

PRESS RELEASE

# Troy Man Pleads Guilty to Unemployment Insurance Fraud

Thursday, February 8, 2024

## For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of New York

## Conviction Stems from False Claims Filed by Corrupt State Employee

ALBANY, NEW YORK – Christopher Ward, a/k/a “Reek,” age 45, of Troy, New York, pled guilty today to conspiring to defraud the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) by obtaining unemployment insurance benefits under the name of another person, including benefits funded by the federal government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The announcement was made by United States Attorney Carla B. Freedman; Craig L. Tremaroli, Special Agent in Charge of the Albany Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); and Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge, North East Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General (USDOL-OIG).

Ward admitted that he provided Carl J. DiVeglia III with the personal identifying information of another individual, which DiVeglia used to file a false claim via the NYSDOL website. Ward further admitted that as a result of the fraudulent application submitted by DiVeglia, the NYSDOL paid \$15,006 in unemployment insurance benefits. As part of his plea agreement, Ward agreed to pay \$15,006 in restitution to the State of New York. DiVeglia [previously pled guilty](#) to fraudulently obtaining \$1.6 million in unemployment insurance benefits as part of the scheme.

Charges against Ward’s three co-defendants, his brother Todd Ward, Rocco Resciniti and Jamaine Myers, [are still pending](#). The charges against these defendants are merely accusations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Ward faces up to 20 years in prison, a fine of up to \$250,000, and a term of supervised release of up to 3 years when he is sentenced on June 27, 2024 by United States District

Judge Glenn T. Suddaby. A defendant's sentence is imposed by a judge based on the particular statute the defendant is charged with violating, the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other factors.

The FBI and USDOL-OIG are investigating this case, with assistance from the NYSDOL Office of Special Investigations, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Joseph S. Hartunian and Joshua R. Rosenthal are 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>.

*Updated February 8, 2024*

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