

**PRESS RELEASE**

# **Mineral man sentenced to over four years in prison for COVID era unemployment insurance fraud scheme**

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

**For Immediate Release**

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Virginia

RICHMOND, Va. – A Mineral man was sentenced today to four years and three months in prison for an unemployment insurance (UI) benefit fraud conspiracy he ran while on state supervision for other crimes. This case is part of the Trump Administration's Task Force to Eliminate Fraud.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government expanded and extended UI benefits for impacted workers. The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) and the Maryland Department of Labor (MD DOL) administer UI compensation in their respective states.

According to court documents, from June 2020 to October 2021, Dashawn Hunter, 29, schemed to defraud the expanded unemployment eligibility by using the personal identifying information of prison inmates and others to file fraudulent claims for UI benefits, falsely attesting that the beneficiaries were ready, willing, and able to work and that they had lost their jobs due to COVID-19. Hunter frequently would file multiple applications for a single individual to multiple different state workforce agencies. Hunter also submitted weekly recertifications of unemployment status for these fraudulent claims to continue receiving UI benefits.

Relying on the false information submitted by Hunter, various state workforce agencies, including VEC and MD DOL, approved several fraudulent UI applications. Hunter received a total of \$221,118 to which he was not entitled.

Hunter is currently incarcerated until approximately 2033 for a state conviction for armed robbery and other crimes. Today's federal sentence will be served consecutive to his state sentence.

The Court also ordered that Hunter shall forfeit and pay restitution for the full amount of \$221,118.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General investigated this case.

Former Assistant U.S. Attorney Carla Jordan-Detamore and Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick Joseph McGorman prosecuted the case.

On April 7, the Department of Justice announced the creation of the National Fraud Enforcement Division (Fraud Division). The Fraud Division is laser-focused on investigating and prosecuting those who commit fraud against the American people. The Department's work to combat fraud supports President Trump's Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, a whole-of-government effort chaired by Vice President J.D. Vance to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse within Federal benefit programs.

Related court documents and information are located on the website of the [District Court](#) for the Eastern District of Virginia or on [PACER](#) by searching for Case No. 3:25-cr-143.

**Contact**

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*Updated June 9, 2026*