

Texas Workforce Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TWC Prosecutes Seven for Unemployment Insurance Fraud

AUSTIN – The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) warns that criminal prosecutions for Unemployment Insurance (UI) fraud are being pursued aggressively.

Recently, seven claimants were prosecuted for fraud:

- Candelario Barrera of Bexar County made full restitution of \$4,258 and received two years deferred adjudication probation on the charge of felony theft. He also was ordered to pay a fine of \$2,000 and perform from 200 to 320 hours of community service at the discretion of the probation department.
- Pedro Villanueva of Bexar County received five years deferred adjudication probation on the charge of fraudulently obtaining a government check. He was required to pay \$5,400 restitution, a fine of \$1,500 and to perform 250 hours of community service.
- Ramona G. LeBlanc of Collin County received five years probation for felony theft and was ordered to pay \$6,174 restitution.
- Lisa Osborn of Collin County made full restitution of \$7,575 and received three years deferred adjudication probation on the charge of fraudulently receiving a government check.
- Mark Crutcher of Dallas County made full restitution of \$3,307 and received one year deferred adjudication probation on the charge of fraudulently receiving a government check.
- Willie Green of Galveston County was sentenced to five years probation for felony theft and was ordered to pay \$7,483 restitution.
- Harold Craig Young of Harris County received four years deferred adjudication probation on the charge of felony theft and was ordered to pay \$7,515 restitution.

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

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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, criminal charges, including felony charges, if supported by the facts, are pursued with the appropriate state district attorney offices. 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 June 6, 2006, TWC has referred 145 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.