

California Man Sentenced to 120 Months In Prison For Fraudulently Obtaining \$46 Million In Public Benefits And Laundering Proceeds To China

Thursday, May 14, 2026

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Middle District of Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG - The United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Pennsylvania announced that Brian R. Cleland, age 72, a resident of Los Angeles, California, was sentenced on May 14, 2026, to 120 months in prison by United States District Judge Jennifer P. Wilson for conspiracy to launder monetary instruments in the amount of approximately \$46.4 million.

On April 7, the Department of Justice announced the creation of the National Fraud Enforcement Division ("Fraud Division"). The Fraud Division is laser-focused on investigating and prosecuting those who commit fraud against the American people. The Department's work to combat fraud supports President Trump's Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, a whole-of-government effort chaired by Vice President J.D. Vance to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse within Federal benefit programs.

According to United States Attorney Brian D. Miller, Cleland previously pleaded guilty on November 17, 2025, and admitted that he and his coconspirators Bruce Jin, Age 61, and Carlos A. Grijalva, age 60, both of Los Angeles, California, along with other unnamed coconspirators, conspired to obtain state unemployment compensation funds, and other public funds, through fraudulent means. Cleland, Jin, Grijalva, and others entered into a series of agreements to make it appear as if they were operating legitimate businesses selling masks and other COVID19 personal protective equipment. The funds that the defendants obtained and laundered through their companies were derived from fraudulently obtained state unemployment compensation ("UC") benefits. Economic Impact Payments, or "stimulus payments," were also obtained through fraudulent means.

Unnamed members of the conspiracy, including some believed to be located in China, established thousands of accounts at banks across the United States using the personal identifying information ("PII") of identity theft victims. From there, fraudulent UC claims were generated and paid to these accounts, including accounts in the names of people

residing in the Middle District of Pennsylvania. These fraudulent UC claims were also generated by fraudsters based in China. As a result of this fraudulent activity, millions of dollars in fraudulent UC payments were made by Pennsylvania, Virginia, Florida, and other states.

After UC funds were paid out, they were then transferred from identity theft victims' accounts to companies controlled by Cleland, Jin, and Grijalva. For instance, Jin, through companies that he controlled known as Ample International and Jin Commerce, received over \$12 million in UC funds from the accounts of identity theft victims. In addition, the defendants used ACH processing—a type of electronic bank-to-bank transfer—to obtain over \$45 million in fraudulent funds from the accounts of identity theft victims. This money mostly went from the accounts of identity theft victims to companies controlled by Cleland and Grijalva, including MexUS Service, Group Mex USA, CCB Group, GC Accounting, and CLECO. After that, Cleland and Grijalva transferred over \$30 million to Jin's companies and over \$6 million to a company controlled by an associate of Jin.

After Jin received the fraudulent funds, either from identity theft victims' accounts or from Cleland and Grijalva through ACH processing, he then made international wire transfers totaling over \$35 million to a bank account associated with a company in China, which is known in the Indictment as "COMPANY 2." Jin also transferred over \$2 million directly to the individual in China who controlled that company, who is referred to as "COCONSPIRATOR 2" in the Indictment.

Cleland was also ordered to pay approximately \$46.4 million in forfeiture.

"Brian Cleland and his co-conspirators stole millions from struggling Americans during a national emergency — hiding behind fake businesses while robbing the American people of crucial unemployment benefits and other public funds. Deplorable schemes like this end now," said Anthony P. D'Esposito, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor. "Let this sentence serve as a warning to those who attempt to exploit tax-payer funded programs; The Office of Inspector General, our law enforcement partners, and Vice President Vance's Task Force to Eliminate Fraud — will find you, investigate you, and hold you accountable to the highest extent of the law."

Jin was sentenced on April 30, 2026, to 144 months in prison and was ordered to forfeit over \$59 million in US currency, along with other properties. Grijalva has pleaded guilty and is scheduled to be sentenced on May 19, 2026.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ravi Romel Sharma and

K. Wesley Mishoe and U.S. Department of Justice Trial Attorney Patrick B. Gushue prosecuted the case.

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