



Alabama Department of Labor

News Release

For Immediate Release: April 29, 2013

Alabama Department of Labor Obtaining Convictions for Unemployment Compensation Fraud

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Labor Commissioner Tom Surtees 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:

- Michael Burgess, of Tuscaloosa, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on March 6, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Burgess received a total of \$2,580 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Burgess pled guilty and was sentenced to 90 days in jail, which was suspended for two years, and 24 months of probation. He was also fined \$100 and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Elizabeth Norwood, of Vance, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on March 13, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Norwood received a total of \$4,675 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Norwood pled guilty and was sentenced to serve 90 days in jail, which was suspended for two years, and 24 months of probation. She was also fined \$100 and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Shannon Biddlecome, of Tuscaloosa, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on March 13, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Biddlecome received a total of \$4,066 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Biddlecome pled guilty and was sentenced to 90 days in jail, suspended for two years, and 24 months of probation. She was also fined \$100 and ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- William Samuel, of Tuscaloosa, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on March 20, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Horton received a total of \$2,876 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Samuel pled guilty and was sentenced to 90 days in jail, which was suspended for two years, and 24 months of probation. He was fined \$100 and was ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Reginald Greene, of Cottdale, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on March 27, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Greene received a total of \$1,482 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Greene pled guilty and was sentenced to 90 days in jail, which was suspended for two years, and 24 months of probation. He was also fined \$100 and required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Shakreea Q. Tensley, of Camp Hill, was tried in Tallapoosa County District Court on March 25, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Tensley received a total of \$1,884 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Tensley pled guilty and was sentenced to six months in jail, which was suspended pending restitution. She was order to pay restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Johnny Turner, of Tuscaloosa, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on March 28, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Turner received a total of \$1,685 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Turner pled guilty and was sentenced to 90 days in jail, which was suspended for two years, and 24 months of probation. He was also fined \$100 and required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Keshia Morgan, of Roanoke, was tried in Randolph County District Court on April 2, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Morgan received a total of \$1,946 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Morgan pled guilty and was sentenced to six months in jail, suspended for two years with unsupervised probation, pending restitution. She was also fined \$100, ordered to perform 24 hours of community service, and required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Starsky L. McNeal, of Alexander City, was tried in Tallpoosa County District Court on April 3, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that McNeal received a total of \$3,067 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

McNeal was found guilty and was sentenced to two years in jail, which was suspended, due to the amount of benefits received illegally already being recovered prior to the court date.

- Tylanda Buckner, of Alexander City, was tried in Tallapoosa County District Court on April 3, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Buckner received a total of \$2,492 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Buckner pled guilty and was sentenced to 12 months in jail, which was suspended pending restitution. She was required to pay restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Synethia D. Spradley, of Alexander City, was tried in Tallapoosa County District Court on April 3, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Spradley received a total of \$870 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Spradley pled guilty and was sentenced to 12 months in jail, which was suspended for two years pending restitution, and two years of unsupervised probation. She was required to pay restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Tashea Ragland, of Alexander City, was tried in Tallapoosa County District Court on April 3, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Ragland received a total of \$4,506 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Ragland pled guilty and was sentenced to 12 months in jail, which was suspended for 24 months pending restitution, and two years of unsupervised probation. She was required to pay restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Lee Stokes, of Tuscaloosa, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on February 27, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Stokes received a total of \$4,826 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Stokes pled guilty and was sentenced to 90 days hard labor, which was suspended for 24 months. He was also fined \$100 and ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Dakara L. Pettaway, of Millbrook, was tried in Elmore County District Court on March 14, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Pettaway received a total of \$4,090 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Pettaway pled guilty and was sentenced to 30 days in jail, suspended for two years pending restitution, and two years of unsupervised probation. She was also fined \$100 and ordered to pay court costs restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

“We at the Alabama Department of Labor 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 Alabama Department of Labor by calling 1-800-392-8019.

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