

Office of the Attorney General
The Capitol
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New Release:

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Indictment Of Westchester County Residents For Allegedly Stealing \$69,000 In Unemployment Benefits

Defendants Accused Of Faking Documentation To Twice Obtain Unemployment Benefits

ALBANY – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the indictment of Dennis Broccolo, 55 of New Rochelle and Stephanie Vega, 27 of New Rochelle on felony charges stemming from the alleged theft of \$69,000 in unemployment benefits. The defendants are accused of twice submitting false applications for unemployment insurance benefits by claiming to have worked for two different companies at which they were never employed.

“Unemployment benefits are intended to help those who fall on tough times, not line the pockets of fraudsters,” said **Attorney General Schneiderman**. “When individuals file false claims for unemployment benefits it harms those who are in real need of assistance and my office is committed to holding individuals accountable when they cheat the system.”

The indictment and other papers filed with the court allege that the defendants falsely claimed to have worked for Bassa Iripinia Corporation when both applied for unemployment benefits in October 2012. In support of their claims, both Broccolo and Vega submitted documents purportedly signed by the corporation’s president. However, the indictment alleges it was not the president’s signature and they, in fact, never worked for the corporation.

After Broccolo and Vega received the maximum allowable benefits under the October 2012 claims, in November, 2014, Broccolo and Vega again allegedly applied for unemployment insurance benefits, this time claiming they worked for Drakemain Café & Lounge. In support of their claims, both Broccolo and Vega are accused of submitting paystubs purportedly from the company despite having never worked for the company.

The alleged theft of unemployment insurance benefits occurred between October 3, 2012 and May 31, 2015.

Broccolo was arraigned before the Honorable Peter Lynch in Albany County Court on one count of Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, three counts of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and 12 counts of Offering a False Instrument for filing. Vega was also arraigned before the Honorable Peter Lynch in Albany County Court on one count of Grand Larceny in the Second Degree, three counts of Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and 10 counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted, both could face up to 15 years in prison. Both defendants pleaded not guilty and bail was set at \$50,000 for Dennis Broccolo and \$10,000 for Stephanie Vega.

The charges are accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant Attorney General Bridget Holohan Scally of the Public Integrity Bureau. The Public Integrity Bureau is led by Bureau Chief Daniel Cort and Deputy Bureau Chief Stacy Aronowitz. The investigation was conducted by Investigator Mitch Paurowski of the Investigations Bureau, with the assistance of Investigator Michelle Martone of the New York State Department of Labor's Office of Special Investigations. The Attorney General's Office thanks the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations for their work on the case. The Attorney General's Investigations Bureau is led by Bureau Chief Dominick Zarrella and Deputy Bureau Chief Antoine Karam. The Criminal Division is led by Executive Deputy Attorney General for Criminal Justice Kelly Donovan.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the New York Attorney's Office for at <http://www.ag.ny.gov>.