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Unemployment Cheaters Convicted

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation continues to investigate potential fraudulent conduct of unemployment insurance (UI) claimants. In order to be eligible for benefits, claimants must be unemployed, able to work, looking for new work and cannot refuse suitable work when offered.

“Identifying fraudulent activity protects the integrity of the UI program and its solvency,” said state Labor and Regulation Secretary Marcia Hultman. “Unemployment benefits are for people who are legitimately eligible.”

Blatant cases of UI benefit fraud are referred to the Attorney General’s Office for prosecution by states attorneys. In 2014, the following people pled guilty and were convicted of fraud.

Claimant	Ordered to Repay	Sentence	County
Judy Foster	\$2,970 in restitution and \$354 in fines and court costs, plus attorney fees.	Jail time of 30 days and two years of probation.	Codington
William Mulroy	\$2,822.52 in restitution plus interest and \$983.60 in fines, court costs and attorney fees.	State Penitentiary of two years was suspended and two years of probation.	Union
Jerry Behnke	\$4,951.78 in restitution and \$304 in court costs and attorney fees.	Jail time of 365 days was suspended and three years of probation	Minnehaha
Shawn Christopher Castle	\$3,683.96 in restitution and \$140.05 in court and prosecution costs.	Jail time of 365 days was suspended and two years of probation.	Minnehaha
Katherine Fritz	\$2,609.52 in restitution and \$462.50 in court and prosecution costs and attorney fees.	State Penitentiary of two years was suspended. Five years of probation and jail time of 180 days, with 128 days suspended.	Minnehaha
Myron Foote	\$3,192 in restitution and \$42 in court costs.	Jail time of 180 days was suspended and one year of probation	Pennington

Charles Henry Young	\$3,359.20 in restitution and \$340.95 in court and prosecution costs and attorney fees.	State Penitentiary of two years suspended. Jail time of 180 days with 177 day suspended, plus two years of probation	Minnehaha
Megan Wynja	\$1,191 in court costs and attorney fees.	State Penitentiary of two years suspended. Jail time of 180 days with 120 days suspended (of the 60 days served two days were in jail with 58 days of electronic monitoring). Three years of probation.	Lincoln

“Typically, fraudulent claims happen when claimants return to work and fail to report their earned wages, while still collecting unemployment benefits,” said Secretary Hultman.

Claimants who falsify information regarding their employment status to receive benefits must repay all the benefits fraudulently received, and also forfeit the right to collect some benefits in the future.

To report tips on potential fraud, contact the Division of Unemployment Insurance Benefit Payment Control Unit at 605.626.7649 or unemploymentfraud@state.sd.us.