



**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

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**DOL Inspector General Anthony D’Esposito Testifies
Before House Ways & Means on Billions in
Pandemic Unemployment Insurance Fraud**

WASHINGTON – U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Inspector General Anthony D’Esposito [testified](#) today before the House Ways & Means Subcommittee on Work & Welfare during the hearing titled “[Reclaiming Forgotten Fraudulent Pandemic Unemployment Funds Frozen by Banks](#),” warning that nearly \$1 billion in taxpayer-funded unemployment insurance benefits remain unclaimed or frozen in prepaid debit card accounts across 21 states — \$912 million tied to potential fraud.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government distributed more than \$888 billion in unemployment insurance benefits. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) previously estimated at least \$191 billion may have been improperly paid, including more than \$76 billion stolen by fraudsters.

“Criminals exploited pandemic unemployment programs on a historic scale,” said Inspector General D’Esposito. “The American people deserve accountability. Every dollar stolen from taxpayers must be pursued, recovered, and returned.”

OIG investigators have relentlessly pursued criminal fraudsters and already delivered major results:

- 2,300 individuals charged
- 1,800 convictions
- 55,000 months of prison sentences
- \$2.2 billion in monetary accomplishments, which includes recoveries, restitution, and forfeitures

Inspector General D’Esposito warned that hundreds of millions of dollars remain sitting on unused debit cards or risk being transferred to state unclaimed property systems, making recovery significantly more difficult.

The DOL OIG will continue working with federal, state, and local law enforcement to identify fraud, recover taxpayer funds, and hold criminals accountable.

For additional information on DOL OIG’s oversight of the UI program, please visit www.oig.dol.gov/doloiguioversightwork.htm. If you suspect wrongdoing involving DOL programs or operations, contact the DOL-OIG Hotline at (800) 347-3756 or www.oig.dol.gov/hotlinecontact.htm.