

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Nevada

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, August 26, 2021

Texas Man Pleads Guilty To Unemployment Benefits Fraud Scheme

LAS VEGAS, Nev. – A Woodlands, Texas, man pleaded guilty today for his role in an unemployment insurance benefits scheme to defraud the California Employment Development Department (EDD).

According to court documents and admissions made in court, around May 2020, Paul Andrew Naeger (38) and his co-conspirators began submitting fraudulent unemployment insurance claims with the EDD, using other people's personal identifying information without their consent. Some of the EDD debit cards associated with those fraudulent unemployment claims were mailed to rental mailboxes in Santa Clarita, Los Angeles, and Sherman Oaks. The debit cards were used for cash withdrawals and to purchase goods and services. In total, EDD approved at least \$334,230 in benefits for the fraudulent claims. Naeger and his co-conspirators used at least \$164,137 of the unemployment insurance benefits, including to pay for Naeger's bail after he was arrested and detained on unrelated state charges in Houston, Texas.

Naeger pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to effect illegal transactions with access devices and one count of aggravated identity theft. U.S. District Judge James C. Mahan scheduled sentencing for December 1, 2021. Naeger faces statutory maximum penalties of seven and a half years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for conspiracy to effect illegal transactions with access devices, and two years in prison for aggravated identity theft.

Co-defendant Brittany Danielle Griesel has pleaded guilty and is awaiting sentencing. Co-defendant Kenneth Edward Greenland has been indicted by a grand jury and is currently awaiting trial.

Acting U.S. Attorney Christopher Chiou for the District of Nevada and Special Agent in Charge Quentin Heiden of the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General (DOL-OIG), Los Angeles Region made the announcement.

This case was investigated by the DOL-OIG. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jim Fang is prosecuting the case.

In May, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.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 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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Topic(s):

Coronavirus
Financial Fraud
Identity Theft

Component(s):

[USAO - Nevada](#)