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**ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN CRACKS DOWN ON UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FRAUD SCHEME**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan has announced that a Cook County Grand Jury handed down charges yesterday in an unemployment securities fraud scheme in which eight individuals allegedly applied for and received nearly \$100,000 total in unemployment insurance benefits without reporting that they were gainfully employed at the time.

"Unemployment funds are meant to help the thousands of Illinoisans who are struggling to make ends meet due to job loss," said AG Madigan. "We will continue our work on these cases so we can hold these individuals accountable."

Those charged are Keith Chatman, 38, Gary Dellert, 52, Terrence Griffin, 43, Francisca Rose, 53, and Tyrone Simmons, 47 - all of Chicago, Ill.; Anthony Mitchell, 40, of Country Club Hills, Ill., Yerre Esto Patton, 38, of Harvey, Ill., and Shaw Grace, 34 of Matteson, Ill. Each is charged with one count of state benefits fraud, theft and perjury, which are Class 2 and 3 felonies and punishable by up to seven years in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

All eight individuals allegedly applied for and received unemployment insurance benefits in amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 and subsequently failed to report their earned wages, which would have reduced or eliminated their eligibility for benefits. Unemployment benefits are paid by a check bearing a warning just above the endorsement line that any person endorsing such a check does so under penalty of criminal prosecution if they have provided false or misleading information or concealed information in order to obtain benefits.

Attorney General Madigan's Financial Crimes Bureau is prosecuting the case following investigations conducted by the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES).

"The Department's rigorous internal controls identified the suspicious behavior and our staff worked vigorously to alert the proper authorities in General Madigan's office," IDES Director Maureen O'Donnell said. "Being responsible stewards of the public's money includes new and evolving safeguards against potential fraud and theft."

Assistant Attorney General Deidre Dyer is handling the case for Madigan's Financial Crimes Bureau. The public is reminded that these are merely charges and that the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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