



## Alabama Department of Labor

### News Release

For Immediate Release: June 15, 2016

### 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 Theft of Property 1<sup>st</sup> Degree for violating the Alabama Unemployment Compensation Law by making false statements in claims for benefits:

- Donnell L. Cooper, of Mobile, was tried in Mobile County Circuit Court on April 21, 2016. An investigation by Labor’s Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Cooper received a total of \$3,638 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Cooper pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended pending restitution, and two years of supervised probation. He was also ordered to pay a victims crime fund assessment of \$25, court costs, and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Larry D. Cross, of Mobile, was tried in Mobile County Circuit Court on April 21, 2016. An investigation by Labor’s Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Cross received a total of \$5,830 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Cross pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended pending restitution, and two years of supervised probation. He was also ordered to pay a victims crime fund assessment of \$25, court costs, and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Tanzinia T. Fowler, of Mobile, was tried in Mobile County Circuit Court on May 19, 2016. An investigation by Labor’s Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Fowler received a total of \$14,138 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Fowler pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended pending restitution, and placed on two years of supervised probation. She was also ordered to pay a victims crime fund assessment of \$50, court costs, and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally within one year.

- Brian Lewis, of Montgomery, was tried in Montgomery County Circuit Court on April 28, 2016. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Lewis received a total of \$1,546 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Lewis pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended, and placed on one year of probation. He was also ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Latasha Giles, of Livingston, was tried in Sumter County Circuit Court on May 23, 2016. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Giles received a total of \$5,226 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

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

- Connie Embry, of Lincoln, was tried in Talladega County District Court on May 5, 2016. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Embry received a total of \$3,596 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Embry pled guilty and was 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.*