

AUGUST 03, 2023

Carr: Eight Former State Employees Indicted in Fulton County for Unemployment Insurance Fraud

ATLANTA, GA – Attorney General Chris Carr today announced that eight former state employees have been indicted in Fulton County. The defendants are alleged to have submitted false claims and weekly certifications to the Georgia Department of Labor (DOL) to receive unemployment insurance benefits when they were employed by the State of Georgia. All of the alleged conduct occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Government employees are entrusted to operate honestly and ethically, and those who do not will be held accountable,” said Carr. “We will not hesitate to pursue any individual who works for our state and seeks to illegally obtain public funds for their own personal gain. We are committed to protecting taxpayer dollars no matter the amount, and this type of fraud will not be tolerated.”

The indictments follow an investigation conducted by the State of Georgia Office of the Inspector General (OIG) with assistance from Georgia DOL and the Office of Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Labor.

“OIG has worked closely with DOL and the Attorney General’s Office in bringing this case for prosecution,” said Interim State Inspector General Nigel Lange. “Georgia public servants who seek to illegally further their own interests rather than those of the public they serve will be caught. These indictments send a clear message to any likeminded individuals. OIG is focused on reducing corruption in State government and relies upon the vigilance of its partner agencies to continue with the mission.”

The Attorney General’s Public Integrity and White Collar Crime Unit presented evidence to a Fulton County Grand Jury, resulting in the indictment* of the eight defendants on July 27, 2023. Each of the defendants was charged separately, as listed below.

James Neville:

- 19 counts of False Statements and Writings (O.C.G.A. § 16-10-20)
- 2 counts of Violation of the Georgia Employment Security Law (O.C.G.A. § 34-8-256)

La-Kira Williams:

- 14 counts of False Statements and Writings (O.C.G.A. § 16-10-20)
- 2 counts of Violation of the Georgia Employment Security Law (O.C.G.A. § 34-8-256)

Denice Vance:

- 10 counts of False Statements and Writings (O.C.G.A. § 16-10-20)
- 2 counts of Violation of the Georgia Employment Security Law (O.C.G.A. § 34-8-256)

Divincia Richardson:

- 10 counts of False Statements and Writings (O.C.G.A. § 16-10-20)
- 1 count of Violation of the Georgia Employment Security Law (O.C.G.A. § 34-8-256)

Willie Jones:

- 10 counts of False Statements and Writings (O.C.G.A. § 16-10-20)
- 1 count of Violation of the Georgia Employment Security Law (O.C.G.A. § 34-8-256)

Tamika C. Goodwin:

- 8 counts of False Statements and Writings (O.C.G.A. § 16-10-20)

Curesha Blair:

- 5 counts of False Statements and Writings (O.C.G.A. § 16-10-20)

Regina Sterling:

- 3 counts of False Statements and Writings (O.C.G.A. § 16-10-20)

A copy of the indictments can be found [here](#). No further information about the investigation or the indictments may be released at this time by the Office of the Attorney General.

**Members of the public should keep in mind that indictments contain only allegations against the individual against whom the indictment is sought. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty, and it will be the government's burden at trial to prove the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of the allegations contained in the indictment.*