

PRESS RELEASE

East Point, Georgia Man Sentenced to Federal Prison for CARES Act Unemployment Fraud

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

For Immediate Release

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

MONTGOMERY, AL – On May 13, 2025, a federal judge sentenced Brandon Cody Carter, 36, of East Point, Georgia, to 78 months in prison for his role in a scheme to file fraudulent unemployment insurance claims under the expanded Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The announcement was made by Acting United States Attorney Kevin Davidson and Special Agent in Charge Mathew Broadhurst, of the Southeast Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General. Following his six-and-a-half-year term of imprisonment, Carter will serve three years on supervised release. Federal inmates are not eligible for parole.

Beginning in March 2020, the CARES Act and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act expanded access to unemployment insurance programs to address the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Alabama, eligible individuals could receive enhanced benefits through the Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL).

According to court documents and Carter's plea agreement, between March and September 2020, he conspired with others to submit fraudulent unemployment insurance claims to ADOL. In doing so, Carter falsely claimed Alabama residency and used multiple aliases, submitting fictitious names, birthdates, Social Security numbers, and other fraudulent information. As a result of these false representations, ADOL issued substantial payments to Carter through unemployment insurance debit cards and direct deposits.

On January 23, 2025, Carter pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit mail fraud. During the plea hearing, he admitted his actions led ADOL to disburse \$818,304 in fraudulent claims. A restitution amount will be determined at a later date.

"This sentence reflects the seriousness of defrauding programs intended to help those truly in need during a national crisis," said Acting United States Attorney Davidson. "Brandon Carter exploited a system designed to provide relief to families facing unprecedented hardship. Our office remains committed to working with our law enforcement partners to uncover and prosecute pandemic-related fraud wherever it occurs."

"Brandon Carter defrauded the Alabama Department of Labor by filing numerous false claims for unemployment insurance benefits to which he was not entitled. He enriched himself by diverting taxpayer funds from a program that was intended to assist unemployed American workers who lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic," stated Special Agent in Charge Broadhurst. "We will continue to work closely with the U.S. Attorney's Office and our other law enforcement partners to protect the integrity of these critical benefit programs."

The U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, Alabama Department of Labor, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, U.S. Secret Service, Social Security Administration Office of Inspector General, Alabama Department of Transportation, and Alabama Law Enforcement Agency investigated this case, which Assistant United States Attorney Joel Feil prosecuted.

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 (NCDF) Hotline via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

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