

PRESS RELEASE

Sacramento Man Sentenced to 4.5 Years in Prison for Covid-Related Unemployment Insurance Fraud Scheme

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For Immediate Release

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

SACRAMENTO, Calif — Roosevelt Gulley, 42, of Sacramento, was sentenced Monday by U.S. District Judge Dale A. Drozd to four years and six months in prison and ordered to pay \$575,425 in restitution for wire fraud and aggravated identity theft related to unemployment insurance fraud during the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. Attorney Eric Grant announced.

"Today's sentence holds the defendant accountable for exploiting a national crisis for personal gain," said U.S. Attorney Grant. "By stealing identities and siphoning COVID-19 relief funds, he diverted critical resources intended to help struggling individuals and small businesses. Our office remains committed to protecting the integrity of federal relief programs and ensuring that those who commit fraud are brought to justice."

"While American workers were facing unemployment lines and an uncertain future during the COVID-19 crisis, Roosevelt Gulley was picking their pockets and gaming the system. This sentence is justice for every victim whose identity he stole and every hard-earned dollar he ripped off. We will not stop until every pandemic fraudster is held accountable," said Anthony P. D'Esposito, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor.

DHS Inspector General Joseph V. Cuffari, Ph.D., said, "Exploiting pandemic relief programs for personal enrichment is unconscionable. DHS OIG will continue to prioritize these investigations, and together with our law enforcement partners, we will hold these individuals accountable for their actions."

"The weaknesses in the federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program enabled widespread criminal fraud across the country," said EDD Director Nancy Farias. "We have since recovered more than \$6 billion, supported the prosecution of thousands of fraudsters, and today – more than 99 percent of our benefit payments do not involve

criminal fraud. We will continue working closely with local, state, and federal investigators to ensure those who commit fraud are identified, pursued, and brought to justice.”

According to court documents, between July and September 2020, Gulley used personally identifiable information of others to electronically submit fraudulent applications for unemployment insurance benefits to the California Employment Development Department. The claims falsely stated that the beneficiaries were self-employed, and. Gulley knew the claimants were not eligible for unemployment insurance. After benefits cards were issued, he withdrew funds at various ATMs.

Gulley also used personally identifiable information from at least two victims without their knowledge to file fraudulent benefits applications and obtain thousands of dollars in benefits. Over the course of his scheme, Gulley attempted to obtain more than \$1.5 million and actually received more than \$500,000 in fraudulent benefits.

Gulley pleaded guilty on Sept. 15, 2025.

The U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General’s COVID Fraud Unit, and California EDD’s Fraud Division conducted the investigation with assistance from the U.S. Secret Service. Assistant U.S. Attorney Douglas Harman prosecuted the case.

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