



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Unemployment Insurance Fraud Crackdown Results in Fines, Criminal Records

CRANSTON – Adelita S. Orefice, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, (DLT), announced that the Department will spare no effort in pursuing criminal charges against individuals who fraudulently collect Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. Director Orefice commented, “One of our top priorities has been to detect, prevent, and ultimately eliminate fraud and abuse in the UI program. Our goal is to maintain the integrity of the Rhode Island Unemployment Insurance Program to ensure that it remains financially secure and funds are available to assist those individuals who are legitimately entitled to benefits.”

Unemployment Insurance compensates workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own and are actively seeking work. Raymond Filippone, Assistant Director for Income Support, confirmed, “Individuals who fraudulently collect Unemployment Insurance are being aggressively pursued for criminal charges of UI fraud. DLT requires immediate reimbursement of overpayments for these claimants to avoid prosecution and conviction.”

Fraud is a serious crime which can result in a criminal record. DLT may seek penalties under applicable laws, which may include a felony charge for each offense. Conviction may result in incarceration and/or restitution, and may bring the additional charges of court costs and fines along with community service. Examples of fraud include giving false information, and failing to report earnings from self-employment or other work performed while collecting UI benefits.

Since May of 2005, DLT has prosecuted thirteen criminals, resulting in dispositions and restitution of \$79,179. Prosecutions include:

- In May 2005, Gerard E. Braga of Cranston, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. He was sentenced to a ten-year suspended sentence, ten years of probation, court ordered restitution of \$4,955 and court costs of \$700.
- In May 2005, Stephen Lee of Manville, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. He was sentenced to 78 months of probation, restitution of \$6,590 and court costs of \$450.
- In May 2005, Celeste L. Shute of West Warwick, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. She was sentenced to a five-year deferred sentence, restitution of \$4,800 and court costs of \$450.
- In June 2005, Thomas F. Mackarvitz of Warwick, RI, entered a nolo plea to larceny, a felony for UI fraud. He was sentenced to a four-year suspended sentence, four years of probation, court ordered restitution of \$6,545 and court costs of \$450.

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- In June 2005, Gregory T. Russo of Providence, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. He was sentenced to a three-year suspended sentence, seven years of probation, court ordered restitution of \$6,885 and court costs of \$450.
- In June 2005, Kathleen Jacques of Mystic, CT, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. She was sentenced to a five-year deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$7,700 and court costs of \$450.
- In June 2005, Renee Lombardi of Cranston, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. She was sentenced to a five-year deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$5,095 and court costs of \$450.
- In June 2005, Gregory F. Aloisio of Johnston, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. He was sentenced to a one-year probation, court ordered restitution of \$7,950 which was recovered in full and court costs of \$90.
- In July 2005, Lucille D. Wright of Providence, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. She was sentenced to a five-year deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$5,734 and court costs of \$450.
- In July 2005, Genevieve Crawford of Providence, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. She was sentenced to a five-year deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$5,879 and court costs of \$90.
- In November 2005, Remington Reese of Tiverton, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. She was sentenced to restitution of \$3,550 and court costs of \$90.
- In November 2005, Steven D' Arienzo of Johnston, RI, entered a nolo plea to an amended charge of obtaining money under false pretenses, a misdemeanor for UI fraud. He was sentenced to one year of probation, restitution of \$8,300 and court costs of \$90.
- In December 2005, Mariane Arcuri of Pawtucket, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. She was sentenced to a five-year deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$5,196 and court costs of \$575.

Sixty-two cases are still pending final disposition, involving a total of \$433,385 in UI benefits.

“We take a strong stand against anyone who tries to defraud the UI system,” stated Filippone. “We will continue to investigate and develop new strategies for pursuing these individuals.”

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The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training offers a wide array of employment and training services to both the general public and to individuals with unusual barriers to employment. DLT is ready to assist any job seeker, whether the goal is a first job, a better job, or a career change. Rhode Island's work force is protected through the enforcement of labor laws, prevailing wage rates, and work place health and safety standards. Temporary income support is available to unemployed, sick, or injured workers and a comprehensive rehabilitation program is available to those injured on the job.

DLT is dedicated to the growth and competitiveness of Rhode Island industry, administering a variety of training grants, tax credits, and apprenticeship programs to help employers. Economic indicators and labor market information are available for long-range planning. The Agency engages in active outreach, helping large and small employers retain their best workers or retrain their existing work force. At no cost to the employer, DLT will also screen job applicants, post job vacancies, and help businesses institute cost-sharing programs that can avert layoffs.

For more information on the innovative programs and services available to all Rhode Islanders at the Department of Labor and Training, please call (401) 462-8000 or visit the web site at www.dlt.ri.gov.

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Auxiliary aids and services are available up on request to individuals with disabilities / TDD (401) 462-8006

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