

**Department of Justice**  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Eastern District of Michigan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Southfield Resident Pleads Guilty In COVID-19 Fraud Scheme**

**DETROIT** - Southfield resident Mykia King pleaded guilty today to wire fraud and aggravated identity theft arising out of a pandemic-related unemployment insurance fraud scheme, announced United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison.

Joining in the announcement were Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General and Special Agent in Charge John Marengo, United States Secret Service's Detroit Field Office.

Mykia King, 29, pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud arising out of her submission of 34 fraudulent claims for pandemic unemployment assistance. She also pleaded guilty to one count of aggravated identity theft, which reflected the fact that she used stolen personal identifying information to further her unemployment assistance fraud scheme.

According to the plea agreement, King filed approximately 34 fraudulent UI claims seeking pandemic unemployment assistance (PUA) benefits to which she was not entitled. These fraudulent claims were submitted in the names of multiple individuals without those individuals' authorization or consent. King submitted adulterated identification documents as proof of identification for her fraudulent PUA claims. Indeed, King submitted identical driver's license photos and social security cards as proof of identification for multiple claims, although she used different names and addresses for the claims. The funds associated with King's fraudulent claims were typically loaded onto Bank of America debit cards and mailed to addresses King controlled. King would then withdraw the funds on these cards, usually at ATMs located in the Eastern District of Michigan.

According to the plea documents, one such fraudulent claim was submitted in the name of a victim whose initials were T.R. King filed a fraudulent PUA claim using T.R.'s name and social security number on June 5, 2020. King was not lawfully in possession of T.R.'s social security number, and was not authorized to file a PUA claim on T.R.'s behalf. The claim used King's street address (with a different apartment number). The system requested an Identity Verification (IDV), and King uploaded an adulterated Michigan driver's license bearing T.R.'s name as proof of identification. Benefits were paid on King's fraudulent T.R. claim on approximately June 23 and 24, 2020. King accessed the fraudulently obtained benefits by using a Bank of America debit card issued for the T.R. claim at ATMs in the Detroit Metro area on approximately June 25-30, July 1-2, July 6, and July 10-11, 2020, obtaining approximately \$11,880. This fraudulent use of T.R.'s identifying information in furtherance of her fraud scheme gave rise to the aggravated identity theft charge to which King pleaded guilty.

United States Attorney Ison stated "Enhanced benefits for unemployed workers were a key lifeline for many of our district's citizens during the pandemic. Unfortunately, those enhanced benefits attracted criminals seeking to exploit the system and enrich themselves at the public's expense. My office has no tolerance for this abuse of a public program, and today's plea is a reflection of my office's commitment to vigorous prosecution of these cases."

“Mykia King submitted numerous fraudulent claims for pandemic unemployment assistance, obtaining more than \$366,000 in funds intended for individuals who lost their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to safeguard the UI system from those who exploit these benefit programs,” said Irene Lindow, Special Agent in Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

Special Agent in Charge Marengo said, “The U.S. Secret Service is dedicated to working with our federal, state and local law enforcement partners in UIA fraud cases. The U.S. Secret Service continues to focus on criminals exploiting the American people.”

Sentencing is set for April 19, 2022 at 11 am. before United States District Judge Linda V. Parker.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys John K. Neal and Alyse Wu. The investigation is being conducted jointly by the Department of Labor-Office of Inspector General and the Secret Service. The Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency provided valuable assistance in this investigation.

**Topic(s):**  
Coronavirus

**Component(s):**  
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