

**PRESS RELEASE**

# **Detroit Man Pleads Guilty in Half-Million Dollar Pandemic Unemployment Insurance Fraud, ID-Theft Scheme**

Thursday, January 8, 2026

**For Immediate Release**

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

**DETROIT** – A Detroit resident pleaded guilty yesterday related to an extensive unemployment insurance fraud and identity theft scheme, announced United States Attorney Jerome F. Gorgon Jr.

Nicholas Overton, 32, pleaded guilty today before Judge Denise Page Hood to one count each of wire fraud and aggravated identity theft.

Joining in the announcement was Megan Howell, Special Agent-in-Charge, Great Lakes Region, U.S. Department of Labor-Office of Inspector General.

According to court records the defendant submitted or caused the submission of approximately 90 fraudulent unemployment insurance claims across 20 states and territories (primarily Michigan, California, New York, and Arizona) and received over \$500,000 in fraudulent unemployment assistance payments.

According to court records the defendant submitted these claims using the personal identifying information (PII) of multiple individuals who were unaware that their identities had been compromised and who had not authorized the defendant to file claims on their behalf.

U.S. Attorney Gorgon stated, "Identity theft is not a victimless crime. It is a deliberate exploitation of real people for personal gain. With these pleas the defendant is being held accountable, and this Office will continue to pursue those who use fraud and stolen identities to take advantage of others and undermine trust in public programs."

"Nicholas Overton devised and executed a scheme that defrauded 20 state workforce agencies by filing for unemployment insurance in the names of identity theft victims who were not entitled to such benefits. This conviction affirms the Office of Inspector

General's commitment to work with our law enforcement partners to investigate and bring to justice those who exploit U.S. Department of Labor programs," said Megan Howell, Special Agent-in-Charge, Great Lakes Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

Overton will be sentenced by Judge Hood on May 7, 2026. He faces a maximum sentence of up to 20 years' imprisonment on the wire fraud count and a mandatory, consecutive sentence of 2 years' imprisonment on the aggravated identity theft count.

This case was investigated by special agents of the Department of Labor Office of the Inspector General (DOL-OIG) and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ryan A. Particka and Jason D. Norwood.

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