



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 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:

- Demetrius D. Barkley, of Birmingham, was tried in Jefferson County District Court on May 6, 2013. An investigation by Labor’s Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Barkley received a total of \$4,059 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Barkley pled guilty and was sentenced to six months in jail, which was suspended, and 24 months of unsupervised probation. He was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Adron Turner, of Tuscaloosa, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on May 1, 2013. An investigation by Labor’s Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Turner received a total of \$5,194 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Turner pled guilty and was sentenced to serve 90 days of hard labor, which was suspended for two years, pending behavior of the defendant. He was also fined \$100 and ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Diedra Stewart, of Tuscaloosa, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on May 1, 2013. An investigation by Labor’s Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Stewart received a total of \$1,499 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

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

- Charles Merritt, of Tuscaloosa, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on April 25, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Merritt received a total of \$1,920 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Merritt pled guilty and was sentenced to 90 days of hard labor, which was suspended for two years, pending behavior of the defendant. He was also fined \$100 and required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Stanley Weaver, of Tuscaloosa, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on April 24, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Weaver received a total of \$1,680 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Weaver pled guilty and was sentenced to 90 days hard labor, which was suspended for two years, pending behavior of the defendant. He was also fined \$100 and ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Jermelle Small, of Tuscaloosa, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on April 18, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Small received a total of \$1,199 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Small pled guilty and was sentenced to 90 days hard labor, which was suspended for two years, pending behavior of the defendant. He was also fined \$100 and ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Earnest Thompson, of Greenville, was tried in Butler County District Court on April 30, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Thompson received a total of \$3,072 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

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

- Catherine Tolbert, of Troy, was tried in Pike County District Court on April 16, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Tolbert received a total of \$4,041 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Tolbert pled guilty and was sentenced to 30 days in jail, suspended for two years, and 24 months of probation. She was also required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Jickinya Majors, of Troy, was tried in Pike County District Court on April 16, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Majors received a total of \$1,430 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Majors pled guilty and was sentenced to 30 days in jail, which was suspended for two

years, and 24 months of probation. She was also required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Crystal K. Faulk, of Wetumpka, was tried in Elmore County District Court on April 26, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Faulk received a total of \$2,240 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Faulk pled guilty and was sentenced to 30 days in jail, which was suspended for two years pending restitution. She was fined \$50 and required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Wydreus D. Edwards, of Montgomery, was tried in Dallas County District Court on April 30, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Edwards received a total of \$9,240 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Edwards pled guilty and was sentenced to 90 days in jail, which was suspended for two years pending restitution, and two years of unsupervised probation. He was required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Wade Garnatz, of Jasper, was tried in Walker County District Court on April 25, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Garnatz received a total of \$4,259 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Garnatz pled guilty and was sentenced to 30 days in jail, which was suspended. He was also fined \$150 and required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Phillip D. Ellington, of Anniston, was tried in Calhoun County District Court on April 16, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Ellington received a total of \$2,166 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

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

- Anthony Johnson, of LaFayette, was tried in Chambers County District Court on April 16, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Johnson received a total of \$2,463 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Johnson pled guilty and was sentenced to three months in jail, which was suspended pending restitution. He was also fined \$100 and ordered to pay restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Lakeshia Crayton, of Dadeville, was tried in Tallapoosa County District Court on April

16, 2013. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Crayton received a total of \$3,112 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Crayton pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended for two years. She was ordered to pay 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.