



“Chasing Cheaters” Partnership Brings 200th Arrest In Combating Unemployment Insurance Fraud

WETHERSFIELD – March 28, 2017 – A partnership between the Connecticut Department of Labor and the Division of Criminal Justice has resulted in 200 arrests of individuals charged with illegally collecting more than \$5.5 million in Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. The state’s “Chasing Cheaters” program has now recouped nearly \$1.8 million which has been returned to the state’s unemployment fund for paying benefits.

“This partnership has allowed our agency to strengthen the integrity of the state’s unemployment insurance system and is an active warning that fraud will not be tolerated by our agency or this state,” said State Labor Commissioner Scott D. Jackson. “When individuals refuse to make restitution for what amounts to theft, it leaves us no alternative but to seek arrest warrants. Their actions hurt employers, the taxpayers of Connecticut, and the state’s overall economic health, and it is our responsibility to protect the system for those residents that are legitimately depending upon benefits while looking for new employment.”

According to Jackson, the 200th arrest involved an individual who collected \$10,884 in unemployment benefits while also working. He noted that approximately 25 percent of those arrested have paid back the owed benefit payments in full, while ongoing repayments are being made by others as part of court-ordered restitution.

“This initiative has successfully uncovered the criminal actions of individuals who are attempting to claim benefits by using a number of illegal tactics, including collecting while working, using another person’s social security number, or creating false employment records,” Jackson added.

“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.

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“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,” Jackson 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.”

Using funds provided by the U.S. Department of Labor 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.”

Jackson 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, using the search feature and entering the words “report fraud” to obtain the report form. Since the program began, tips from the public have helped to recover \$175,800 in unemployment insurance benefits that should not have been collected, and have prevented another \$2.14 million from being illegally collected.

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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Contact:
Nancy Steffens
Connecticut Department of Labor
860-263-6537
nancy.steffens@ct.gov

Contact:
Mark A. Dupuis
Office of the Chief State's Attorney
860-258-5997
mark.dupuis@ct.gov