

**PRESS RELEASE**

# **Albany Woman Pleads Guilty to Unemployment Insurance Fraud and Gun and Drug Charges**

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

**For Immediate Release**

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of New York

ALBANY, NEW YORK – Niesha Goodwin, age 37, of Albany, pled guilty today to mail fraud and aggravated identity theft charges for fraudulently obtaining pandemic-related unemployment insurance benefits in the names of other people. Goodwin also pled guilty to firearm and drug distribution charges for a firearm and cocaine base recovered during a search of her residence.

The announcement was made by United States Attorney Carla B. Freedman; Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge, Northeast Region, United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General (USDOL-OIG); Ketty Larco-Ward, Inspector in Charge of the Boston Division of the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS); and Erin Keegan, Special Agent in Charge of the Buffalo Field Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI).

Goodwin admitted that from about July 2020 through March 2021, she fraudulently obtained unemployment insurance benefits worth more than \$150,000 by submitting applications for benefits in the names of five other people, including by using stolen personal identifying information. Goodwin agreed to pay \$151,783 in restitution to the New York State Department of Labor.

Goodwin also admitted to possessing a loaded 9mm semi-automatic pistol and cocaine base (a/k/a crack cocaine) with the intent to distribute in November 2022. As a result of her prior conviction for robbery, Goodwin could not lawfully possess the pistol. Goodwin has agreed to forfeit the firearm and to abandon seven rounds of ammunition that were found in the firearm.

Goodwin faces at least 2 years in prison, a fine of up to \$1.75 million, and a term of supervised release of at least 3 years when she is sentenced on June 12, 2025 by United States District Judge Mae A. D'Agostino.

The case was investigated by USDOL-OIG, USPIA, and HSI, with assistance from the Albany Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Matthew M. Paulbeck, Joseph S. Hartunian, and Joshua R. Rosenthal are prosecuting the case.

*Updated February 12, 2025*

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