

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Central District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Former Postal Service Mail Carrier Pleads Guilty to Federal Charges for Stealing Mail and Fraudulently Obtaining COVID-19 Jobless Benefits

LOS ANGELES – A former United States Postal Service (USPS) mail carrier pleaded guilty today to federal criminal charges for scheming to steal more than \$250,000 in unemployment insurance (UI) funds by making false claims of COVID-related job losses and for stealing UI debit cards intended for other people on his mail route.

Stephen Glover, 32, of Palmdale, pleaded guilty to a two-count information charging him with mail fraud and theft of mail matter by an officer or employee.

According to his plea agreement, from August 2020 to June 2021, while he was employed at the United States Post Office in Valencia, Glover schemed to defraud the California Employment Development Department (EDD) out of hundreds of thousands of dollars in COVID-19 pandemic-related unemployment benefits. Glover's co-schemers applied for unemployment benefits from EDD using false statements and sometimes using stolen identities. Based upon the fraudulent claims, EDD mailed out debit cards to addresses listed on the applications.

The fraudulent UI claims were federally funded through programs authorized by Congress in response to the pandemic, including the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Lost Wage Assistance (LWAP) programs.

Glover admitted to abusing his position as a USPS mail carrier by providing co-schemers addresses on his mail route, which his co-schemers then used as mailing addresses on the fraudulent EDD applications. After EDD mailed debit cards to those addresses, Glover intercepted and stole that mail.

Glover further admitted to stealing legitimate EDD debit cards intended for recipients on his mail route. Glover used the EDD debit cards in other people's names to withdraw thousands of dollars in cash from ATMs. He also activated the debit cards in other people's names by calling EDD and using PINs he had discovered from stolen EDD mail. During a search of his girlfriend's residence in June 2021, law enforcement found 37 pieces of mail from EDD address to 15 different individuals.

The total intended loss related to Glover's mail fraud scheme is \$270,698.

Glover also admitted to stealing more than 10 personal and business checks payable to others and unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic, which totaled to approximately \$23,266. In relation to these checks, Glover admitted to stealing approximately 40 pieces of mail.

United States District Judge Percy Anderson scheduled a September 19 sentencing hearing, at which time Glover will face a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison on the mail fraud count and five years in federal prison on the mail theft count.

In a related case, Travis McKenzie, 26, of Valencia, a co-schemer who lived on Glover's mail route, is scheduled to plead guilty on July 13 to a three-count information charging him with mail fraud, mail theft, and identity theft.

McKenzie admitted in his plea agreement that law enforcement found more than 150 pieces of mail from EDD addressed to more than 50 different names, as well as mail from the Virginia Employment Commission, at his residence. McKenzie further admitted to using cash withdrawn from ATMs using EDD debit cards to purchase items from luxury retailers including Louis Vuitton and Prada handbags from luxury retailers Nieman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue.

The intended loss applicable to McKenzie's participation in the mail fraud scheme is approximately \$577,522. McKenzie further admitted to possessing 317 pieces of stolen mail.

Upon entering his guilty plea, McKenzie will face a statutory maximum sentence of 40 years in federal prison.

The United States Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, the United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General, the California Employment Development Department Investigations, and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department investigated this matter.

Assistant United States Attorney Charles E. Pell of the Santa Ana Branch Office is prosecuting these cases.

Anyone with information about allegations of fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud 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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