PRESS RELEASE

Knoxville Resident Indicted for Laundering Fraudulently Obtained COVID-19 Unemployment Insurance Benefits

Tuesday, August 4, 2026

For Immediate Release
U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Tennessee

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – On July 28, 2026, a federal grand jury in Chattanooga returned a two-count indictment against Amy Denise Fields, 62, of Knoxville, for conspiracy to commit money laundering and a substantive money laundering offense. On August 3, 2026, Fields appeared before United States Magistrate Judge Debra C. Poplin in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee in Knoxville. Fields pleaded not guilty and was released pending trial, which has been set for October 6, 2026, before the Honorable Thomas A. Varlan, United States District Judge in United States District Court, at Knoxville.

The indictment alleges that Fields and others not named in the indictment conspired to launder money Fields knew was fraudulently obtained from federal programs. Fields's co-conspirators submitted fraudulent applications for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits to several different states during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of those fraudulent UI applications listed Fields's personal information, including her residential address and bank account information, which Fields knowingly provided to her co-conspirators. Fields's co-conspirators caused the fraudulent UI benefits to be electronically deposited into Fields's bank accounts, several of which she opened in furtherance of the conspiracy. Knowing that the funds deposited into her bank accounts were fraudulently obtained UI benefits intended for other individuals, Fields intentionally withdrew the funds from her bank accounts—often in cash—and then deposited the cash into Bitcoin ATM machines in the Eastern District of Tennessee, laundering the funds to promote the ongoing unlawful activity and to conceal the proceeds of the fraudulently obtained UI benefits.

If convicted, Fields faces up to 20 years in prison, a term of supervised release of up to three years, a fine of up to $500,000, restitution, and forfeiture.

U.S. Attorney Francis M. Hamilton III of the Eastern District of Tennessee and Acting Supervisory Agent in Charge Kelly Linemann of the U.S. Department of Labor-Office of Inspector General, made the announcement.

This indictment is the result of an investigation by the United States Department of Labor-Office of Inspector General.

Assistant United States Attorney William A. Roach, Jr., will represent the United States.

On April 7, the Department of Justice announced the creation of the National Fraud Enforcement Division (Fraud Division). The Fraud Division is laser-focused on investigating and prosecuting those who commit fraud against the American people. The Department's work to combat fraud supports President Trump's Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, a whole-of-government effort chaired by Vice President J.D. Vance to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse within Federal benefit programs.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment constitutes only charges and that every person is presumed innocent until their guilt has been proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

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