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Contact Communications

Phone (850) 245-0150



Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General James Uthmeier Secures 30-Year Prison Sentence for Illegal Alien Fentanyl Trafficker with Valid California Driver's License

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier announced that the Office of Statewide Prosecution secured a 30-year prison sentence for Cesar Caldera-Garcia, 40, an illegal alien, for trafficking in fentanyl into the United States. Caldera-Garcia has a prior federal conviction for smuggling people into the U.S. in 2006.

“This illegal alien was bringing lethal amounts of fentanyl into our country and smuggling humans over the southern border, but California decided he was deserving of a driver’s license,” **said Attorney General James Uthmeier.** “I commend Assistant Statewide Prosecutors Paul Thomas and Taryn Vaughn for securing this important verdict. Anyone who traffics these dangerous drugs in Florida will be held accountable and prosecuted to the fullest extent.”

In November 2023, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) launched an undercover investigation into a drug trafficking organization (DTO) based in Mexico.

Investigators had reason to believe members of this DTO were smuggling Fentanyl into the United States through the southern border. During the investigation, the DTO agreed to sell over 10 kilos of Fentanyl Powder and approximately 50,000 fentanyl pills. The DTO wanted to open a distribution cell in Florida, and Caldera-Garcia came here to do so.

Caldera-Garcia came to Florida to open the distribution cell to sell 3 kilograms of fentanyl powder and 20,000 fentanyl pills. Investigators were able to confirm Caldera-Garcia’s identity through a California driver's license he obtained as an illegal alien.

U.S. Customs and Border Patrol arrested Caldero-Garcia, and he was charged with trafficking in fentanyl (over 28 grams) and conspiracy to traffic in fentanyl (over 28 grams), each of which has a mandatory minimum sentence of 25 years.

On April 22, 2026, a jury found Caldera-Garcia guilty on all counts. The same day, Judge Frederick Mercurio sentenced Caldera-Garcia to 30 years in the Florida Department of Corrections.

The case was prosecuted by the Office of Statewide Prosecution in the Twelfth Judicial Circuit of Florida.

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