

PRESS RELEASE

Florida Man Pleads Guilty to Scheming to Defraud Maryland, California of More Than \$2.3 Million in Covid-19 Unemployment Insurance Benefits

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

For Immediate Release

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

Baltimore, Maryland – David Godin, 34, aka “James St Patrick,” aka “David Wetty,” aka “Vic Pro,” of Miami, Florida, has pleaded guilty to wire fraud and aggravated identity theft, in connection with a scheme to defraud the Maryland Department of Labor (MD-DOL) and California Employment Development Department (CA-EDD). Godin attempted to defraud MD-DOL and CA-EDD of more than \$2.3 million in unemployment insurance (UI) benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kelly O. Hayes, U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced the guilty plea with Special Agent in Charge Troy W. Springer, National Capital Region, U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Inspector General (DOL-OIG), and Special Agent in Charge Kareem A. Carter, Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI), Washington, D.C. Field Office.

According to the plea agreement, from June 2020 through November 2023, Godin engaged in a sophisticated scheme to defraud the MD-DOL and CA-EDD by using the personal identifiable information of identity theft victims, anonymous email addresses, virtual private networks, and proxy servers. This enabled Godin to file numerous fraudulent UI claims with multiple states from a single location; aggregate UI information in discrete accounts; and avoid fraud safeguards put in place by state insurance programs.

Godin submitted and caused the submission of at least 140 fraudulent UI claims to MD-DOL, CA-EDD, and other state workforce agencies, resulting in approximately \$2,364,226 in UI benefits. He obtained \$1,087,345.66 through the fraud scheme. As part of the plea agreement, Godin is required to pay restitution of \$1,087,345.66. Additionally, Godin

must forfeit money, property, and/or assets that he obtained through the scheme, including a money judgment of at least \$1,087,345.66.

Godin faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison for the wire fraud scheme and a consecutive mandatory minimum sentence of two years in federal prison for using the personal identifiable information of identity theft victims during and in relation to the fraudulent activities. A federal district court judge determines sentencing after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors. U.S. District Judge Matthew J. Maddox has scheduled sentencing for June 30, at 10 a.m.

This case is part of the District of Maryland COVID-19 Strike Force, a Strike Force that 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, 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 (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

U.S. Attorney Hayes commended DOL-OIG and IRS-CI for their work in the investigation. Ms. Hayes also thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Bijon A. Mostoufi and Jared M. Beim, who are prosecuting the federal case, and Joanna B.N. Huber, who is supporting the case.

For more information about the Maryland U.S. Attorney's Office, its priorities, and resources available to report fraud, please visit www.justice.gov/usao-md and <https://www.justice.gov/usao-md/report-fraud>.

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Updated March 26, 2025

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