

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Detroit Man Sentenced on Charges related to Theft of \$1.6M in Unemployment Insurance Benefits from Nine States

A Detroit man was sentenced today to 39 months in federal prison on charges of wire fraud and identity theft, in connection with a scheme to defraud and obtain more than \$1.6 million in unemployment insurance benefits from nine states, announced United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison.

Joining in the announcement were Josh P. Hauxhurst, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Detroit Field Office, and Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

Jordan Armstrong, 29, of Detroit, was sentenced by United States District Judge Victoria A. Roberts in United States District Court in Detroit this morning.

According to court records, beginning in early May 2020, and continuing through October 2020, Armstrong, without various individuals' knowledge or approval, submitted fraudulent applications for unemployment insurance benefits in the names of individuals in Michigan, California, Texas, Arizona, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Massachusetts, New York, and Louisiana. Armstrong attempted the same scheme in eight other states—in total filing more than 300 claims across 17 states and territories. Armstrong submitted these claims using individuals' Social Security Numbers and other personal identifiable information. Armstrong directed the benefits to be paid out via debit cards and then used these cards to repeatedly withdraw the funds via ATMs throughout Metro Detroit.

Armstrong was also ordered to pay restitution to the victim-states in the total amount of \$1,611,202.

"Today's sentence is another example of our ongoing efforts to investigate and prosecute the unprecedented theft of unemployment insurance benefits that occurred during the pandemic. These expanded unemployment insurance benefits were intended as a lifeline for those needing help during a time of great stress and uncertainty. We will continue to hold the individuals who stole those monies accountable," stated U.S. Attorney Dawn N. Ison.

"Mr. Armstrong's scheme exploited programs designed to support small businesses and unemployed Americans and diverted money away from those who were in need during the pandemic," said Josh Hauxhurst, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Detroit Division. "Thanks to the hard work of all the agencies involved in this investigation, Mr. Armstrong has been held to account for his criminal actions."

"Jordan Armstrong defrauded multiple state workforce agencies of more than \$2.6 million by filing for unemployment insurance benefits in the names of identity theft victims. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners and state workforce agencies to protect the integrity of unemployment insurance benefit programs," said Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

The investigation of this case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, with the assistance of the Birmingham Police Department. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Ryan A. Particka.

Component(s):

USAO - Michigan, Eastern