

PRESS RELEASE

California Man Pleads Guilty To Committing Unemployment Insurance Benefits Fraud

Friday, April 21, 2023

For Immediate Release

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

LAS VEGAS – A California resident pleaded guilty today to using multiple California Employment Development Department (EDD) unemployment insurance benefits debit cards in other peoples' names without their authorization.

Breon Dante Mims (32), of Stockton, Calif., pleaded guilty to illegal transaction with access devices. A sentencing hearing is scheduled for July 25, 2023, before United States District Judge Gloria M. Navarro. Mims faces a statutory maximum penalty of 15 years in prison.

According to court documents and admissions made in court by Mims, on September 20, 2020, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department officers stopped Mims walking along Las Vegas Boulevard after he was observed smoking a marijuana blunt in public. During the stop, officers obtained Mims' consent to search his backpack, and they found \$10,080 in cash and 10 EDD debit cards none of which were in Mims' name. He admitted that he possessed and used these EDD debit cards without authorization; and that he submitted the unemployment claims associated with the EDD debit cards without authorization. At least \$261,600 in benefits were approved for the unemployment claims associated with the cards, and Mims withdrew at least \$77,000 from various ATMs in Nevada and California using these fraudulently obtained EDD debit cards.

United States Attorney Jason M. Frierson for the District of Nevada and Special Agent in Charge Quentin Heiden of the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General (DOL-OIG), Western Region made the announcement.

The DOL-OIG investigated the case. Assistant United States Attorney Jim Fang is prosecuting the case.

In May 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

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

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