

**Department of Justice**  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Virginia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Saint Paul, Virginia Woman Pleads Guilty to Unemployment Scheme**

ABINGDON, Va. – Brittany McReynolds, a Saint Paul, Virginia woman who conspired with others to file for fraudulent pandemic unemployment benefits, pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court in Abingdon to charges she conspired with others to commit mail fraud and defraud the government of more than \$182,474. Acting United States Attorney Daniel P. Bubar, Jonathan Mellone, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge, Philadelphia Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General and Acting Special Agent in Charge is Darrell J. Waldon of the Internal Revenue Service- Criminal Investigation announced the guilty plea today.

McReynolds, 32, waived her right to be indicted and pleaded to a two-count Information charging her with one count of conspiracy to defraud the government and one count of conspiracy to commit mail fraud.

“McReynolds took advantage of unemployment funds that were to be provided to those in need during the pandemic, defrauding these important programs,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Bubar today. “We will continue to work closely with our partners at the Department of Labor and IRS to ensure that anyone who steals from these benefit programs is brought to justice.”

“The Unemployment Insurance Program exists to provide needed assistance to qualified individuals who are unemployed due to no fault of their own. Fraud against the Unemployment Insurance Program causes state workforce agencies, like the Virginia Employment Commission, to redirect valuable resources to address fraud and ensure benefits go to individuals who are eligible to receive them. The Office of Inspector General will continue to work closely with the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Virginia Employment Commission, and our many law enforcement partners, to investigate those who exploit the Unemployment Insurance Program,” said Jonathan Mellone, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge, Philadelphia Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

“The CARES Act and the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program have been a lifeline, helping to sustain taxpayers through these tough times. Sadly, as these programs were being launched to assist those in need, McReynolds and her co-conspirators found a way to fraudulently take advantage of the benefits,” said Darrell J. Waldon, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the IRS-CI Washington DC Field Office. “These type investigations remain a priority of IRS-CI. We will continue to pursue justice against those who deceptively obtain pandemic relief funds to enhance themselves financially.”

McReynolds admitted today that she and others, including her husband Travis Kilgore - who pleaded guilty last week in U.S. District Court to conspiracy and mail fraud charges - filed claims for pandemic unemployment benefits through the VEC website. The scheme involved submitting claims for various individuals who were not eligible to receive pandemic unemployment benefits. McReynolds and Kilgore lied on the filings as part of the scheme to appear eligible for benefits. Because pandemic unemployment benefits were paid weekly, McReynolds reverified and re-certified the false statements on numerous occasions throughout the scheme.

In all, the conspiracy filed claims for approximately 21 other individuals, causing at least \$182,474 in false claims to be have been paid.

The investigation of the case was conducted by the Department of Labor-Office of the Inspector General and the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation, the Norton Police Department, and the Russell County Sheriff's Office. Assistant United States Attorney Daniel J. Murphy is prosecuting the case for the United States.

**Component(s):**

USAO - Virginia, Western