



**For Immediate Release  
November 21, 2005**

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## **Department of Labor and Training Comes Down Hard on Fraudulent UI Claims**

CRANSTON—Adelita S. Orefice, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT), announced today that individuals who fraudulently collect Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits are being aggressively pursued for criminal charges of UI fraud. Director Orefice commented, “Prevention, detection, and elimination of fraud and abuse in the UI program is one of our top priorities. We want to ensure that eligible individuals receive unemployment benefits—we don’t want fraud and theft to eat away at this important safety net.”

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, “If DLT discovers that claimants have received UI benefits through fraudulent means, we require immediate reimbursement of overpayments in order for those 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.

In the first six months of 2005, DLT prosecuted nine criminals, resulting in dispositions and restitution of \$54,864.

- In January 2005, Roseanne Brunette of East Providence, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. She was sentenced to 5 years deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$7,284, and court costs of \$450.
- In January 2005, Patricia Napolitano of Johnston, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. She was sentenced to 5 years deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$5,324, and court costs of \$450.
- In January 2005, Jay Reuter of Wakefield, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. He was sentenced to five years probation, court ordered restitution of \$5,704 and court costs of \$450.
- In February 2005, Dennis Alves of Cranston, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. He was sentenced to five years probation, court ordered restitution of \$6,268 and court costs of \$450.

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- In February 2005, Jason Golden of Cranston, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. He was sentenced to fifty hours of community service, court ordered restitution of \$5,780 and court costs of \$90.
- In February 2005, Mathilde Francois of Providence, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. She was sentenced to five years deferred sentence, court ordered restitution of \$7,587 and court costs of \$450.
- In April 2005, Thomas G. Coningford of Cranston, RI, entered a nolo plea to obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. He was sentenced to restitution of \$5,401 which was recovered in full and court costs of \$90.
- In April 2005, Traci A. Knowles of North Providence, RI, entered a nolo plea to an amended charge of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud and was ordered to pay restitution of \$5,800 in full and court costs of \$90.
- In June 2005, Barry Martell of Houston, TX, entered a nolo plea to an amended charge of obtaining money under false pretenses, a felony for UI fraud. He received a one-year unsupervised probation and restitution of \$5,146 to be paid in full and court costs of \$215.

Fifty-nine cases are still pending final disposition, involving a total \$406,181 in UI benefits.

Mr. Filippone reiterated, “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 UI benefits.”

*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](http://www.dlt.ri.gov).*

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Governor Donald L. Carcieri



Director Adelita S. Orefice