

PRESS RELEASE

Westwego Woman Indicted for Unemployment Insurance Fraud and Covid Fraud

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Louisiana
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NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA – United States Attorney Duane A. Evans announced today that **REHA JANE ARVIE**, (“**ARVIE**”), age 33, of Westwego, LA, was indicted on September 6, 2024 for Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud (Count 1), in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1349; Mail Fraud (Counts 2 and 3), in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1341; and, Making False Statements (Count 4), in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1001(a)(2).

According to the indictment, beginning in or around July 2020, **ARVIE** defrauded, and attempted to defraud, various state offices of Unemployment Insurance (“UI”) through the submission of approximately 100 fraudulent UI applications. **ARVIE** recruited friends and family via Facebook to file these fraudulent UI applications. Additionally, **ARVIE** filed fraudulent UI applications for herself and others, in various states including Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Indiana, Missouri, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Utah, Texas, and the territory of Guam. **ARVIE** charged those for whom she filed fraudulent UI claims fees ranging from \$1,200.00 to \$1,500.00. Moreover, during the investigation, **ARVIE** lied to federal agents during an interview.

Later, on April 8, 2021, **ARVIE** unlawfully obtained a Paycheck Protection Program (“PPP”) loan from the United States Small Business Administration (“SBA”). Specifically, **ARVIE** falsely claimed on her PPP application that she had income of \$102,357.00 for the year 2020 and submitted a fraudulent Schedule C in support thereof. As a result of her false statements, **ARVIE** received a PPP loan of approximately \$20,832.00.

If convicted, **ARVIE** faces up to twenty (20) years imprisonment, per count, for Counts 1 through 3 and up to five (5) years imprisonment for Count 4. As to each count, **ARVIE** also faces up to three (3) years of supervised release, a fine up to \$250,000.00, or twice the gross gain to the defendant, or twice the gross loss to any victim, and a \$100.00 mandatory special assessment fee.

U.S. Attorney Evans reiterated that the indictment is merely a charge and that the guilt of the defendant must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

On May 17, 2021, the 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>. The Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of the Inspector General, is an active member of the PRAC Fraud Task Force.

"The PRAC was established to promote transparency and facilitate coordinated oversight of the federal government's COVID-19 pandemic response. The PRAC's 20 member Inspectors General identify major risks that cross program and agency boundaries to detect fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in the more than \$5 trillion in COVID-19 spending, including spending via the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), and Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program. This case was also supported by the PRAC's Pandemic Analytics Center of Excellence, which applies the latest advances in analytic and forensic technologies to help OIGs and law enforcement pursue data-driven pandemic relief fraud investigations."

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>.

The United States Attorney's Office would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; the Department of Veteran Affairs, Office of Inspector General; The Pandemic Response Accountability Committee; the United States Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General COVID

Fraud Unit; and the California Employment Development Department with this matter. The prosecution of this case is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Brian M. Klebba, Chief of the Financial Crimes Unit.

Contact

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United States Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Louisiana

United States Department of Justice

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