

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Nevada

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

Georgia Man Pleads Guilty To Fraudulently Obtaining Over \$170,000 In Unemployment Insurance Benefits

LAS VEGAS, Nev. – A Lawrenceville, Georgia, man pleaded guilty today to fraudulently obtaining over \$170,000 in unemployment benefits by submitting multiple unemployment claims in other people's names and using benefits debit cards not belonging to him.

According to court documents and admissions made in court, on September 11, 2020, Robert Devon Barber (25) and co-conspirator Keheir Jordan Parker (25, of Victorville, Calif.) were stopped in Las Vegas for a traffic violation. During the traffic stop, law enforcement officers recovered 12 California Employment Development Department (EDD) unemployment insurance benefits debit cards issued in other peoples' names, along with ATM receipts showing that the debit cards had been used to make cash withdrawals totaling \$7,400 in Nevada and California.

At least \$249,460 in unemployment benefits was approved for the claims associated with the 12 recovered EDD cards. Approximately, \$170,715.78 was withdrawn from accounts associated with those 12 cards, including \$148,400 in ATM cash withdrawals and \$22,315.78 in purchases.

Barber pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to effectuate illegal transactions with access devices. He faces a statutory maximum penalty of seven and a half years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. U.S. District Judge Richard F. Boulware II scheduled sentencing for February 1, 2022.

Co-defendant Parker pleaded guilty in June 2021, and he is awaiting sentencing.

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 DOL-OIG. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jim Fang is prosecuting the case.

On May 17, 2021, 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 (NCDF) 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

Component(s):
USAO - Nevada