

PRESS RELEASE

Citrus Heights Couple Sentenced for \$1 Million Unemployment Insurance Benefits Fraud Scheme

Thursday, August 7, 2025

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of California

Citrus Heights residents Deshawn Oshaea Campbell, 38, and Rochelle Pasley, 35, were sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Daniel J. Calabretta to seven years and three months and five years and five months respectively and ordered to pay \$1,157,000 in restitution, Acting U.S. Attorney Kimberly A. Sanchez announced.

According to court documents, between June 2020 and December 2020, Campbell and Pasley conspired to defraud by filing fraudulent unemployment insurance claims with the California Employment Development Department (EDD) seeking Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits under the CARES Act. During the conspiracy, the defendants obtained the identifying information of other individuals and used their identities to submit dozens of fraudulent claims. The claims represented, among other things, that the claimants had recently lost employment or were unable to find employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These claims were fraudulent because, for instance, many of the individuals whose identities were used did not reside in California and were thus ineligible for benefits from EDD.

"Since the beginning of the pandemic, the U.S. Attorney's Office has been committed to combatting fraud that abuses the provisions of the CARES Act," said Acting U.S. Attorney Sanchez. "We will continue to prosecute fraud arising out of the pandemic and bring offenders to justice."

In the applications, the defendants used mailing addresses that were under their control, or under the control of their family and friends. EDD approved more than 50 of the fraudulent claims and authorized Bank of America to mail out EDD debit cards containing benefits. The defendants then obtained these debit cards and used them to withdraw the benefits at ATMs throughout California and to make direct purchases, all for their own benefit. The scheme resulted in EDD paying out more than \$1 million.

"These defendants stole from our nation's unemployment insurance program by fraudulently filing for UI benefits in the names of individuals who were not entitled to such benefits. They took advantage of the UI program at a time when so many deserving American workers were suffering from pandemic-related economic challenges. The U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General remains committed to combating UI fraud and holding individuals accountable for their fraudulent schemes. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding investigative work of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the California Employment Development Department-Investigations Division, and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of California in this collaborative investigative effort," said Quentin Heiden, Special Agent-in-Charge, Western Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

In addition to the mail fraud scheme, Campbell pleaded guilty to possessing a firearm after having been convicted of a felony.

This case was the product of an investigation by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, and the EDD – Investigation Division. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jessica Delaney and Justin Lee prosecuted the case.

This effort is part of a California COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Strike Force operation, one of five interagency COVID-19 fraud strike force teams established by the U.S. Department of Justice. The California Strike Force combines law enforcement and prosecutorial resources in the Eastern and Central Districts of California and focuses on large-scale, multistate pandemic relief fraud perpetrated by criminal organizations and transnational actors. The strike forces use prosecutor-led and data analyst-driven teams to identify and bring to justice those who stole pandemic relief funds.

Updated August 7, 2025

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