

Department of Justice



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District of Massachusetts**

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CHARLESTOWN MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO IDENTITY FRAUD CHARGES

BOSTON – A Charlestown man who has been living under a false identity pleaded guilty today in federal court in Boston to charges arising from his use of the name and Social Security number of a U.S. citizen.

An individual referred to as “John Doe” pleaded guilty to one count of false statements on a United States passport application, one count of false representation of a social security number, three counts of wire fraud and one count of aggravated identity theft. U.S. District Judge Denise J. Casper scheduled sentencing for May 4, 2022. Doe was indicted in March 2020 and subsequently charged in a superseding indictment on April 29, 2021.

On or about March 31, 2020, Doe used the name and personally identifiable information of a Puerto Rican resident to apply for Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance (Mass DUA) and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. On April 1, 2020, Mass DUA approved the claim and began issuing benefits to Doe via a prepaid debit card, which he used for cash withdrawals at ATM machines and for the purchase of goods and services. As a result, from April through September 2020, Doe fraudulently received over \$15,000 in unemployment benefits under the stolen identity.

Previously, in 2017, Doe used the victim’s Social Security number to apply for a duplicate driver’s license with the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles and, in 2010, used the victim’s name and personally identifiable information to apply for a United States passport.

The charge of wire fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of passport fraud provides

for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of false representation of a Social Security number provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. The charge of aggravated identity theft provides for two years in prison to be served consecutive to the term for the underlying felony, which in this case is the false representation of a Social Security number. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The investigation is being conducted by the U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service together with Homeland Security's Investigation's Document and Benefit Fraud Task Force (DBFTF), a specialized field investigative group comprised of personnel from various local, state, and federal agencies with expertise in detecting, deterring, and disrupting organizations and individuals involved in various types of document, identity, and benefit fraud schemes.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Jonathan Davidson, Special Agent in Charge of U.S. Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service, Boston Field Office; Matthew B. Millhollin, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; and Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations, Labor Racketeering and Fraud made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Alatheia Porter of Mendell's Narcotics and Money Laundering Unit, Benjamin A. Saltzman of Mendell's Major Crimes Unit and James Herbert of Mendell's Health Care Fraud Unit are prosecuting the case.

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>.

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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