

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Central District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, May 31, 2019

O.C. Man Faces Federal Mail Fraud Charges for Allegedly Using Over 200 Stolen Identities to Collect Unemployment Insurance

SANTA ANA, California – A Yorba Linda man who allegedly used more than 200 stolen identities to fraudulently collect nearly \$600,000 in unemployment insurance benefits from the California Employment Development Department (EDD) was charged today with two counts of mail fraud.

Jeffrey Silhanek, 39, was named in a criminal information filed in United States District Court.

According to the information, Silhanek obtained stolen identities and used those names to open post office boxes. Silhanek then allegedly used the stolen identities and addresses to file unemployment insurance benefit claims, without the knowledge or permission of the identity theft victims. Silhanek represented that the claimants had been laid off and were entitled to unemployment insurance benefits. To ensure that he received the benefits, Silhanek instructed the EDD to send benefit checks and debit cards to the post office boxes he controlled.

As a result of the claims that Silhanek filed, the EDD suffered losses of at least \$586,000.

The EDD is the administrator of the federally funded unemployment insurance benefit program for residents of the State of California.

Silhanek is scheduled to be arraigned in this case on July 8.

An information contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed to be innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.

This case is being investigated by the United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

This matter is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Daniel H. Ahn of the Santa Ana Branch Office.