



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Unemployment Insurance Fraud Crackdown Results in Fines, Record

CRANSTON – The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) warns those who fraudulently have applied for Unemployment Insurance (UI) that criminal convictions for UI fraud are being aggressively pursued. The Income Support Division has made prevention, detection, and elimination of fraud and abuse in the UI program one of its top priorities, ensuring that only eligible individuals receive unemployment benefits.

Unemployment Insurance compensates workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own and are actively seeking work. If DLT discovers that claimants have received UI benefits through fraudulent applications, and/or certification for weekly benefits, the agency demands immediate reimbursement of overpayments for claimants to avoid prosecution and conviction.

Fraud is a serious crime, resulting 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, failure to report self-employment or other earnings, and working while collecting UI benefits. In Calendar Year 2004, forty-six criminal cases resulted in convictions. As a result of prosecutions, more than \$2 million was recovered and returned to the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund.

In 2004, there were 46 convictions, including 40 restitution judgments exceeding \$5,000. A partial list of prosecutions includes:

- In January 2004, Stephanie S. Kelly of Unit Street, Providence, RI, was convicted of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony, for UI fraud. She entered a nolo plea and was sentenced to five years suspended, five years probation, and court ordered restitution of \$5,165. She was also ordered to pay court costs and fines of \$450. An administrative penalty was also administered.
- In March 2004, Cheryl A. Gagnon of Magill Street, Pawtucket, RI, was convicted of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony, for UI fraud. She entered a nolo plea and was sentenced to five years deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$6,292, and court costs and fines of \$450.
- In March 2004, Thomas Finegan of Aborn Avenue, Cumberland, RI, was convicted of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony, for UI fraud. He entered a nolo plea and was sentenced to five years deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$5,724, and court costs and fines of \$450.
- In April 2004, Alison J. Debritto of Villa Avenue, Cranston, RI, was convicted of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony, for UI fraud. She entered a nolo plea and was sentenced to five years deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$10,608 and court costs and fines of \$450.

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- In April 2004, Clifford Amancio of Sisson Road, Greene, RI, was convicted of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony, for UI fraud. He entered a nolo plea and was sentenced to five years deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$15,051, and court costs and fines of \$270.
- In July 2004, Eddie Lee of Commodore Street, Providence, RI, was convicted of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony, for UI fraud. He entered a nolo plea and was sentenced to eight years suspended, eight year probation, and court ordered restitution of \$11,046. He was ordered to pay court costs and fines of \$450. An administrative penalty was also administered.
- In August 2004, Billy L. Geremia of Smith Street, North Providence, RI, was convicted of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony, for UI fraud. He was sentenced to five years deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$11, 073, and court costs and fines of \$450.
- In September 2004, Man Nhem of Hobson Avenue, Cranston, RI, was convicted of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony, for UI fraud. He entered a nolo plea and was sentenced to five years deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$6,378, and court costs and fines of \$450.
- In October 2004, Julie Roberge of Devereux Avenue, Providence, RI, was convicted of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony, for UI fraud. She entered a nolo plea and was sentenced to five years deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$5,645, and court costs and fines of \$450.
- In November 2004, James Waldeck of State Street, Veazie, ME, was convicted of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony, for UI fraud. He was sentenced to five years in state jail, six months to serve, four years and six months suspended, four years and six months probation, and court ordered restitution of \$8,788. An administrative penalty was also administered.
- In November 2004, Andrew J. Chase of Stetson Street, Warwick, RI, was convicted of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony, for UI fraud. He entered a nolo plea and was sentenced to five years suspended sentence, five years probation, court ordered restitution of \$9,877, and court costs and fines. An administrative penalty was also administered.
- In November 2004, Lloyd Winsor of Nardillo Street, Johnston, RI, was convicted of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony, for UI fraud. He entered a nolo plea and was sentenced to three years suspended sentence, three years probation, court ordered restitution of \$5, 549, and court costs and fines of \$575. An administrative penalty was also administered.

“Maintaining the integrity of Rhode Island’s Unemployment Insurance program is a key priority for the UI Administration,” stated Ray Filippone, Assistant Director of Income Support. “We take a strong stand against anyone who tries to defraud the UI system. It is critical that we protect the integrity of the UI program in Rhode Island to ensure it remains financially secure and the funds are available to help those who are legitimately entitled to Unemployment Insurance benefits.”

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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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