

PRESS RELEASE

Former Massachusetts State Senator Convicted of COVID and Tax Fraud

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Massachusetts

Defendant convicted by federal jury of 23 felony counts

BOSTON – Former Massachusetts State Senator Dean A. Tran was convicted yesterday following a six-day trial for scheming to defraud the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance and collecting income that he failed to report to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Tran, 48, of Fitchburg, was convicted of 20 counts of wire fraud and three counts of filing false tax returns. U.S. District Court Chief Judge F. Dennis Saylor, IV, scheduled sentencing for Dec. 4, 2024. The defendant was indicted by a federal grand jury in November 2023.

According to evidence presented at trial, Tran served as an elected member of the Massachusetts State Senate, representing Worcester and Middlesex Counties from 2017 to January 2021. After Tran's State Senate term ended in 2021, Tran fraudulently received pandemic unemployment benefits while simultaneously employed as a paid consultant for a New Hampshire-based retailer of automotive parts (the Automotive Parts Company). While working as a paid consultant for the Automotive Parts Company, Tran fraudulently collected \$30,120 in pandemic unemployment benefits.

In addition, Tran concealed \$54,700 in consulting income that he received from the Automotive Parts Company from his 2021 federal income tax return. This was in addition to thousands of dollars in income that Tran concealed from the IRS while collecting rent from tenants who rented his Fitchburg property from 2020 to 2022.

“Dean Tran defrauded the government out of unemployment benefits he had no right to receive. His fraud and calculated deception diverted money away from those who were struggling to get by during a very difficult time,” said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy. “Our office and our law enforcement partners are committed to holding accountable public officials who lie and steal for personal gain.”

“Former Massachusetts State Senator Dean Tran stole taxpayer funds intended for those Americans who lost their job due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The jury’s verdict affirms the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General’s commitment to investigate allegations of fraud involving the U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL) unemployment insurance (UI) program. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to protect the integrity of the UI system from those who exploit this critical benefit program,” stated Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent-in-Charge, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Northeast Region.

“The conviction of Dean Tran demonstrates the IRS’s commitment to the prosecution of all who choose to break the law, even elected officials,” said Harry Chavis, Jr., Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation, Boston Field Office. “Elected officials are held to a higher standard when they take an oath to serve but to Tran, his oath meant nothing when he chose to steal from the America taxpayers on two separate occasions. Tran stole from a pandemic unemployment program designed to help those most in need. Tran proceeded to harm the American public further when he decided to not to report his taxable income, the most basic of principles all Americans are expected to follow.”

“Former State Senator Dean Tran was convicted of cheating taxpayers by cashing in on a public health crisis by diverting tens of thousands of dollars meant to support those out of work due to the pandemic to himself instead,” said Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division. “The FBI simply won’t stand for opportunists thinking they can defraud the federal government, lie on their taxes, and get away with it. We will continue to aggressively pursue anyone foolish enough to do so.”

The charge of wire fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of filing false tax returns provides for a sentence of up to three years in prison, one year of supervised release and a fine of \$100,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based

upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

Acting U.S. Attorney Levy, DOL-OIG SAC Mellone, IRS-CI SAC Chavis and FBI SAC Cohen made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorneys John T. Mulcahy and Dustin Chao of the Office's Public Corruption & Special Prosecutions Unit are prosecuting the 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> and <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus/combatingfraud>.

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 via the [NCDF Web Complaint Form](#).

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