

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 6, 2021

Allen Park Tax Preparer Arrested in Scheme to Obtain Pandemic Unemployment Benefits

An Allen Park resident was arrested today in connection with a federal criminal complaint charging him with obtaining unemployment benefits authorized by the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act by means of false and fraudulent pretenses and representations, by using the personally identifiable information of others that he had unlawfully obtained, announced Acting United States Attorney Saima S. Mohsin.

Joining in the announcement were Special Agent in Charge Irene Lindow, U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General, Special Agent in Charge Sarah Kull, IRS-Criminal Investigation, Special Agent in Charge Douglas Zloto, U.S. Secret Service, and Acting Director Liza Estlund Olson, Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA).

Charged in the criminal complaint is **Christopher Dominic Niebel**, 43, of

Allen Park, Michigan. The affidavit supporting the complaint states that Niebel was responsible for or associated with over 100 fraudulent unemployment insurance accounts. The total amount of unemployment benefits paid through those fraudulent accounts by the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) from March through August 2020 was approximately \$849,000.00. Niebel was the account holder on at least 28 of the bank accounts to which the unemployment benefits were electronically transferred. These benefits included regular unemployment benefits but were mostly pandemic-related unemployment benefits provided through the CARES Act.

The complaint affidavit also relates that Niebel held himself out as a tax preparer under the name "Tax Guy Chris" with an office in Allen Park.

A complaint is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. Trial cannot be held on felony charges in a complaint. When the investigation is completed a determination will be made whether to seek a felony indictment.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Stephen Hiyama. The investigation is being conducted jointly by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General, IRS-Criminal Investigation, the U.S. Secret Service, and the Michigan UIA.

Topic(s):
Coronavirus

Component(s):
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