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## NY state tax worker accused of stealing taxpayers' identities, running up \$200,000 on accounts

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TROY, N.Y. (AP) — A former New York state tax department worker was accused of stealing the identities of thousands of taxpayers and running up more than \$200,000 in fraudulent charges.

Walter Healey gathered credit card, brokerage account and Social Security numbers that he used to open more than 90 credit card accounts and lines of credit between 2006 and 2008, prosecutors said.

Healey pleaded not guilty Wednesday to four counts: identity theft, unlawful possession of personal identification, tampering with public records and official misconduct. Healey, escorted into a Troy courtroom by two officers, posted \$5,000 bail and left.

The 63-year-old Troy resident said he last worked in October and was retired. He declined further comment and walked past waiting TV cameras. Defense attorney George LaMarche said later that Healey cooperated with investigators.

State tax officials are notifying more than 2,000 people across the state whose information was breached, according to the office of Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, who brought the case.

"These charges go far beyond the theft of people's identities, they involve an egregious breach of public trust," Cuomo said.

A tax department employee since 1986, Healey was assigned in 2006 to a unit that scans identification documents submitted by taxpayers for routine audits. Last year, another employee noticed irregularities in packages of documents assigned to Healey. An investigation found that many were missing pages, according to court papers.

An audit of Healey's computer use for May through July 2008 showed him accessing the records of hundreds of taxpayers, far more than required for his job, authorities said in court papers.

Investigators who searched Healey's home in October said they found more than 700 state tax forms



containing identifying taxpayer information. They also found more than 300 birth certificates, more than 1,000 Social Security cards, credit card statements and applications, and some 2,000 notes with Social Security numbers, many accompanied by handwritten notes such as "good prospect," "had money" and "go with this one."

Healey opened more than 90 credit accounts at more than 20 banks using the Social Security numbers of at least 15 people and his own home address, according to the criminal complaint. Some accounts were opened in the names of four people who were dead, a 4-year-old boy, Healey's mother and his sister, authorities said. He used more than \$250,000 in credit and had more than \$200,000 in unpaid balances, they said.

The attorney general's office said it is contacting victims who had a credit card account applied for, or opened, in their name and is assisting the credit bureaus to clear up cases where someone's credit was affected.

Tax Commissioner Robert Megna said his department worked with the state inspector general on the investigation. He called it "a serious breach of security, a violation that we have not previously suffered and will not tolerate."

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