

Texas Workforce Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TWC Prosecutes 12 for Fraud

AUSTIN – The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) warns those who fraudulently have applied for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits that criminal convictions for UI fraud are being pursued aggressively. The most recent 12 prosecutions include:

- John H. Collins of Bexar County was sentenced to five years probation for felony theft. He was required to pay \$3,168 in restitution to TWC and pay a fine of \$500.
- George T. Jones of Brazoria County was sentenced to five years deferred adjudication probation for felony aggregated theft. He was ordered to pay \$7,542 in restitution to TWC, and was also ordered to pay \$268 in court costs, perform 160 hours of community service and to pay a CrimeStopper fee of \$25.
- Michelle Battle-Henderson of Dallas County received three years probation, and was ordered to pay restitution of \$4,515 and pay a \$300 fine.
- Juventino Cano of Dallas County received five years deferred adjudication probation, and was ordered to pay restitution of \$7,944 and pay a \$300 fine.
- Darian Coleman of Dallas County received three years deferred adjudication probation, and was ordered to pay restitution of \$5,804 and pay a \$500 fine.
- Latoya Featherstone of Dallas County was sentenced to five years deferred adjudication probation, to pay a restitution of \$14,743 and to pay a \$500 fine on the charge of securing execution of a document by deception.
- Sheryl Feddeler of Dallas County received four years probation, and was ordered to pay restitution of \$10,578 and pay a \$500 fine.
- Artis Gordon of Dallas County received three years deferred adjudication probation, and was ordered to make restitution and pay a \$650 fine.
- Marco Mata of Dallas County received five years deferred adjudication probation, and was ordered to pay restitution of \$9,184 and pay a \$500 fine.
- Tasha Williams of Dallas County received five years deferred adjudication probation, and was ordered to pay restitution and a \$500 fine.
- Vanessa Willie of Harrison County was sentenced to two years of regular probation for the misdemeanor offense of tampering with government records. She was ordered to pay \$8,012 in restitution to TWC.
- Nathaniel Haggerty of Smith County was sentenced to five years probation for the state jail felony offense of theft. He was ordered to pay \$5,141 in restitution to TWC, pay \$258 in court costs and to pay a \$50 CrimeStopper fee.

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Fraud

TWC's Program Integrity and Regulatory Enforcement divisions are charged with detecting and preventing fraud, waste and abuse, and enforcing all regulatory statutes within the jurisdiction of the agency, including Tax, Workforce, Trade Act, Skills Development, Self-Sufficiency, Child Care and all other programs TWC administers. These divisions have made prevention, detection and elimination of fraud and abuse in the UI program a priority, ensuring that funds are available exclusively to those who meet the eligibility requirements.

TWC administers UI benefits to workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own and are actively seeking work. Through its Fraud Detection Department, located within the Program Integrity Division, TWC regularly cross-matches UI claims with employer wage reports and other databases to detect possible UI fraud. When TWC discovers that claimants have received UI benefits through fraudulent applications, the agency seeks immediate reimbursement of overpayments. Examples of UI fraud include giving false information and failure to report self-employment or other earnings while receiving UI benefits.

Once fraud is detected, the Fraud Detection Unit turns the case over to the Prosecutions Unit for review for possible criminal prosecution. If the Prosecutions Unit accepts the case, criminal charges, including felony charges, if supported by the facts, are pursued with the appropriate district attorneys office within the state. Conviction may result in incarceration and/or restitution, and may invoke additional charges for court costs and fines, and require community service.

From January 1, 2006 to April 30, 2006, TWC has referred 104 cases to State District Attorney Offices for criminal prosecution. In Calendar Year 2005, more than \$1.2 million was recovered for the UI Trust Fund.

For monthly updates on fraud convictions, see TWC's Web site at www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/bnfts/prosecutiondispo.html.

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The Texas Workforce Commission is a state agency dedicated to helping Texas employers, workers and communities prosper economically. For details on TWC and the programs it offers in unison with its network of local workforce development boards, call (512) 463-8556 or visit www.texasworkforce.org.