

PRESS RELEASE

Miami Man Sentenced to Federal Prison for \$2.3 Million COVID-19 Unemployment Insurance Benefits Fraud Scheme

Tuesday, June 24, 2025

For Immediate Release

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

Baltimore, Maryland – Today, U.S. District Judge Matthew J. Maddox sentenced David Godin, 34, of Miami, Florida, aka “James St Patrick,” “David Wetty,” and “Vic Pro,” to 78 months in federal prison, followed by three years of supervised release. Godin pled guilty to wire fraud and aggravated identity theft in connection with a scheme to defraud the Maryland Department of Labor (MD-DOL) and California Employment Development Department (CA-EDD). Judge Maddox also ordered Godin to pay a forfeiture money judgment of \$1,087,345.66 and restitution of \$1,137,894.56.

Kelly O. Hayes, U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced the sentence with Special Agent in Charge Troy W. Springer, National Capital Region, U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Inspector General (DOL-OIG), and Special Agent in Charge Kareem A. Carter, Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI), Washington, D.C. Field Office.

According to the plea agreement, from June 2020 through November 2023, Godin engaged in a sophisticated scheme to defraud the MD-DOL and CA-EDD by using the personal identifiable information of identity theft victims, anonymous email addresses, virtual private networks, and proxy servers. This enabled Godin to file numerous fraudulent unemployment insurance (UI) claims with multiple states from a single location; aggregate UI information in discrete accounts; and avoid fraud safeguards put in place by state UI insurance programs.

Godin submitted and caused the submission of at least 140 fraudulent UI claims to MD-DOL, CA-EDD, and other state workforce agencies, resulting in more than \$2.3 million in UI benefits. He obtained well over \$1 million through the fraud scheme. As the United States set forth in its sentencing submission, Godin used the money to buy nice things

and live a life of luxury. Godin then recorded himself with the spoils of his fraud, including stacks of cash, expensive watches, and sports cars.

The District of Maryland COVID-19 Strike Force is one of five strike forces established throughout the United States by the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate and prosecute COVID-19 fraud, including fraud relating to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The CARES Act was designed to provide emergency financial assistance to Americans suffering the economic effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The strike forces focus on large-scale, multi-state pandemic relief fraud perpetrated by criminal organizations and transnational actors. The strike forces are interagency law enforcement efforts, using prosecutor-led and data analyst-driven teams designed to identify and bring to justice those who stole pandemic relief funds.

For more information about the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit 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 (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form.

U.S. Attorney Hayes commended the DOL-OIG and IRS-CI for their work in the investigation. Ms. Hayes also thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Bijon A. Mostoufi and Jared Murphy, who prosecuted the case, and recognized Paralegal Specialist Joanna B.N. Huber for her assistance and legal support.

For more information about the Maryland U.S. Attorney's Office, its priorities, and resources available to report fraud, please visit justice.gov/usao-md and justice.gov/usao-md/report-fraud.

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