

**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Michigan

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Detroit Man Sentenced to 36 Months in Prison for Unemployment Insurance Fraud, Illegal Gun Possession**

A Detroit man was sentenced to 36 months in prison today for having conspired to engage in mail fraud and being a felon in possession of a firearm, U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider announced.

Schneider was joined in the announcement by James Vanderberg, Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General and Wanda M. Stokes, Director of the Talent Investment Agency

According to court records, Charles H. Alexander, 54, of Detroit, participated in a multi-year scheme to fraudulently obtain unemployment insurance benefits. As part of the scheme, Alexander obtained personal identifying information of third parties and caused unemployment benefits to be issued in the names of those third parties—even though those individuals has no legitimate entitlement to such benefits. Alexander also impersonated others in order to withdraw fraudulently-obtained unemployment insurance benefits.

Alexander, who has prior convictions for illegal weapons activity, drug activity, and aggravated domestic violence, was also sentenced for having illegally possessed a loaded firearm.

“Unemployment insurance fraud hurts honest employers and employees by driving up rates and making it more difficult for legitimate claimants to receive their benefits,” stated United States Attorney Matthew Schneider. “Charles Alexander took that damaging fraud activity and made it even worse when he chose to endanger others through his illicit possession of a loaded gun. “

“Charles Alexander and his co-conspirators defrauded the Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency by falsely obtaining and using debit cards containing over \$330,000 in unemployment insurance benefits issued in the names of claimants who were not entitled to such benefits. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners and state workforce agencies to protect the integrity of unemployment insurance benefit programs,” said James Vanderberg, Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

"Stealing unemployment benefits hurts us all," Wanda M. Stokes, Director of the Talent Investment Agency said. "We are vigilant in bringing these criminals to justice and making certain they face stiff penalties for their crime. I commend Regulation Agent Kurt Eggly for his efforts to bring this criminal to justice," Stokes added.

Alexander was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Bernard A. Friedman. Judge Friedman ordered Alexander to pay \$330,561 in restitution.

The case was investigated by the Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General and the State of Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Andrew J. Yahkind.