

**Department of Justice**  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of North Carolina

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Charlotte Man Convicted Of Using Stolen Identities To Defraud Government-Funded COVID-19 Relief Programs Is Sentenced To Five Years In Prison**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – U.S. Attorney Dena J. King announced today that Keon Taylor, 31, of Charlotte, was sentenced to five years in prison and three years of supervised release for using stolen identities to defraud government-funded coronavirus aid relief programs of more than \$219,000. In addition to the prison term imposed, Taylor was ordered to pay \$252,849.50 in restitution.

U.S. Attorney King is joined in making today's announcement by Tommy D. Coke, Inspector in Charge of the Atlanta Division of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) which oversees Charlotte, and Matthew Broadhurst, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Atlanta Region.

The CARES Act is a federal law enacted March 29, 2020, and it is designed to provide emergency financial assistance to millions of Americans suffering the economic effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The CARES Act established several new temporary programs and provided for the expansion of others, including the Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) program, which provides low-interest financing to small businesses, renters, and homeowners in regions affected by declared disasters.

According to the information to which Taylor pleaded guilty, other documents filed in this case and statements made in court, from March 2020 to February 2021, Taylor engaged in a scheme to defraud the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the North Carolina Division of Employment Security, and the States of Tennessee, Texas, Ohio, Massachusetts, Nevada, and Arizona by filing fraudulent claims for COVID-19 related unemployment insurance (UI) benefits. As part of the scheme, Taylor obtained stolen personal identifying information, or PII, of more than 35 victims, including names, Social Security numbers, dates of birth, and addresses. Taylor used the PII to apply for and receive over \$219,000 in fraudulent unemployment benefits, and to submit numerous additional applications seeking fraudulent UI benefits. Court documents show that Taylor also attempted to defraud the SBA by using false information to submit applications for three loans under the EIDL program set aside for businesses impacted by COVID-19.

Documents further show that in February 2021, federal agents executed a search warrant at Taylor's apartment, seizing equipment used to manufacture fake identification cards. According to court records, Taylor continued to engage in fraudulent ID-making activities even after pleading guilty, which resulted in the revocation of his federal bond.

"Taylor went on a crime spree, stealing taxpayer dollars from federal and state programs intended to help those in real need as a result of the coronavirus. In the process, he victimized individuals whose stolen identities were used to carry out the fraud. Taylor's crimes are serious and now he has to endure the consequences. My office will continue to hold accountable those who seek to profit from the pandemic and exploit government benefits intended to help people impacted by COVID-19."

“Taylor took advantage of the American people whose lives have been disrupted by the pandemic to try and enrich himself through fraud,” stated Inspector in Charge Coke. “The U.S. Postal Inspection Service will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to bring justice to criminals exploiting the American people.”

“Taylor defrauded the unemployment system of multiple states by fraudulently collecting over \$219,000 in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. His conduct further exacerbated the distribution of unemployment benefits at a time when so many Americans are in desperate need of this assistance. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to protect the integrity of DOL programs,” said Acting Special Agent in Charge Broadhurst.

On July 27, 2021, Taylor pleaded guilty to wire fraud and aggravated identity theft.

In making today’s announcement, U.S. Attorney King commended USPIS for their investigative efforts in this case. U.S. Attorney King also thanked DOL-OIG for their coordination and recognized the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department for their assistance.

The prosecution for the government was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Jenny G. Sugar of the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Charlotte.

The Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Western District of North Carolina need the public’s assistance in remaining vigilant and reporting suspected fraudulent activity. To report suspected fraud, contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) at (866) 720-5721 or file an online complaint at <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/webform/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>. Complaints filed will be reviewed by the NCDF and referred to federal, state, local or international law enforcement or regulatory agencies for investigation. Members of the public in the Western District of North Carolina are also encouraged to call 704-344-6222 to reach their local Coronavirus Fraud Coordinator.

**Topic(s):**  
Coronavirus

**Component(s):**  
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