



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
May 11, 2023

### COUNTY WORKER ARRAIGNED ON WELFARE FRAUD CHARGES

A former Butte County Department of Employment and Social Services (DESS) worker was arraigned this morning on welfare fraud and identity theft charges based on her using her inside access to department computers to obtain and use a welfare benefits (EBT) debit card in her boyfriend's name while he was in jail.

Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said felony counts of welfare fraud and identity theft were filed against **Shawna West, 32**, of Oroville, a now-former employee of the Butte County DESS.

Ramsey said West used her position as an employee to gain computer access to her boyfriend's electronic welfare benefits account while he was in jail on unrelated charges. It is alleged in the criminal complaint that West canceled her boyfriend's previous EBT card and had a new one sent to her address. She used the money on the card to make personal purchases without her boyfriend's knowledge. Ramsey said West ultimately spent \$1,392 from the card.

When the fraud was discovered by the District Attorney's Welfare Fraud Unit investigators in March 2023, Ramsey said an investigation was launched in conjunction with the DESS administration which led to West's resignation as an employee and the criminal complaint today.

West appeared with an attorney in court today but did not enter a plea. She was released on her own recognizance pending further arraignment and entry of plea on her case on June 1, 2023. She faces a maximum penalty of three years and eight months in jail.