

**Department of Justice**  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Central District of California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Two Postal Service Employees Plead Guilty to Using EDD Debit Cards to Illegally Purchase Thousands of Dollars in Postal Money Orders**

*LOS ANGELES* – Two United States Postal Service (USPS) employees pleaded guilty today to federal criminal charges accusing them of unlawfully buying and cashing tens of thousands of dollars' worth of Postal money orders with unemployment benefits fraudulently obtained with false claims of COVID-related job losses.

Christian Jeremyah James, 31, of South Los Angeles, who worked in the Culver City Main Post Office, and Armand Caleb Legardy, 32, of Inglewood, who worked in the La Tijera Post Office on Crenshaw Boulevard in South Los Angeles, each pleaded guilty in separate hearings to one count of use of unauthorized access devices.

According to their plea agreements, from August 2020 to February 2021, James and Legardy used debit cards that the California Employment Development Department (EDD) had issued to other people for unemployment insurance benefits – cards that were obtained by other unidentified individuals using stolen identities and false information.

James and Legardy admitted they used the EDD-issued debit cards in other people's names to purchase or cash money orders from the USPS and to withdraw thousands of dollars in cash from bank ATMs. The defendants also admitted that they deposited multiple fraudulently purchased Postal money orders directly into their own bank accounts.

Between September 3 and September 19, 2020, James deposited more than \$27,000 worth of USPS money orders into his bank account, according to his plea agreement. Legardy deposited more than \$10,000 in USPS money orders that had been illegally purchased with California EDD cards in other people's names, his plea agreement states.

James admitted to knowingly using at least eight EDD debit cards in other people's names and causing a loss of approximately \$142,652. Legardy admitted to illegally using nine EDD cards and causing a loss of approximately \$160,879.

United States District Judge George H. Wu has scheduled sentencing hearings of October 7 for James and September 30 for Legardy, at which time each defendant will face a statutory maximum sentence of 10 years in federal prison.

The United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General, the United States Department of Labor Office of Inspector General, IRS Criminal Investigation, and the California Employment Development Department investigated this matter.

Assistant United States Attorney Charles E. Pell of the Santa Ana Branch Office is prosecuting these cases.

**Topic(s):**  
Coronavirus  
Public Corruption

**Component(s):**  
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**Contact:**  
Ciaran McEvoy  
Public Information Officer  
United States Attorney's Office  
Central District of California (Los Angeles)  
[ciaran.mcevoy@usdoj.gov](mailto:ciaran.mcevoy@usdoj.gov)  
(213) 894-4465

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