

**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of California

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 27, 2021

## **Arkansas Woman Pleads Guilty to Unemployment Benefits Fraud**

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Deborah Shannell Hollimon, 44, of West Memphis, Arkansas, pleaded guilty today to committing mail fraud in connection with California state unemployment insurance benefits, Acting U.S. Attorney Phillip A. Talbert announced.

According to court documents, from September 2012 through September 2015, Hollimon and others filed over 100 fraudulent unemployment insurance claims with the California Employment Development Department (EDD) seeking approximately \$882,991 using fictitious businesses. Hollimon created fictitious employers with EDD and then submitted information to EDD reporting fake employees for the businesses. Almost all, of the individuals reported as employees of the companies were actually victims of identity theft. Hollimon subsequently filed unemployment claims in her own name and in the names of the fake employees in order to collect the benefits. Approximately \$569,168 in fraudulent benefits was paid out by EDD.

This case is the product of an investigation by the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General and the California Employment Development Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Shea J. Kenny is prosecuting the case.

Hollimon is scheduled to be sentenced by U.S. District Judge Troy L. Nunley on Aug. 19. Hollimon faces a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of any applicable statutory factors and the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables.

**Topic(s):**  
Financial Fraud

**Component(s):**  
[USAO - California, Eastern](#)

Updated May 27, 2021