

PRESS RELEASE

Three Fraudsters Sentenced to Combined 235 Months in Federal Prison for \$16M Student Loan, PPP Fraud Schemes

Wednesday, September 30, 2026

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Michigan

DETROIT - Brandon Robinson, 42, of Detroit, was sentenced to 92 months in federal prison for orchestrating overlapping federal student aid and PPP fraud schemes, announced Assistant Attorney General Colin M. McDonald of the Department of Justice's National Fraud Enforcement Division and United States Attorney Jerome Gorgon, Jr.

U.S. District Court Judge Laurie J. Michelson ordered that Robinson, the ringleader of the scheme, serve three years of supervised release following his term of imprisonment and pay restitution as follows:

- \$10,521,189.05 to the Department of Education
- \$1,357,493.00 to various state workforce agencies

Michelson sentenced Robinson following his guilty pleas to conspiracy to commit wire fraud and aggravated identity theft. Alongside Robinson, Antonio Robinson, 37, of Ferndale was sentenced to 84 months imprisonment and Joshuan Porter, 36, of Detroit was sentenced to 55 months imprisonment.

"These defendants stole more than \$16 million from federal programs designed to assist students and unemployed Americans," said Assistant Attorney General Colin M. McDonald of the Department of Justice's National Fraud Enforcement Division. "The defendants enrolled straw students across more than 100 schools in more than 20 states to collect these proceeds. They now face prison time for their egregious actions. We commend the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan for its outstanding work prosecuting this case."

"These defendants thought federal programs were easy money. They were wrong," said Gorgon. "We are making sure that federal program fraudsters bear the consequences."

Gorgon was joined in the announcement by Scott Wingle, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General's Central Regional Office, and Anthony P. D'Esposito, Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

"I'm proud of the work of OIG special agents and our law enforcement colleagues for shutting down yet another fraud ring and holding these fraudsters accountable for their criminal actions," said Scott Wingle, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General's Central Regional Office. "The OIG is committed to fighting student aid fraud and we will continue to aggressively pursue those that participate in these types of crimes."

"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."

The case was jointly investigated by agents from the Department of Education Office of the Inspector General and the Department of Labor Office of the Inspector General, with assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Ryan A. Particka.

About the Case:

According to court documents, Brandon Robinson was responsible for leading a years-long scheme to obtain fraudulent Federal Student Aid (FSA) benefits involving so-called "straw students." Antonio Robinson and Joshuan Porter took direction from Robinson and served as middlemen, ferrying information and kickbacks between Brandon Robinson and the fake students.

The three submitted fraudulent FSA claims for more than 1,200 individuals, involving over 100 schools in more than 20 states, between January 2015 and November 2023. They were awarded more than \$16M in FSA benefits and collected more than \$10M of it before being caught.

The three also worked together to file over 100 fraudulent claims for pandemic unemployment assistance between March 2020 and June 2021, Collecting around \$1.3M in false unemployment benefits.

About the National Fraud Enforcement Division: *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.*

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