



# Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

## News Release

For Immediate Release: June 22, 2010

### Alabamians Charged with Unemployment Compensation Fraud

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director Tom Surtees announced today that the following individuals were successfully prosecuted for violating the Alabama Unemployment Compensation Law. They were charged with making false statements in claims for unemployment benefits:

- Suzanne Crews Patterson, of Mobile, was tried in Mobile County District Court on June 16, 2010. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Patterson received a total of \$2,950.00 in unemployment benefits to which she was not entitled.

Patterson was found guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended for two years. She was also ordered to pay a \$50.00 fine, court costs, and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Valerie Henrietta Jones, of Mobile, was tried in Mobile County District Court on June 14, 2010. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Jones received a total of \$1,184.00 in unemployment benefits to which she was not entitled.

Jones was found guilty and sentenced to six months in jail, which was suspended for 18 months. She was required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Phillip B. Lockhart, of Opelika, was tried in Lee County District Court on May 11, 2010. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Lockhart received a total of \$2,751.00 in unemployment benefits to which he was not entitled.

Lockhart pled guilty and was sentenced to 28 months in jail, suspended for 28 months. He was ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

“We at the Department of Industrial Relations want people to know that we are aggressively pursuing cases of unemployment compensation fraud,” said Surtees. “Especially in these economic times, we want to make sure that all who are entitled to benefits receive them. But at the same time, we will not allow those who deliberately try to defraud the system to go unpunished. We are working with local District Attorney Offices to make sure that we can identify and prosecute those individuals who are committing these crimes.”

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

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*Members of the media seeking more information should contact Public Information Officer Tara Hutchison at (334) 242-8616.*