

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, July 22, 2021

**Stoneham Man Indicted for Identity Theft and Fraud
Related to COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Assistance**

BOSTON – A Stoneham man was indicted today in connection with his alleged involvement in a fraudulent scheme to obtain COVID-19-related unemployment assistance.

Daniel Maleus, 33, was indicted on one count of wire fraud, one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft. Maleus was charged by criminal complaint and arrested on April 8, 2021.

In March 2020, in response to the global coronavirus pandemic, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), which among other things, created a temporary federal unemployment insurance program called Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). The PUA, which in Massachusetts is administered by the Department of Unemployment Assistance, provides unemployment insurance benefits for individuals who are not eligible for other types of unemployment benefits.

According to the charging documents, Maleus filed and conspired with others to file fraudulent PUA claims in the names of other people. It is alleged that Maleus and his co-conspirators obtained more than \$250,000 in payments on fraudulent unemployment claims submitted between April 2020 and April 2021.

The charges of wire fraud and conspiracy to commit wire fraud each provide for a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release, a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater and forfeiture. The charge of aggravated identity theft provides for a mandatory sentence of two years in prison to be served consecutively to any other sentence imposed. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Joseph R. Bonavolanta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division; and Nikitas Splagounias, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations made the announcement. Special assistance was provided by the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance. Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Markham of Mendell's Securities, Financial & Cyber Fraud Unit is prosecuting the case.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information

and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Topic(s):

Coronavirus
Financial Fraud

Component(s):

[USAO - Massachusetts](#)

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