



## Alabama Department of Labor

### News Release

For Immediate Release: May 2, 2014

### 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:

- Chelsea D. Decilles, of Anniston, was tried in Calhoun County District Court on April 15, 2014. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Decilles received a total of \$2,329 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Decilles pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended for one year and given one year of unsupervised probation. She was fined \$250 and ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Jennifer M. Austin Tremble, of Anniston, was tried in Calhoun County District Court on April 8, 2014. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Tremble received a total of \$4,768 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Tremble pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended for two years pending restitution, and two years of unsupervised probation. She was fined \$500 and ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Augustus J. Hatcher, of Selma, was tried in Dallas County District Court on April 1, 2014. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Hatcher received a total of \$2,560 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Hatcher pled guilty and was sentenced to 180 days in jail, which was suspended for 18 months pending restitution, and 18 months of unsupervised probation. He was also ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Rodney Wright, Sr., of Opelika, was tried in Lee County District Court on April 8, 2014. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Wright received a total of \$5,352 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Wright pled guilty and was sentenced to 180 days in jail, which was suspended for two years pending restitution, and two years of unsupervised probation. He was also ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Darryl K. Shedrick, of Montgomery, was tried in Montgomery County District Court on April 21, 2014. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Shedrick received a total of \$2,703 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Shedrick pled guilty and was sentenced to 30 days in jail. He was also ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally. His probation will be based on his ability to pay restitution.

- Dan E. Hollis, of Maylene, was tried in Shelby County District Court on April 21, 2014. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Hollis received a total of \$1,621 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Hollis pled guilty and was sentenced to 60 days in jail, which was suspended. He was also ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Donna Davis, of Tuscaloosa, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on April 9, 2014. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Davis received a total of \$4,698 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

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

- David Fountain, of Northport, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on March 19, 2014. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Fountain received a total of \$4,109 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Fountain pled guilty and was sentenced to 90 days in jail, which was suspended for 90 days pending behavior of the defendant, and two years of probation. He was also ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Lorene Matthews, of Tuscaloosa, was tried in Tuscaloosa County District Court on April 30, 2014. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Matthews received a total of \$4,353 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Matthews pled guilty and was sentenced to 90 days in jail which was suspended 90 days, pending behavior of the defendant, and two years of probation. She was also required to

pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Jessie W. Harris, of Cordova, was tried in Walker County District Court on April 9, 2014. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Harris received a total of \$3,240 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Harris pled guilty and was sentenced to 90 days in jail, which was suspended for one year pending restitution, and was given one year of unsupervised probation. He was also fined \$25 and ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

“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,” said Surtees. “We are working with local District Attorney Offices to make sure that we can identify and prosecute those individuals who are committing these crimes. We would also like to remind employers that their timely reporting of new hires is one of the best tools we have to detect 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.*