



MEDIA RELEASE

Investigative Unit

Ohio Investigative Unit • Robert W. Booker Jr., Executive Director
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ARRESTS AT TOLEDO CARRYOUT FOR FOOD STAMP FRAUD, ILLEGAL GAMBLING *Forty administrative citations issued*

(Columbus) – Undercover agents with the Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) executed a search warrant Tuesday at Sawalha International, Inc., also known as Express Mart, after an extensive investigation into food stamp fraud and illegal gambling.

Mohamed Beyrouti, 30, of Toledo, was arrested and transported to Lucas County Jail on 13 counts each of illegal use of food stamp or women infant and children (WIC) benefits and telecommunications fraud. Leo Sawalha, 43, of Maumee, was issued an arrest summons for possessing a gambling device and operating a gambling house.

“Food stamp fraud is a crime against tax payers and is not tolerated in Ohio,” said OIU Agent-in-Charge Ray Rodriguez. “To add to the fraudulent activity, the permit establishment was participating in illegal gambling, which is an unfair business practice.”

The Express Mart, 5925 Heatherdowns Blvd., in Toledo also faces administrative charges including 13 counts each of illegal use of electronic benefits transfer (EBT) and trafficking in EBT, 11 counts of illegal possession of EBT, and one count each of possessing a gambling device, electronic gambling device, and operating a gambling house.

Administrative charges are filed against the liquor permit and will be forwarded to the Liquor Control Commission. Possible administrative penalties could include fines, suspension or revocation of the liquor permit. Additional criminal charges could be presented to the Lucas County Prosecutor’s Office for its consideration.

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The Ohio Investigative Unit is a division of the Ohio Department of Public Safety. Agents are undercover sworn peace officers who enforce the state’s liquor and tobacco laws, as well as food stamp fraud. Individuals who believe food stamp fraud is being committed are encouraged to contact OIU toll-free at 1-877-4MINORS. All complaints will remain anonymous.