



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

PRESS RELEASE

Labor OIG Intensifies Anti-Fraud Efforts, Secures Significant Sentences in Major Benefit Fraud Schemes Involving More than \$15 Million Stolen

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General

WASHINGTON— Since the creation of President Donald Trump and Vice President J.D. Vance’s White House Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General has significantly intensified its efforts to combat fraud across federal programs. These actions include aggressive ongoing investigations into unemployment insurance fraud, the launch of a historic investigation into the H-1B and J-1 visa programs, the adoption of Vice President J.D. Vance’s fraud pledge, and many other initiatives. Under the leadership of Inspector General Anthony P. D’Esposito, the office continues to pursue criminals relentlessly each day, reinforcing accountability and delivering justice for American taxpayers.

DETROIT— A Michigan man, Brandon Robinson, was sentenced to 92 months in federal prison, and three years of supervised release for orchestrating overlapping federal student aid and pandemic unemployment insurance fraud schemes. Additionally, he was ordered to pay \$10,521,189 to the Department of Education and \$1,357,493 to various state workforce agencies in restitution. Robinson was the ringleader of a years-long scheme to obtain fraudulent Federal Student Aid benefits, filing claims for more than 1,200 individuals, involving over 100 schools in more than 20 states. Robinson and his co-conspirators also worked together to file more than 100 fraudulent claims for pandemic unemployment assistance, collecting around \$1.3M in false unemployment benefits. “Brandon Robinson exploited two taxpayer-funded assistance programs designed to support individuals in need

of unemployment benefits or Federal Student Aid—programs that Americans depend on. Today's sentencing highlights the commitment by my agency and Vice President Vance's Task Force to Eliminate Fraud to aggressively pursue fraudsters and hold them accountable," **said Anthony P. D'Esposito, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor**. "We will continue to pursue those individuals that attempt to exploit the unemployment insurance system and other programs designed to support hardworking Americans. Accountability is coming."

PHILADELPHIA—Ardavan Alamoutinia of Pennsylvania was sentenced to 120 months in prison, three years of supervised release, and restitution of \$3,177,376 for a scheme to fraudulently obtain emergency funds meant for those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Alamoutinia and a co-conspirator used stolen identities to file more than 500 fraudulent applications for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. Fraudulent applications were filed in 27 different states and resulted in a loss to the government of at least \$2,886,876. "This brazen scheme used stolen identities to obtain nearly \$2.9 million in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance funds taken directly from hardworking American taxpayers. The Department of Labor Office of Inspector General remains steadfast in its commitment to working with our law enforcement partners to safeguard the integrity of these vital programs," **said Inspector General D'Esposito**.

WASHINGTON—A Virginia man, Karon Olufemi Blalock, was sentenced to 128 months in federal prison for his role in a transcontinental narcotics trafficking conspiracy that smuggled tens of thousands of fentanyl pills from California to the D.C. area. Blalock, also known as "Fat Bags," separately obtained \$22,224 in pandemic-related unemployment insurance funds through fraud, diverting critical public resources. He in turn used these funds in furtherance of his fentanyl trafficking in the District of Columbia. "Karon 'Fat Bags' Blalock chose to pour poison into our communities and line his pockets with stolen money from a system meant to help struggling Americans," **said Inspector General D'Esposito**. "Those who betray public trust, steal from benefit programs, and fuel the fentanyl epidemic, will face unwavering, decisive justice from my office and our law enforcement partners."

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