

PRESS RELEASE

Cook County Man Sentenced in Rockford to More Than Five Years in Prison for Mail Fraud and Aggravated Identity Theft

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Illinois

ROCKFORD — A Cook County man has been sentenced to more than five years in federal prison after pleading guilty to mail fraud and aggravated identity theft.

ROBERT CARTER, 29, of Homewood, Ill., was sentenced Wednesday by U.S. District Judge Philip G. Reinhard to 64 months in prison and ordered to pay more than \$1 million in restitution.

According to his plea agreement, from June 2020 through March 2021, Carter and others schemed to submit fraudulent unemployment insurance claims to the California Employment Development Department, the Maryland Division of Unemployment Insurance, and the Virginia Employment Commission. Carter used Social Security numbers and dates of birth of others without their knowledge or consent to submit unemployment claims. Carter opted to have the unemployment benefits paid via debit cards mailed to residences connected to Carter and others involved in the scheme, then withdrew funds from the debit cards at financial institutions and ATMs in Illinois.

The sentence was announced by Morris Pasqual, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Region of the Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, and Ruth M. Mendonça, Inspector-in-Charge of the Chicago Division of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. The government was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert S. Ladd.

“Robert Carter engaged in a scheme to fraudulently obtain more than \$1 million in unemployment insurance funds by applying for benefits in the names of identity theft victims,” said SAC Lindow. “Carter stole benefits set aside by the federal government to assist American workers struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are grateful to the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service for their strong partnership and collaboration on these types of investigations.”