

U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of Connecticut*

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**GEORGIA WOMAN SENTENCED TO 51 MONTHS IN
PRISON FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS THEFT SCHEME**

Deirdre M. Daly, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced that VICKY SUE COHRAN, 53, of Temple, Georgia, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Alvin W. Thompson in Hartford to 51 months of imprisonment, followed by three years of supervised release, for stealing numerous identities while operating a “fictitious employer scheme” that defrauded state unemployment insurance programs of approximately \$125,000.

According to court documents and statements made in court, state unemployment insurance programs use employee wages as reported by employers to determine an employee’s benefit amount when the employee files a valid claim for benefits. COHRAN, with the assistance of her two sons, utilized several state unemployment insurance program websites to register businesses that had no actual employees, business operations or normal business expenses. COHRAN and her sons then created and submitted fictitious wage reports that used names and identifying information of individuals without their knowledge. COHRAN and her sons then posed as fictitious employees to file claims for unemployment benefits.

Through this scheme, COHRAN used the names and identifying information of approximately 27 individuals to steal a total of \$120,214 from the unemployment insurance programs of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Washington, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and New Jersey.

The scheme was uncovered shortly after COHRAN registered a fictitious business with the Connecticut Department of Labor in September 2014. In November 2014, three purported employees of the fictitious business filed claims for unemployment benefits with the Connecticut Department of Labor.

COHRAN was ordered to pay full restitution.

On August 11, 2015, COHRAN pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, one count of aggravated identity theft and one count of misuse of a social security number.

Also today, Christopher Cohran, 26, of Temple, Georgia, waived his right to indictment and pleaded guilty in Hartford federal court to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, a charge that carries a maximum term of imprisonment of 20 years. He is scheduled to be sentenced on March 30, 2016. Nathan Cohran, 30, of Temple, is scheduled to plead guilty to the same charge tomorrow.

This investigation is being conducted by the Social Security Administration – Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Office of the Chief State’s Attorney, Connecticut Department of Labor, Winter Park (Fla.) Police Department, Pinellas County (Fla.) Sheriff’s Department, Villa Rica (Ga.) Police Department, Temple (Ga.) Police Department and Carroll County (Ga.) Sheriff’s Department.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Douglas P. Morabito.

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