

**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Nevada

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, May 10, 2022

**Las Vegas Woman Sentenced To Prison For Using Stolen Identities To Fraudulently Collect Over \$175,000 In Unemployment Insurance Benefits**

**LAS VEGAS** – A Las Vegas woman was sentenced today to 45 months in prison for using at least 40 stolen identities to fraudulently collect approximately \$175,622 in unemployment insurance benefits from the California Employment Development Department (EDD).

Danielle Lacharis Buck, aka Danielle Lacharis Lakey, pleaded guilty in October 2021 to one count of mail fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft. In addition to imprisonment, U.S. District Judge Kent J. Dawson sentenced Buck to three years of supervised release.

According to court documents, from September 2010 to April 2019, Buck devised and executed a scheme to defraud the California EDD — the administrator of the federally funded unemployment insurance benefit program for California residents — into paying her approximately \$175,622 in unemployment insurance benefits.

Buck had been employed in medical billings and collections. As part of the fraud scheme, Buck used her position to wrongfully obtain hospital patients' names, social security numbers, and employment information. She then used these victims' stolen identities to apply for and receive unemployment insurance benefits. Buck withdrew cash using unemployment insurance benefits debit cards at ATMs in the Las Vegas and Los Angeles metropolitan areas. In total, Buck submitted more than 50 false unemployment insurance claims using at least 40 different stolen identities.

Acting U.S. Attorney Christopher Chiou 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), Los Angeles Region made the announcement.

The case was investigated by the DOL-OIG. Assistant U.S. Attorney Eric Schmale prosecuted the case.

On May 17, 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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**Topic(s):**

Coronavirus  
Financial Fraud  
Identity Theft

**Component(s):**

[USAO - Nevada](#)

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