

Press Release

Lehigh Valley Man Charged with Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Fraud and for Defrauding Local Car Dealerships

Thursday, August 22, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

PHILADELPHIA – United States Attorney Jacqueline C. Romero announced that Justin Heimbach, 33, of Bath, Pennsylvania, has been charged by indictment with six counts of mail fraud and four counts of wire fraud in connection with schemes to defraud the federal government and multiple local car dealerships.

In March of 2020, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), which created the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program (PUA). The PUA program provided unemployment benefits to individuals not eligible for regular unemployment compensation, or extended unemployment benefits.

The indictment alleges that Heimbach, who operated a construction company called TeamKJ Construction, engaged in a scheme that caused fraudulent PUA applications to be filed in the names of individuals allegedly no longer employed by TeamKJ as a result of COVID-19. In reality, the applications contained a number of materially false statements, including that the applicant had lost their job with TeamKJ as a result of COVID-19 and the date the applicant lost their job with TeamKJ due to the pandemic.

The indictment further alleges that Heimbach successfully defrauded multiple Lehigh Valley car dealerships by purchasing vehicles in the names of other construction companies registered to or associated with him, by writing checks for those vehicles on bank accounts that were either closed or had an insufficient balance to cover the transaction.

If convicted, Heimbach faces a maximum possible sentence of 200 years in prison.

The case was jointly investigated by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, the United States Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General, and the FBI – Allentown Resident Agency. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Timothy M. Lanni and S. Chandler Harris.

An indictment, information, or criminal complaint is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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