

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
District of Rhode Island

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, December 21, 2022

Providence Man on Admits to Wire Fraud Conspiracy, Identity Theft While on Federal Supervised Release for Sex Trafficking

PROVIDENCE – A Providence man today admitted to a federal judge that he participated in a conspiracy to fraudulently submit online applications in his name and in the names of other persons to collect COVID-related unemployment benefits from at least seven states, and that he did so while serving a term of federal supervised release that followed his conviction and incarceration for sex trafficking, announced United States Attorney Zachary A. Cunha.

Mackenzey Scott, 26, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit wire fraud, seven counts of wire fraud, theft of government money, and four counts of aggravated identity theft.

According to information presented to the court and contained in court documents, beginning in March 2020, approximately four months after his release from Bureau of Prisons' custody, and continuing to May 2021, Scott used his own name, and the names of others to carry out a scheme to submit fraudulent online applications for COVID-related, federally-funded unemployment benefits from state agencies in North Dakota, Massachusetts, Arizona, Nevada, Kentucky, Texas, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Indiana. In each of these applications, Scott falsely claimed that he, and the other persons in whose names he submitted applications, were entitled to benefits and made false statements about employment and/or residence in the applications submitted to respective states.

Scott's fraudulent activity was discovered in February 2021 by a United States Probation Officer during an investigation into alleged violations of the terms of his federal supervised release.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Denise M. Barton and Stacey Erickson.

The matter was investigated by the FBI and the Department of Labor – Office of Inspector General.

Rhode Islanders who believe their personal identification has been stolen and used to fraudulently obtain unemployment benefits are urged to contact the Rhode Island State Police at financialcrimes@risp.gov or the FBI Providence office at (401) 272-8310.

On May 17, 2021, the United States 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
Identity Theft

Component(s):

[Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#)
[USAO - Rhode Island](#)

Contact:

Jim Martin (401) 709-5357

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