



Alabama Department of Labor

News Release

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Alabama Department of Labor Obtaining Convictions for Unemployment Compensation Fraud

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

- Belinda D. Woods, of Selma, was tried in Dallas County District Court on August 4, 2015. An investigation by Labor’s Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Woods received a total of \$2,404 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Woods pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended, and given two years of unsupervised probation. She was also ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Stacey L. Powell, of Millbrook, was tried in Elmore County District Court on May 28, 2015. An investigation by Labor’s Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Powell received a total of \$3,603 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Powell pled guilty and was sentenced to ten years in jail, which was suspended for eight years and six months. He was also ordered to serve 18 months in the Elmore County Community Corrections Alternative Sentencing Program. Powell is registered as a habitual offender (unrelated charges). He was ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Phyllis M. Nelms, of Auburn, was tried in Lee County District Court on August 4, 2015. An investigation by Labor’s Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Nelms received a total of \$1,428 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Nelms pled guilty and was ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Toby L. Rogers, of Hurtsboro, was tried in Russell County District Court on August 24, 2015. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Rogers received a total of \$4,100 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Rogers pled guilty and was ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally. He was also fined \$100. Any additional sentence will depend on his ability to pay restitution.

The following individuals were charged with Theft of Property 1st Degree:

- Nathan Frye, of Mobile, was tried in Mobile County Circuit Court on May 7, 2015. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Frye received a total of \$4,657 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Frye pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, suspended for two years pending restitution, and given two years of formal probation. He was assessed a \$50 victim's fee and ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Roslyn M. Greene, of Mobile, was tried in Mobile County Circuit Court on July 30, 2015. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Greene received a total of \$3,912 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Greene pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, suspended for two years pending restitution, and given two years of informal probation. She was assessed a \$50 victim's fee, and ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Christine Nickles, of Mobile, was tried in Mobile County Circuit Court on April 20, 2014. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Nickles received a total of \$5,266 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Nickles pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, suspended for two years pending restitution, and given two years of informal probation. She was assessed a \$50 victim's fee, and ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Arthur Smoot, III, of Talladega, was tried in Talladega County Circuit Court on August 11, 2015. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Smoot received a total of \$6,326 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Smoot pled guilty and was sentenced to three years in jail, which was suspended, and given three years of supervised probation. He was fined \$500 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>.

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Members of the media seeking more information should contact Communications Director Tara Hutchison at (334) 242-8616.