



## **“Chasing Cheaters” Partnership Brings 100th Arrest In Combating Unemployment Insurance Fraud**

WETHERSFIELD, June 9, 2015 – A partnership between the Connecticut Department of Labor and the Division of Criminal Justice has resulted in the 100<sup>th</sup> arrest of individuals charged with illegally collecting more than \$3 million in Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. The state’s “Chasing Cheaters” program has now recouped more than \$800,000 which has been returned to the state’s unemployment fund for paying benefits and additional repayments are being made as part of court-ordered restitution.

“Those who knowingly cheat the state’s unemployment system have found out the hard way that fraud will not be tolerated in Connecticut,” said State Labor Commissioner Sharon M. Palmer. “These individuals refused to make restitution for what amounts to theft, which left us no alternative but to seek arrest warrants. Unfortunately, their actions hurt employers, the taxpayers of Connecticut, and the state’s overall economic health.”

The initiative has successfully uncovered the criminal actions of individuals who attempted to cheat the state by collecting benefits using a number of illegal tactics, including collecting while working, using another person’s social security number, or creating false employment records.

“We are dealing with the intentional theft of tax dollars that have been allocated to benefit those in need. This is not about someone making a mistake,” said Chief State’s Attorney Kevin T. Kane.

According to Kane, those charged with unemployment fraud and who fail to make payments can face violation of probation, further prosecution and a potential prison sentence. A number of the arrested individuals have also been charged with identity theft for using a Social Security number that is not assigned to them.

“It is important to the integrity of the unemployment insurance system, and to Connecticut’s employers who pay into the state fund that supports this program, to ensure benefits are provided only to those eligible to receive them,” said Commissioner Palmer.

“While Connecticut has one of the best performance records in the nation for preventing unemployment insurance fraud, the agency continues to use new technology and develop successful partnerships to improve the way we do business,” Palmer added. “Working with the Office of the Chief State’s Attorney, allows us to join forces, utilize staff more efficiently, and serve the public more effectively.”

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Using funds provided by the federal Labor Department for integrity initiatives, an Unemployment Compensation Fraud Unit was established in the Office of the Chief State's Attorney. The unit, comprised of two inspectors and a prosecutor, work with CTDOL to prosecute cases of deliberate fraud, with substantiated cases compiled from public tips, integrity software, and surveillance tools.

"No one wants to see dishonest people taking advantage of a system that exists to help those who are trying to make ends meet while looking for a new job," Kane added. "This partnership allows us to get the message out that there are serious consequences for breaking the law."

Palmer urged any person suspecting unemployment fraud to use the Labor Department's online reporting option by going to the agency's website at [www.ct.gov/dol](http://www.ct.gov/dol), using the search feature and entering the words "report fraud" to obtain the report form.

Additional information about the program can also be found on the agency's website by using the search feature and entering the words "fraud prosecution program."

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