



# PRESS RELEASE

The Providence Police Department  
From the Office of  
**Colonel Hugh T. Clements, Jr.**  
Chief of Police



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Providence Police investigation resulted in an arrest and the seizure of more than \$20,000 in U.S. currency and contraband tobacco.**

**Providence, RI** – During the past several weeks, the Providence Police Department’s Intelligence and Organized Crime Unit and the License Enforcement Unit, along with the assistance of the Rhode Island Division of Taxation’s Special Investigation Unit (SIU), conducted a joint investigation into the illegal distribution of untaxed tobacco products.

Through surveillance and a lengthy investigation, law enforcement gained knowledge of the subject known as Esteban Perez conducting deliveries of tobacco products and was observed storing suspected contraband at the U-Haul moving and storage facility in Providence. Esteban Perez was found to have a lengthy criminal record with charges including multiple arrests and convictions for possession of untaxed tobacco products. The Rhode Island Division of Taxation also confirmed that Perez does not hold or has never been granted a license by the State of Rhode Island to sell or distribute tobacco products. Perez also has never submitted any OTP (Other Tobacco Products) filings, returns, or remittances with the Division of Taxation.

Esteban Perez was placed in police custody and a search warrant was executed for his home on Sumter Street in Providence as well the U-Haul locker located on Oxford Street in Providence. Numerous tobacco products, including untaxed counterfeit stamped cigarettes, suspected synthetic marijuana, counterfeit tax stamps and approximately \$20,088.00 in U.S. currency were seized from both locations.

Esteban Perez (age 58) was later charged with the following violations: counterfeit cigarettes, penalty for operating without a dealer license, sale of unstamped cigarettes, penalties for violations as to unstamped cigarettes, importation of cigarettes with intent to evade tax, criminal penalty for fraudulent offences, violation as to reports and records, tax imposed on smokeless tobacco, cigars and pipe tobacco, violations as to reports and records, and penalties for unlicensed business.

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