

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Northern District of Illinois

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, February 3, 2022

Suburban Chicago Man Charged With Fraudulently Obtaining Unemployment Benefits

CHICAGO — A suburban Chicago man has been charged in federal court with fraudulently obtaining unemployment benefits in the names of hundreds of individuals whose information was used without their knowledge.

DARRONTE REGGANS, 33, of Matteson, Ill., is charged with ten counts of wire fraud and two counts of aggravated identity theft. Reggans pleaded not guilty during his arraignment Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Chicago. A status hearing is scheduled for March 1, 2022, before U.S. District Judge Martha M. Pacold.

According to the indictment, Reggans obtained unemployment insurance benefits from the Illinois Department of Employment Security by falsely and fraudulently representing that the purported claimants had worked and been terminated without fault by various employers. Reggans requested payment from IDES via debit card and directed the agency to mail the cards to various addresses he selected, the indictment states. Reggans then allegedly used the cards to withdraw the fraudulently obtained benefits from automated teller machines.

The charges allege that Reggans filed and caused to be filed approximately 296 fraudulent claims in the names of other individuals, using their names, Social Security numbers, dates of birth, and other personal identifying information without their knowledge. The fraudulent claims sought at least \$3.6 million in benefits and caused IDES to issue benefits totaling approximately \$174,000, the indictment states.

The indictment was announced by John R. Lausch, Jr., United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Division of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; and William Hedrick, Inspector-in-Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service in Chicago. Substantial assistance was provided by the Matteson, Ill., Police Department, and the DuPage County State's Attorney's Office. The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider.

"Unemployment insurance benefits provide a lifeline to many Americans facing economic hardships and job losses," said U.S. Attorney Lausch. "We will continue to work with our federal and state partners to hold accountable those who seek to commit fraud in connection with this important program."

"An important part of the mission of the Office of Inspector General is to investigate allegations involving unemployment insurance fraud," said DOL-OIG SAC Lindow. "We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to investigate these types of allegations."

"The U.S. Postal Inspection Service is dedicated to holding responsible those who attempt to compromise the integrity of the U.S. Mail in furtherance of criminal activity," said USPIS Inspector-

in-Charge Hedrick. “Postal Inspectors will continue working with our law enforcement partners to pursue justice on behalf of Postal customers in our community.”

The public is reminded that an indictment is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Each count of wire fraud is punishable by up to 20 years in federal prison, while each count of aggravated identity theft is punishable by a mandatory two-year sentence. If convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under federal statutes and the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines.

Attachment(s):

[Download Reggans indictment](#)

Topic(s):

Cyber Crime
Financial Fraud
Identity Theft
Labor & Employment

Component(s):

[USAO - Illinois, Northern](#)

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