

PRESS RELEASE

Citrus Heights Couple Indicted for Participation in \$1 Million Unemployment Insurance Benefits Fraud Scheme

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For Immediate Release

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

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A 10-count indictment was unsealed today charging Deshawn Oshaea Campbell, 36, and Rochelle Pasley, 33, both of Citrus Heights, with conspiracy to commit mail fraud, mail fraud, and aggravated identity theft, U.S. Attorney Phillip A. Talbert announced.

According to court documents, between June 2020 and December 2020, the two defendants conspired to defraud by filing fraudulent unemployment insurance claims with the California Employment Development Department (EDD) seeking Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits under the CARES Act. During the conspiracy, the defendants obtained the identifying information of other individuals and used their identities to submit dozens of fraudulent claims. The claims represented, among other things, that the claimants had recently lost employment or were unable to find employment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These claims were fraudulent because, for instance, many of the individuals whose identities were used did not reside in California and were thus ineligible for benefits from EDD.

In the applications, the defendants used mailing addresses that were under their control, or under the control of their family and friends. EDD approved more than 50 of the fraudulent claims and authorized Bank of America to mail out EDD debit cards containing benefits. The defendants then obtained these debit cards and used them to withdraw the benefits at ATMs throughout California and to make direct purchases, all for their own benefit. The scheme resulted in EDD paying out over \$1 million.

This case is the product of an investigation by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, and the EDD – Investigation Division. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jessica Delaney and Justin Lee are prosecuting the case.

If convicted, Campbell and Pasley face a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for each count of conspiracy and mail fraud, and Pasley faces a mandatory, consecutive two-year prison term for aggravated identity theft. Any sentence, however, would be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of any applicable statutory factors and the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables. The charges are only allegations; the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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