

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of New Jersey

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, September 22, 2022

**Former Postal Employee Sentenced To 13 Months In Prison
For Fraud In Connection With Unemployment Insurance
Benefits**

NEWARK, N.J. – A former U.S. Postal Service USPS employee was sentenced to 13 months in prison for conspiring to fraudulently obtain unemployment insurance benefits, U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger announced.

Ross Clayton, 31, of Irvington, New Jersey, previously pleaded guilty by videoconference before U.S. District Judge Julien X. Neals to an information charging him with conspiring to commit wire fraud. Judge Neals imposed the sentence on Sept. 21, 2022, in Newark federal court.

According to documents filed in the case and statements made in court:

On March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was signed into law. The CARES Act created a new temporary federal unemployment insurance program called Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), which provided unemployment insurance benefits for individuals who were not eligible for other types of unemployment (the self-employed, independent contractors, gig economy workers). The CARES Act also created a new temporary federal program called Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (FPUC) that provided an additional \$600 weekly benefit to those eligible for PUA and regular unemployment insurance benefits.

Clayton was a USPS employee and took unemployment insurance benefits-related mail, including debit cards, from a USPS location in New Jersey. He used that mail to obtain unemployment insurance benefits to which he was not entitled.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Neals sentenced Clayton to two years of supervised release and ordered him to pay restitution in the amount of \$53,321.05 and forfeiture in the amount of \$28,397.49.

U.S. Attorney Sellinger credited special agents of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Jonathan Mellone in Manhattan; and postal inspectors of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service in Newark, under the direction of Acting Inspector in Charge Raimundo Marrero, Philadelphia Division; and special agents with the U.S. Postal Service – Office of Inspector General, Northeast Area Field Office, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Matthew Modafferi, with the investigation leading to the sentencing.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew Kogan of the U.S. Attorney's Office Cybercrime Unit in Newark.

Defense counsel: Robert M. Perry Esq., Mount Holly, New Jersey

Topic(s):

Coronavirus

Component(s):

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