

Former EDD Employee Sentenced to 66 Months for Mail Fraud and Bribery Scheme

Friday, March 28, 2025

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of California

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SAN DIEGO – Regina Brice, a former employee of the California Employment Development Department, was sentenced in federal court today to 66 months in prison for using her position to file \$858,339 in fraudulent unemployment claims, effectively stealing money that was intended to give economic relief to people impacted by the pandemic.

According to court documents, Brice was employed by the EDD since 2010. During the pandemic, she was responsible for processing COVID-related unemployment claims. However, between July 2020 and May 2021, Brice exploited her employee access at EDD to manipulate and file fraudulent unemployment claims for her co-conspirators in exchange for thousands of dollars in bribes. These co-conspirators included California prison inmates whom she instructed on how to bypass the system's fraud checking software to obtain the money.

“This defendant turned her back on the oath of her office and those she was supposed to help during a once-in-a-century pandemic,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Andrew Haden. “Today she is being held accountable for her greed.”

“Former California Employment Development Department (EDD) Employment Program Representative Regina Brice filed fraudulent and manipulated unemployment insurance (UI) claims in exchange for kickbacks, diverting vital taxpayer resources away from unemployed American workers who lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Quentin Heiden, Special Agent-in-Charge, Western Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General (DOL-OIG). “Brice violated the public trust afforded to her as an EDD employee to enrich herself and others. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to safeguard the integrity of the UI program for those who need

it. This sentencing demonstrates DOL-OIG’s commitment to root out waste, fraud, and abuse in DOL programs.”

DHS Inspector General Joseph V. Cuffari, Ph.D., said, “Regina Brice defrauded government programs meant to help Americans at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. DHS OIG will continue to prioritize pandemic-related fraud investigations and work with our law enforcement partners to bring perpetrators to justice. I appreciate the continued partnership between DHS OIG and the Department of Labor OIG in bringing this case to a close.”

“Today’s sentencing marks a significant victory for justice and accountability,” said Matt Shields, Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service in Los Angeles Division. “The exploitation of vulnerable individuals’ personal information for nearly a million dollars in fraudulent gains, facilitated by an EDD employee’s corruption, is a betrayal of public trust. I commend the relentless efforts of our inspectors and collaboration with the Department of Labor OIG and Department of Homeland Security OIG in bringing this case to a close and ensuring that such misconduct results in severe consequences.”

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>.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ronald Sou.

DEFENDANT

Case Number 23-CR-2082-RBM

Regina Brice

Age: 43

San Diego, CA

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Mail Fraud – Title 18, U.S.C., Section 1341

Maximum penalty: Twenty years in prison and \$250,000 fine

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES

U.S. Department of Labor – Office of the Inspector General

Department of Homeland Security – Office of the Inspector General

United States Postal Inspector Service

California Employment Development Department – Investigation Division

Contact

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Updated March 28, 2025

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Press Release Number: CAS25-0328-Brice