

PRESS RELEASE

Haverhill Man Indicted for Allegedly Filing Fraudulent Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Claim for Brazilian Resident

Thursday, June 20, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

BOSTON – A Haverhill man was indicted today for allegedly filing a Massachusetts Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claim in 2020 for a man who was living in Brazil at the time, and therefore ineligible to receive PUA benefits.

Julio Roncaly Morais, 41, was charged with one count of wire fraud and one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud. He will appear in federal court in Boston at a later date.

According to the charging documents, Morais filed a Massachusetts PUA claim on June 3, 2020, on behalf of a co-conspirator who was living in Brazil before and after the PUA claim was filed. In the PUA application, Morais allegedly certified under penalty of perjury that the co-conspirator was a resident of Massachusetts and was able and available to work in Massachusetts but was unable to due to the pandemic. As a result of this claim, the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance paid a total of \$5,202 in benefits before suspending payments due to an inability to reach the co-conspirator.

The charges of wire fraud and conspiracy to commit wire fraud each provide for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. 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 United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy; Michael J. Krol, Special Agent in charge for the Homeland Security Investigations New England Field Office; Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; and Harry Chavis, Jr., Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigations in Boston made the announcement today. Assistance in the investigation was provided by the Woburn and Norwood Police Departments. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kelly Begg Lawrence, James D. Herbert, and Samuel R. Feldman of the Criminal Division are prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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