

PRESS RELEASE

Haverhill Man Pleads Guilty to Fraudulent Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Claim for Brazilian Resident

Thursday, February 13, 2025

For Immediate Release

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

BOSTON – A Haverhill man has pleaded guilty to making false statements in connection with a Massachusetts Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claim he submitted in 2020 on behalf of a man who was living in Brazil at the time, and therefore ineligible to receive PUA benefits.

Julio Roncaly Morais, 42, pleaded guilty to one count of false statements before U.S. District Court Judge Allison D. Burroughs who scheduled sentencing for May 28, 2025. In June 2024, Morais was indicted by a federal grand jury.

Morais filed a Massachusetts PUA claim on June 3, 2020, on behalf of a co-conspirator who was living in Brazil before and after the PUA claim was filed. In the PUA application, Morais certified under penalty of perjury that the co-conspirator was a resident of Massachusetts and was able and available to work in Massachusetts but was unable to due to the pandemic. As a result of this claim, the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance paid a total of \$5,202 in benefits before suspending payments.

The charge of false statements provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

United States Attorney Leah B. Foley; Michael J. Krol, Special Agent in charge for the Homeland Security Investigations New England Field Office; Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; and Thomas Demeo, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigations in Boston made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was

provided by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Fraud Detection and National Security and the Woburn and Norwood Police Departments. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kelly Begg Lawrence, James D. Herbert and Samuel R. Feldman of the Criminal Division are prosecuting the case.

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