

# ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL CHARGES CHICAGO WOMAN OVER ALLEGED UNEMPLOYMENT AND COVID-19 RELIEF FRAUD

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## *Charges Follow Comprehensive Investigation by Raoul's Task Force on Unemployment Insurance Benefits Fraud*

**Chicago** – Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced charges against a Chicago woman, alleging she fraudulently obtained approximately \$75,000 in federal Small Business Administration (SBA) loans and unemployment benefits. The charges are the most recent resulting from the Attorney General's Task Force on Unemployment Insurance Benefits Fraud that brings together state and federal resources to combat unemployment insurance benefits fraud.

Briana F. Jackson, 25, of Chicago, was arraigned in Cook County Circuit Court on one count of theft, a Class 1 felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison; five counts of theft, Class 2 felonies each punishable by up to seven years in prison; one count of loan fraud, a Class 2 felony punishable by up to seven years in prison; three counts of wire fraud, Class 3 felonies each punishable by up to five years in prison; eight counts of forgery, Class 3 felonies each punishable by up to five years in prison; and one count of state benefits fraud, a Class 3 felony punishable by up to five years in prison. Jackson's next court date is scheduled for Jan. 19, 2024.

"Millions of Americans across the country were forced to rely on unemployment and federal loan assistance during the height of the pandemic," Raoul said. "My office's Task Force on Unemployment Insurance Benefits Fraud will continue working diligently with our partners to ensure that individuals who took advantage of these programs are held accountable to taxpayers."

According to Raoul, Jackson received approximately \$40,000 in Paycheck Protection Program loans after fraudulently filing applications for the program. Raoul also alleges Jackson fraudulently collected approximately \$35,000 in unemployment benefits from the state of Illinois to which she was not entitled.

"Stealing funds meant for small businesses means stealing from families and communities," said Robert W. "Wes" Wheeler, Jr., Special Agent-in-Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Chicago office. "These charges show that we will continue to work with our local, state, and federal partners to ensure that public funds are used to improve our neighborhoods."

"An important part of the mission of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General is to investigate allegations of fraud involving unemployment insurance programs. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to aggressively investigate these types of allegations," said Irene Lindow, Special Agent in Charge, Great Lakes Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

The public is reminded that the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Supervising Attorney Megan McGuire Bachman is prosecuting the case for Raoul's Criminal Prosecutions and Trial Assistance Bureau.