

## FIVE PEOPLE CHARGED WITH FRAUDULENTLY COLLECTING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS



Five people have been charged with fraudulently collecting \$117,000 in unemployment benefits whilst continuing to work. They will be arraigned tomorrow in two separate courts by prosecutors for Attorney General Martha Coakley's office. The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's Department of Unemployment Assistance referred the case to the Attorney General's Office saying, "We allege these defendants collected unemployment benefits while continuing to work in violation of the law." Attorney General Coakley said. "Unemployment fraud puts a strain on the system and the detection, investigation, and prosecution of these crimes are important to deter fraud and return these funds back to the Commonwealth." The first of the five defendants is Robert Reynolds, age 42, of Hudson, NH, who is charged with unemployment fraud on 89 counts. He applied for and received unemployment benefits from EOLWDDUA between January 2008 and May 2010. During the time he received the unemployment benefits he was available for work, even though he told the authorities he was not working. According to the authorities, he defrauded the EOLWDDUA to the tune of around \$42,796, whilst at the same time earning around \$92,491 from his employment. Gary Alvarado, aged 28 is charged of unemployment fraud on 59 counts and larceny over \$250. He too followed the same modus operandi as Reynolds and collected unemployment benefits for 59 weeks collecting \$35,105 in unemployment benefits, whilst earning an almost equal amount, whilst working during this period. Of the remaining three, Justin Otting stands accused of 31 counts of unemployment fraud and larceny. Its alleged Otting collected \$10,890 in unemployment benefits while earning close to \$14,000 working for three different employers. Andrea Mom Ieng, 39, of Lowell, Mass., will face upto 24 counts of unemployment fraud and larceny in Boston Municipal Court for the \$10,464 in unemployment benefits prosecutors say she defrauded between May and November 2010 while simultaneously working full time and earning a \$26,754 salary. The last of the five defendants, Zelda Williams is charged with 49 counts of unemployment fraud and larceny. Authorities said she collected unemployment benefit worth \$18,342 from the state between November 2008 and October 2009, while earning \$35,521. AG Coakley's Insurance and Unemployment Fraud Division looks into allegations of fraud and helps bring to justice the perpetrators of unemployment fraud. In 2011, the Insurance and Unemployment Fraud Division obtained \$5,578,934 in restitution orders in 33 matters. The Unemployment Services Trust (UST) has revealed that many states, seeing the increasing cases of unemployment fraud, are cracking the whip and bringing to book fraudulent beneficiaries. Last year fraudulent unemployment claims were almost \$17 billion.