

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Maryland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 26, 2023

**Maryland Man Facing Federal Indictment for Filing
Fraudulent Applications for COVID-19 CARES Act
Unemployment Benefits and for Illegal Possession of a
Firearm**

Baltimore, Maryland – A federal grand jury returned an indictment yesterday charging Ryan E. Dales, age 34, of Baltimore, Maryland, with illegal possession of a firearm by a previously convicted felon and with wire fraud, relating to the submission of fraudulent applications for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act.

The indictment was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Erik L. Barron and Special Agent in Charge Thomas J. Sobocinski of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Baltimore Field Office; and Acting Special Agent in Charge Troy W. Springer, of the National Capital Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

According to the two-count indictment, Dales illegally possessed a firearm on January 20, 2023.

The CARES Act, enacted in March 2020 to provide emergency financial assistance to Americans suffering from the economic effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, created the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program, which expanded states’ ability to provide UI for workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including workers who otherwise wouldn’t be eligible for UI benefits. The indictment alleges that beginning in December 2020 and continuing through about September 2021, Dales submitted applications for UI benefits that contained false statements, misrepresentations, and omissions related to his employment, his eligibility to received UI benefits, and his purported businesses, including their existence, operation, and profits. Dales allegedly submitted a fictitious tax form in support of his applications.

More information on the allegations against Dales may be found [here](#).

If convicted, Dales faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in federal prison for being a felon in possession of a firearm and a maximum of 20 years in federal prison for wire fraud. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after taking into account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors. Dales is expected to have an initial appearance in U.S. District Court in Baltimore, but no date has been set.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

The District of Maryland COVID-19 Fraud Strike Force is one of three strike forces established by U.S. Attorney General Merrick B. Garland and the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate and prosecute COVID-19 fraud, including fraud relating to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act. The CARES Act was designed to provide emergency financial assistance to Americans suffering the economic effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The strike forces focus on large-scale, multi-state pandemic relief fraud perpetrated by criminal organizations and

transnational actors. The strike forces are interagency law enforcement efforts, using prosecutor-led and data analyst-driven teams designed to identify and bring to justice those who stole pandemic relief funds.

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>.

United States Attorney Erik L. Barron commended the FBI and DOL-OIG for their work in the investigation. United States Attorney Barron and Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul A. Riley are prosecuting the case. Mr. Barron also recognized the assistance of the Maryland COVID-19 Strike Force Paralegal Specialist Joanna B.N. Huber.

For more information on the Maryland U.S. Attorney's Office, its priorities, and resources available to help the community, please visit www.justice.gov/usao/md.

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Topic(s):
Coronavirus
Firearms Offenses

Component(s):
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