



Alabama Department of Industrial Relations

News Release

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Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Obtaining Convictions for Unemployment Compensation Fraud

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Director 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 L. Couch, of Jacksonville, was tried in Calhoun County District Court on October 27, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Couch received a total of \$1,766.00 in unemployment benefits to which he was not entitled.

Couch was found guilty and sentenced to 12 months in jail, which was suspended for 24 months. He was ordered to pay a \$100.00 fine, court costs, and restitution in the amount of benefits illegally received.

- Wendell Montgomery, of Anniston, was tried in Calhoun County District Court on October 27, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Montgomery received a total of \$1,776.00 in unemployment benefits to which he was not entitled.

Montgomery was found guilty and sentenced to 12 months in jail, which was suspended for 24 months. He was ordered to pay a \$100.00 fine, court costs, and restitution in the amount of benefits illegally received.

- Lashonda Sullivan, of Anniston, was tried in Calhoun County District Court on October 27, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Sullivan received a total of \$3,394.00 in unemployment benefits to which she was not entitled.

Sullivan was found guilty and sentenced to 12 months in jail, which was suspended for 24 months. She was ordered to pay a \$100.00 fine, court costs, and restitution in the amount of benefits illegally received.

- Michael Frost, of Weaver, was tried in Calhoun County District Court on October 27, 2009. An investigation by the Industrial Relations Benefit Payment Control Section determined that Frost received a total of \$2,107.00 in unemployment benefits to which he was not entitled.

Frost was found guilty and sentenced to 12 months in jail, which was suspended for 24 months. He was ordered to pay a \$100.00 fine, court costs, and restitution in the amount of benefits illegally received.

- Bernard Williams, of Anniston, was tried in Calhoun County District Court on October 27, 2009. An investigation by Industrial Relations Benefits Control Section determined that Williams received a total of \$1,428.00 in unemployment benefits to which he was not entitled.

Williams was sentenced to 12 months in jail, which was suspended for 24 months. He was ordered to pay a \$100.00 fine, court costs, and restitution in the amount of benefits illegally received.

“We at the Department of Industrial Relations 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 Department of Industrial Relations by calling 1-800-392-8019.

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Members of the media seeking more information should contact Public Information Officer Tara Hutchison at (334) 242-8616.