

## PRESS RELEASE

# Temple Hills Man Sentenced for Firearms and Drug Trafficking Crimes, and CARES Act Unemployment Insurance Fraud

Friday, January 23, 2026

### For Immediate Release

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

**Greenbelt, Maryland** – U.S. District Judge Deborah L. Boardman sentenced a Maryland man to federal prison in connection with two cases — one involving drug-trafficking and firearms crimes — and the other relating to identity-theft and wire-fraud charges.

Lawrence Nathaniel Harris, 33, of Temple Hills Maryland, received a 15-year prison sentence, followed by three years of supervised release, for conspiracy to commit wire fraud and aggravated identity theft, and also for possessing a machine gun, possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance, and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug-trafficking offense. Judge Boardman also ordered Harris to pay \$952,225 of restitution.

Kelly O. Hayes, U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced the sentence with Special Agent in Charge Troy W. Springer, National Capital Region, U.S. Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General (DOL-OIG); Special Agent in Charge Charles Doerrer, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); Special Agent in Charge Jimmy Paul, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) – Baltimore Field Office; and Chief George Nader, Prince George's County Police Department (PGPD).

The fraud and identity theft charges are connected to Harris submitting fraudulent Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act unemployment insurance (UI) claims. According to his plea agreement, beginning in at least January 2021, and continuing until about September 2023, [Harris and his co-conspirators engaged in a scheme](#) to defraud the United States, State of Maryland, multiple financial institutions, and multiple individuals, including identity theft victims. The co-conspirators submitted false and fraudulent UI benefits claims to the Maryland Department of Labor (MD-DOL), Maryland's agency responsible for processing the claims. Harris participated in

submitting UI claims resulting in losses exceeding \$950,000, and he used debit cards issued in the names of aggravated identity theft victims to obtain UI fraud funds.

Additionally, Harris admitted that on November 16, 2022, while law enforcement executed a residential search warrant at his home, he threw a firearm and a bag of marijuana from his room. He possessed this firearm in furtherance of his drug-trafficking activities. During a search of Harris's attic, law enforcement recovered two duffle bags filled with marijuana as well as four additional firearms. The firearms included a pistol equipped with a switch that converted it into a machine gun. Harris admitted to possessing the guns and drugs found in the attic.

The District of Maryland COVID-19 Strike Force is one of five strike forces established throughout the United States by the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate and prosecute COVID-19 fraud, including fraud relating to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The CARES Act was designed to provide emergency financial assistance to Americans suffering the economic effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The strike forces focus on large-scale, multi-state pandemic relief fraud perpetrated by criminal organizations and transnational actors. The strike forces are interagency law enforcement efforts, using prosecutor-led and data analyst-driven teams designed to identify and bring to justice those who stole pandemic relief funds.

For more information about the Department's response to the pandemic, visit [justice.gov/coronavirus](https://justice.gov/coronavirus). 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 at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at [justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form](https://justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form).

This case is part of Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), a program bringing together all levels of law enforcement and the communities they serve to reduce violent crime and gun violence, and to make our neighborhoods safer for everyone. On May 26, 2021, the Department launched a violent crime reduction strategy strengthening PSN based on these core principles: fostering trust and legitimacy in our communities, supporting community-based organizations that help prevent violence from occurring in the first place, setting focused and strategic enforcement priorities, and measuring the results.

U.S. Attorney Hayes commended the DOL-OIG, ATF, FBI, and PGPD for their work in the investigation and the MD-DOL for its assistance. Ms. Hayes also thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Harry M. Gruber, Joseph L. Wenner, Christopher Sarma, and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Lanay Mitchell, who prosecuted this case. She also recognized the Maryland COVID-19 Strike Force and Paralegal Specialist Joanna B.N. Huber for her valuable assistance.

For more information about the Maryland U.S. Attorney's Office, its priorities, and resources available to report fraud, visit [justice.gov/usao-md](https://justice.gov/usao-md) and [justice.gov/usao-md/community-outreach](https://justice.gov/usao-md/community-outreach).

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