



Alabama Department of Labor Alabama Career Center System PRESS RELEASE



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Alabama Department of Labor Obtaining Convictions for Unemployment Compensation Fraud

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Labor Secretary Fitzgerald Washington announced today that the Department has successfully prosecuted several Alabamians for unemployment compensation fraud. The following individuals were charged with a misdemeanor violation of the Alabama Unemployment Compensation Law by making false statements in claims for benefits:

- Christopher Jordan, of Aliceville, was tried in Pickens County District Court on February 8, 2017. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Bailey received a total of \$5,400 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Jordan pled guilty and was sentenced to three months in jail, which was suspended for two years pending restitution. He was also ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Charlie Keith, of Sylacauga, was tried in Talladega County Circuit Court on January 27, 2017. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Keith received a total of \$4,140 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Keith pled guilty and was sentenced to two months in jail, which was suspended for two months pending restitution. He was also ordered to pay a \$100 fine, court costs, and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally, which is currently \$448.00.

- Donald Little, of Sylacauga, was tried in Talladega County Circuit Court on December 7, 2016. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Little received a total of \$3,080 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Little pled guilty and was sentenced to 30 days in jail, which was suspended for 30 days pending restitution. He was also ordered to pay a \$100 fine, court costs, and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally, which is currently \$888.

The following individual was charged with Theft by Deception:

- Charlmers Smith, of Decatur, was tried in Cleburne County Circuit Court on February 13, 2017. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Smith received a total of \$3,184 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Smith pled guilty to Theft of Property 1st Degree and was sentenced to two years of jail, which was suspended, and two years of supervised probation. He was also ordered to pay a victim's assessment fee of \$25, court costs, and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

The following individual was charged with Theft of Property, Third Degree:

- Marrion D. Wiggins, of Mobile, was tried in Mobile County District Court on August 11, 2016. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Wiggins received a total of \$4,858 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Wiggins pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended for one year pending restitution. She was also ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

The following individual was charged with Theft of Property, Fourth Degree:

- Christopher B. Giddens, of Jasper, was tried in Walker County Circuit Court on December 15, 2016. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Giddens received a total of \$4,775 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Giddens pled guilty and was sentenced to six months in jail, which was suspended for six months pending restitution, and placed on unsupervised probation for two years. He was also fined \$25 and ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

"Unemployment compensation benefits can serve as a lifeline to those who truly need them," said Washington. "However, we want to send a message to those who would knowingly defraud the system in order to obtain benefits they aren't entitled to: This is a crime and you will be prosecuted."

"Our investigators are continuously working with local District Attorney Offices in order to identify and prosecute those individuals who are committing these crimes. I would also like to remind employers that their timely reporting of new hires is one of the best tools we have to prevent unemployment fraud."

Suspected unemployment compensation fraud may be reported to the Alabama Department of Labor by calling 1-800-392-8019.

Employers may find more information regarding reporting new hires at <http://www.labor.alabama.gov/nh>.

The Alabama Department of Labor / The Alabama Career Center System is a partner in Alabama Works, Alabama's unified workforce system.

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Members of the media needing more information should contact Tara Hutchison at 334-242-8616 / tara.hutchison@labor.alabama.gov

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