



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.

- Lakisha Beavers, of Auburn, was tried in Lee County District Court on November 27, 2012. An investigation by Labor’s Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Beavers received a total of \$4,166.00 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Beavers pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended. She was also ordered to pay a \$500.00 fine, court costs, and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally. Beavers was also ordered to perform 20 hours of community service and placed on probation for one year.

- Barbara Griffin, of Opelika, was tried in Lee County District Court on November 27, 2012. An investigation by Labor’s Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Griffin received a total of \$6,575.00 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Griffin was found guilty and was sentenced to serve one year in jail, which was suspended, and one year of probation. She was also ordered to complete 20 hours of community service, fined \$500.00, and ordered to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Michelle Hughley, of Opelika, was tried in Lee County District Court on November 27, 2012. An investigation by Labor’s Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Hughley received a total of \$2,114.00 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Hughley was found guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, suspended for three months pending restitution and fined \$500. She was also ordered to pay court costs and

restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally. Hughley was also ordered to perform 20 hours of community service and placed on probation for one year.

- Gary A. Beacham, of Odenville, was tried in St. Clair County District Court on November 14, 2012. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Beacham received a total of \$4,048.00 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Beacham pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended for two years and given two years of unsupervised probation. He was also required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Mitch W. Mitchell, of Columbiana, was tried in Shelby County District Court on November 14, 2012. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Mitchell received a total of \$3,505.00 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Mitchell pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended for two years pending restitution, and two years of unsupervised probation. He was also fined \$100.00 and required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Shundreta Buchanan, of Jacksonville, was tried in Calhoun County District Court on November 13, 2012. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Buchanan received a total of \$3,165.00 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Buchanan pled guilty and was sentenced to 30 days in jail, which was suspended for two years pending restitution, and two years of unsupervised probation. She was also fined \$100.00 and required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Peggy Ingram Harris, of Auburn, was tried in Lee County District Court on November 15, 2012. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Harris received a total of \$1,398.00 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Harris pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended for one year pending restitution, and required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Sandra Murry, of Headland, was tried in Houston County District Court on November 5, 2012. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Murry received a total of \$1,375.00 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Murry pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended for two years. She was also required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits

received illegally.

- Sylvester Boyd, of Shorter, was tried in Macon County District Court on November 14, 2012. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Boyd received a total of \$2,043.00 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Boyd pled guilty and was sentenced to 30 days in jail, which was suspended, and fined \$100. He was also required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Lakisha M. Hall, of Talladega, was tried in Talladega County District Court on November 8, 2012. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Hall received a total of \$4,200.00 in benefits to which she was not entitled.

Hall pled guilty and was sentenced to 30 days in jail, which was suspended, and fined \$100. She was also required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Clifton Heflin, of Lineville, was tried in Clay County District Court on November 6, 2012. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Heflin received a total of \$5,315.00 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Heflin pled guilty and was sentenced to six months in jail, which was suspended for 24 months. He was also required to pay court costs and restitution in the amount of benefits received illegally.

- Antonio Ward, of Montgomery, was tried in Montgomery County District Court on August 20, 2012. An investigation by Labor's Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Ward received a total of \$3,330.00 in benefits to which he was not entitled.

Ward pled guilty and was sentenced to one year in jail, which was suspended, and fined \$282. He was also required to pay court costs and 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.