

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Nevada

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, December 23, 2020

**U.S. Attorney's Office Announces: (1) Funding to Hire
Prosecutor to Combat Unemployment Insurance Fraud and
(2) Charges Against Man for Unemployment Insurance
Fraud**

LAS VEGAS, Nev. – U.S. Attorney Nicholas A. Trutanich announced today that the District of Nevada has received funding from the Department of Justice to hire a dedicated prosecutor to combat CARES Act unemployment insurance fraud.

The District of Nevada has been allocated funding to hire an Assistant United States Attorney for a one-year term, who will focus on prosecuting cases involving fraudulent schemes to unlawfully obtain unemployment insurance (UI) benefits and related offenses through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020.

“If fraudsters don’t understand it by now, they should quickly realize that our office is prioritizing the investigation and prosecution of those trying to exploit the unemployment system and harm Nevadans in need,” said U.S. Attorney Trutanich. “The additional resources from the Department of Justice will help us accomplish that goal for Nevada.”

The CARES Act allocated \$270 billion for supplemental federal UI benefits. Additionally, President Trump directed that \$44 billion in federal Disaster Relief Funds be used to provide supplemental UI benefits to eligible claimants. The substantial increase in funding for UI benefits spurred a dramatic spike in UI fraud across the country, resulting in the theft of federal funds intended to help those struggling with unemployment during the current pandemic and economic crisis.

On October 15, 2020, the U.S. Attorney's Office announced six federal criminal complaints charging ten defendants with crimes associated with unemployment insurance fraud. Since then, the Office has continued to investigate those who seek to steal taxpayer dollars meant for out-of-work Nevadans. For example, on December 21, an unlawfully-present alien, Alan Ray, was charged with federal crimes in connection with unemployment insurance fraud based on his possession of multiple unemployment debit cards not in his name. Ray, 33, of England, has been charged with one count of possession of counterfeit and unauthorized access devices and one count of aggravated identity theft.

According to allegations in the complaint, on October 27, 2020, a casino in Las Vegas reported the discovery of a package containing, among other things: 24 unemployment insurance benefits debit cards from Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR) and the California Employment Development Department (EDD), all in different names; two notebooks containing the personal identifying information (PII) of more than 80 individuals, including the PII of all 24 debits cards in the package; and four mailbox rental applications and associated mailbox keys. Ray attempted to ship the package to an address in Houston, Texas, and later attempted to retrieve the package from the casino. The complaint further alleges that Ray used multiple identities during the course of the investigation, represented himself as a U.S. citizen when he is not, and was previously deported in 2011. Investigation revealed that at least 60 unemployment insurance claims

were filed with DETR and EDD using the PII contained in the notebooks, in an effort to obtain at least \$1,149,250 in unemployment insurance benefits.

The case was investigated by the FBI with assistance from U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jim Fang is prosecuting the case.

A complaint merely alleges that a crime has been committed. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Individuals who believe that someone is fraudulently using their identity to apply for unemployment benefits should file a complaint through the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at www.ic3.gov and to [DETR's Fraud Report](#).

The public is encouraged to continue to report wrongdoing relating to the pandemic to the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) and to remain vigilant against bad actors looking to exploit this national emergency. To report a scam relating to COVID-19, you can report it without leaving your home by calling the NCDF Hotline at 1-866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form, available at <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

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Topic(s):

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

[USAO - Nevada](#)