

PRESS RELEASE

Norfolk man sentenced to over five years in prison for using other people's identities to defraud COVID-19 pandemic relief programs

Thursday, April 17, 2025

For Immediate Release

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

NORFOLK, Va. – A Norfolk man was sentenced yesterday to five years and ten months in prison for mail fraud and aggravated identity theft.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act expanded states' ability to provide unemployment insurance (UI) for many workers impacted by the pandemic. During that time, the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) was responsible for administering the unemployment compensation program in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Unemployed workers in Virginia could file for UI benefits either by phone or through the VEC internet portal and applicants could choose whether to have VEC deposit their unemployment benefits directly in a linked bank account or loaded onto a prepaid debit card, typically called a "Way2Go" card.

According to court documents, Dwaynald Darion Gibbs, 40, filed or caused to be filed dozens of claims resulting in the VEC's approval of approximately \$658,966 in UI benefits. The fraudulent claims were identified after a review identified multiple applications that shared certain similarities. For example, many of the claims provided the name "Legends" or "Legends Barbershop" as the former employer, used one of two mailing addresses associated with Gibbs, and provided the same telephone number. Many of the claims were also submitted from the same internet protocol address.

Gibbs pled guilty on Dec. 5, 2024.

Erik S. Siebert, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; Troy W. Springer, Special Agent in Charge, National Capital Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; and Joseph V. Cuffari, Inspector General for the Department of Homeland

Security, made the announcement after sentencing by Senior U.S. District Judge Raymond A. Jackson.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Anthony Mozzi and Kristen S. Taylor prosecuted the case.

A copy of this press release is located on the website of the [U.S. Attorney's Office](#) for the Eastern District of Virginia. 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. 2:24-cr-109.

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