

RESS RELEASE

Nevada Man Charged In \$500,830 COVID-19 Unemployment Fraud Scheme

Wednesday, August 27, 2025

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Nevada

LAS VEGAS – A Las Vegas man made his initial appearance in court yesterday for allegedly defrauding the Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation (DETR) and the California Employment Development Department (EDD) in a scheme to steal \$500,830 in benefits meant to assist unemployed individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A federal grand jury indicted Craig Renard Gibson with five counts of bank fraud, one count of illegal transactions with access devices, and four counts of aggravated identity theft. United States Magistrate Judge Daniel J. Albregts scheduled a jury trial to begin October 20, 2025 before United States District Judge Richard F. Boulware.

"An important part of the mission of the Office of Inspector General is to investigate allegations of fraud involving the unemployment insurance program. This collaborative investigative effort with our local, state, and federal partners reaffirms our commitment to investigate these types of allegations," said Quentin Heiden, Special Agent-in-Charge, Western Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

According to allegations contained in court documents, from about August 26, 2020, to about December 9, 2020, Gibson and others possessed debit cards issued in the names of other individuals that contained unemployment insurance benefits provided by the Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation (DETR) and the California Employment Development Department (EDD). After obtaining the debit cards, Gibson and others illegally withdrew over \$500,000 in funds from these cards.

Gibson faces a maximum statutory penalty of 162 years' imprisonment and a fine of \$5,250,000. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Sigal Chattah for the District of Nevada and Special Agent-in-Charge Quentin Heiden for the Western Region, Department of Labor-OIG made the announcement.

The Department of Labor-OIG and Department of Homeland Security-OIG investigated the case. Assistant United States Attorney Mina Chang is prosecuting the case.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Justice Department's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 1-866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form.

An indictment is merely an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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