

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Eastern District of Michigan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, October 11, 2019

Melvindale Man Sentenced for Defrauding the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency

A Melvindale, Michigan resident was sentenced yesterday to 70 months in federal prison after having pleaded guilty to wire fraud and aggravated identity theft in connection with unemployment compensation scheme, United States Attorney Matthew Schneider announced today.

Schneider was joined in the announcement by Tim Kolar, State Administrator – Investigations and Collections Unemployment Insurance

LeRoy Constantine, 33, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Mark A. Goldsmith who also ordered Constantine to pay full restitution in the amount of \$188,946 and 3 years of supervised release.

According to information provided to the court at the June 4, guilty plea, from April 2016 through May 2016, Constantine obtained personal identifying information of unsuspecting victims, including their name, date of birth, and social security numbers and submitted false claims to the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency for unemployment insurance benefits. Once Constantine falsely applied for the benefits, he would receive a prepaid debit card charged with unemployment insurance benefit funds and use them for his personal benefit. Constantine submitted 63 false claims which resulted in a loss to the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency of \$188,946.

“Unemployment insurance is designed to provide benefits for employees who need money while they are out of work,” Schneider said. “People who abuse the system will pay the consequences.”

“Leroy Constantine stole the identities of Michigan residents, causing harm to those victims, taxpayers, and business owners, stated Administrator Kolar. “The Unemployment Insurance Agency, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, and the U.S. Attorney’s Office remain committed to investigating, charging and convicting these criminals. Justice will continue to prevail.”

The investigation of this case was conducted by the Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General with the assistance of the State of Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency Fraud Division. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jihan Williams.

Topic(s):

Identity Theft

Component(s):

[USAO - Michigan, Eastern](#)