations," said Quentin Heiden, Special Agent in Charge, Western Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

"Labor trafficking is modern-day slavery, and it robs victims of their freedom and dignity. HSI will remain vigilant in identifying and combating this insidious crime," said U.S. Department of Homeland Security Honolulu Assistant Special Agent in Charge Lucia Cabral-Dearmas.

The case is State v. Anita Valdez, 1CPC-24-0000523.

Labor Trafficking in the First Degree is a Class A felony punishable by 20 years in prison and a fine not exceeding \$50,000.

Valdez is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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