



Former Amtrak employee sentenced to prison, restitution after swindling customers out of more than \$23k for phony Amtrak trip to New York City

January 13, 2023

NEW ORLEANS – A former Amtrak employee was sentenced January 4 for wire fraud related to a fake New York City train trip she invented to bilk customers out of approximately \$23,000 to \$26,000 in payments and for submitting fraudulent sick benefit claims to the Railroad Retirement Board, according to a press release from the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Eastern District of Louisiana.

According to the press release, Kenya Butler-Small, a former On-board Services Train Attendant, was ordered to serve concurrent terms of six months of incarceration for two wire fraud charges and to pay restitution to the victims. In addition, she was ordered to serve two years of supervised release following her incarceration, the first six months of which will consist of home incarceration with location monitoring as well as a mandatory \$100 special assessment fee for each count.

Butler-Small recruited more than 40 individuals to purchase spots on a completely fabricated excursion she described as a group trip to New York City that included related activities such as shows and museum visits. Butler-Small charged each victim prices ranging from \$250 to \$425 for the fake trip.

She claimed that the train would leave New Orleans at midnight on June 21, 2019, but she never booked such a trip despite telling victims that she had done so. When the date of the trip approached, Butler-Small falsely claimed that Amtrak canceled the trip when a passenger booked for the trip assaulted an Amtrak employee and issued a bomb threat.

Butler-Small also submitted fraudulent sick benefit claims to the Railroad Retirement Board, claiming she was too sick to work. In truth, Butler-Small was working another job when she claimed to be sick. She received approximately \$4,679 in sick benefits as a result.

This case was investigated by the Amtrak Office of Inspector General and the Railroad Retirement Board Office of Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorney Chandra Menon was in charge of the prosecution.

Reports of fraud, waste, or abuse; criminal or unethical acts affecting Amtrak’s property or operations; or mismanagement in Amtrak programs or operations can be made 24 hours a day via the Amtrak OIG Hotline at 1-800-468-5469 or online at <https://direc.to/hPAu>.

-###-