

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Central District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 26, 2022

Postal Service Mail Carrier Arrested on Federal Complaint Alleging Scheme to Fraudulently Obtain Nearly \$800,000 in Jobless Benefits

LOS ANGELES – Federal authorities this morning arrested a United States Postal Service (USPS) mail carrier and a Santa Clarita Valley man for allegedly scheming to steal approximately \$800,000 in unemployment insurance (UI) funds by using false claims of COVID-related job losses and stealing UI debit cards from the U.S. mail.

Stephen Glover, 32, of Palmdale, who worked at the Valencia post office, and Travis McKenzie, 26, of Valencia, who lived on Glover's mail delivery route, are expected to make their initial court appearances this afternoon in United States District Court in downtown Los Angeles. A criminal complaint filed on May 13 and unsealed after today's arrests charges Glover and McKenzie with one count of mail fraud.

According to the affidavit in support of the criminal complaint, from August 2020 to February 2021, Glover and McKenzie fraudulently obtained debit cards issued by the California Employment Development Department (EDD), which administers the state's unemployment insurance program. The debit cards were issued based on applications for pandemic-related unemployment benefits submitted using approximately 50 stolen identities and containing false statements claiming COVID-related job losses, the affidavit states. The EDD debit cards were issued in the names of victims, some of whom had never resided in, worked in, or even visited California. Glover and McKenzie allegedly split the cash withdrawn using the EDD debit cards, some of which had balances exceeding \$30,000.

The scheme allegedly involved more than 50 fraudulent claims to EDD, which resulted in EDD issuing cards that had approximately \$798,733 in funds in those names, of which at least \$318,771 has been withdrawn from the debit cards.

Glover also allegedly stole mail containing more than \$20,000 in personal and business checks belonging to others.

Law enforcement executed search warrants at Glover's, McKenzie's, and Glover's girlfriend's residences in the spring of 2021, during which they found more than 200 pieces of stolen and EDD-related mail, including more than 15 EDD debit cards, according to the affidavit. In addition to defrauding the California EDD, Glover and McKenzie's scheme also fraudulently obtained debit cards from the Virginia Employment Commission, the affidavit alleges.

A criminal complaint contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

If convicted of the mail fraud offense alleged in the complaint, Glover and McKenzie would each face a statutory maximum sentence of 20 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 this case.

Topic(s):
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