

Texas Workforce Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: June 18, 2008

MEDIA CONTACT: Ann Hatchitt

PHONE: (512) 463-8556

TWC Prosecutes Greater Austin-Area Claimants for Unemployment Insurance Fraud

AUSTIN – The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) warns that criminal prosecutions for Unemployment Insurance (UI) fraud are pursued aggressively. TWC refers cases in which UI benefits are obtained through fraud or deception to respective local district attorney offices. TWC has provided evidence resulting in the recent prosecutions of six Greater Austin-area claimants. Restitution orders totaling \$32,590 will be returned to the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund, which TWC administers for the state of Texas.

Hays County

- Adolph A. Quintero, 33, was convicted of Class A misdemeanor fraudulently obtaining Unemployment Insurance benefits by County Court at Law No. 2 and sentenced to two years regular probation. Quintero was ordered to make \$8,896 restitution, pay an \$800 fine and \$236 in court costs, and perform 80 hours of community service.

Travis County

- Jackie R. Fitzpatrick, 42, received three years deferred adjudication probation from the 331st District Court on the charge of state jail felony securing execution of document by deception. Fitzpatrick was ordered to make \$5,940 restitution, pay \$293 in court costs and perform 120 hours of community service.
- Isabel C. Gonzalez, 34, received one year deferred adjudication probation from the 167th District Court on the charge of state jail felony attempted securing execution of document by deception. Gonzalez made \$6,380 restitution before sentencing and was ordered to pay a \$500 fine.
- Gerard L. Nevit, 52, received two years deferred adjudication probation from the 390th District Court on the charge of state jail felony securing execution of document by deception. Nevit made \$5,104 restitution before sentencing and was ordered to perform 120 hours of community service.
- Guy L. Strickland, 43, was convicted by the 403rd District Court of state jail felony securing execution of document by deception, and was sentenced to five years prison time.

Williamson County

- Robert J. Azevedo II, 47, received five years deferred adjudication probation from the 26th District Court on the charge of state jail felony theft. As a condition of probation, Azevedo was ordered to serve 30 days in jail. He also was ordered to make \$6,270 restitution and pay a \$2,500 fine.

TWC's Regulatory Integrity Division is charged with detecting and preventing fraud, waste and abuse. The division enforces all regulatory statutes within the jurisdiction of the agency, including Tax, Workforce, Trade Act, Skills Development, Self-Sufficiency, Child Care and all other programs that TWC administers. Prevention, detection and elimination of fraud and abuse in the UI program are top priorities, ensuring that funds are available exclusively to those who meet the eligibility requirements.

TWC administers UI benefits to workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own and are actively seeking work. TWC regularly cross matches UI claims with employer wage reports and other databases to detect possible UI fraud. If TWC discovers that claimants have received UI benefits through fraudulent applications, the agency seeks immediate reimbursement of overpayments. Examples of UI fraud include giving false information and failure to report self-employment or other earnings while receiving UI benefits.

To report suspected UI fraud, call the TWC Fraud and Program Abuse Hotline at (800) 252-3642. For monthly updates on fraud convictions, see TWC's Web site at <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/bnfts/prosecutiondispo.html>.

###ash

The Texas Workforce Commission is a state agency dedicated to helping Texas employers, workers and communities prosper economically. For details on TWC and the programs it offers in unison with its network of local workforce development boards, call (512) 463-8556 or visit www.texasworkforce.org.