

Fraudster Sentenced to More than Four Years in Federal Prison After Stealing Over \$800,000 in COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Benefits

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS- Temitope S. Adeboye, 32, of Indianapolis has been sentenced to 57 months in federal prison after pleading guilty to Wire Fraud, Aggravated Identity Theft, and other false identity documents offenses.

In 2020, Congress passed, and the President signed into law, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act ("CARES Act"). The CARES Act provided for the funding of unemployment benefits that were to be paid out by the states. A prospective claimant could apply for benefits and request their unemployment benefits be placed onto a prepaid debit card.

According to court documents, beginning on a date unknown and continuing until at least August 6, 2020, Adeboye obtained and used unemployment debit cards from the State of Nevada in the names of identity theft victims. These individuals had not applied for unemployment benefits. In some instances, when the identity theft victim applied for benefits themselves, they learned that someone has already applied using their identity information.

Adeboye used these fraudulently obtained unemployment benefits debit cards to purchase money orders and other items of value. When asked to verify his identity by cashiers, Adeboye used fake IDs in the names of the identity theft victims. He later used money orders that were purchased with stolen unemployment benefits to buy a Lexus.

On August 6, 2023, Adeboye was arrested by IMPD officers for driving with a suspended driver's license. During a search of the vehicle, officers found the following items: 96 unemployment debit cards issued by the State of Nevada, each under a different name, a Kroger receipt for \$1,501.76, multiple money orders issued by Western Union, U.S. Postal Service, and MoneyGram, and U.S. currency totaling \$76,680.

At the time of his arrest, Adeboye possessed approximately 32 fake driver's licenses from Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, including some that were under the same stolen identities as the unemployment debit cards. The 96 unemployment debit cards recovered from Adeboye were used in over 5,000 transactions at various retailers and financial institutions.

"As the pandemic raged across the country in 2020, fraudsters embraced the motto, 'Never let a good crisis go to waste.' While countless individuals experienced tremendous grief as loved ones passed away and the strain of isolation grew, this defendant saw an opportunity to steal money and identities," said Zachary A. Myers, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana. "The Department of Justice and our partners in federal, state, and local law enforcement are committed to identifying and prosecuting the criminals who took advantage of the global crisis to scheme and steal. This prison sentence demonstrates that these thieves will have a price to pay in federal court."

The FBI, Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and IMPD investigated this case. The sentence was imposed by U.S. District Court Judge Richard L. Young. Judge Young also ordered that Adeboye be supervised by the U.S. Probation Office for 3 years following his release from federal prison and pay \$804,460.54 in restitution.

U.S. Attorney Myers thanked Assistant United States Attorney Kyle M. Sawa, who prosecuted this 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 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>

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