

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Orange County Woman Sentenced to 4½ Years in Federal Prison for Unemployment Insurance Fraud

LOS ANGELES – A woman was sentenced today to 54 months in federal prison for defrauding the state's unemployment insurance program out of more than one-half million dollars by using stolen identities to submit dozens of bogus claims for "employees" who supposedly worked at sham companies.

Rolanda Ashley, 49, of Anaheim, was sentenced by United States District Judge John A. Kronstadt, who also ordered her to pay \$547,904 in restitution to her victims. Ashley pleaded guilty in October 2018 to one felony count of mail fraud.

According to her plea agreement, from October 2010 to November 2013, Ashley participated in a scheme to defraud the Employment Development Department (EDD), the state agency that administers the federal unemployment insurance program in California.

As part of the scheme, Ashley and a co-conspirator registered fictitious companies with EDD, submitted false wage information for individuals who purportedly worked for these sham companies, and then she fraudulently applied for and obtained unemployment insurance benefits in these individuals' names. At least 10 victims had their Social Security numbers and dates of birth used without their permission to further the scheme. When registering the business addresses of fake companies with EDD, Ashley listed addresses that she controlled or to which she had access. As a result of Ashley's fraudulent submissions, EDD directed a bank to mail debit cards to addresses that she listed for the fake claimants.

In total, Ashley submitted approximately 40 fraudulent claims seeking more than \$550,000 in unemployment insurance benefits.

This case was investigated by the United States Department of Labor - Office of Inspector General, and the California Employment Development Department.

This matter is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Kerry L. Quinn and Poonam G. Kumar of the Major Frauds Section.