

U.S. Secret Service Helps Recover \$2B Through Investigations into COVID-19-Related Financial Fraud

Data Released Today Show Agency Has Also Seized Over \$640M in Fraudulently-Obtained Funds

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WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Secret Service released data on efforts to investigate acts of fraud that exploit COVID-19 relief funds. Investigations have resulted in the seizure of millions of dollars and have assisted in the return of approximately \$2 billion.

One year into investigating COVID-19-related financial fraud, the Secret Service has seized over \$640 million in fraudulently obtained funds and assisted in returning approximately \$2 billion to state unemployment insurance programs. The Secret Service has additionally initiated more than 690 unemployment insurance fraud investigations and investigative inquiries, as well as 720 Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) and Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) fraud investigations and investigative inquiries.

The U.S. Secret Service is uniquely positioned by statutory authority to investigate and disrupt the fraudulent exploitation of funds allocated specifically for pandemic-related financial relief as part of the agency’s responsibility to protect the U.S. financial infrastructure. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, criminals have tried to exploit the American people for their own illicit gain, including through attempts to fraudulently acquire funds made available through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA), and the American Rescue Plan.

“Today’s announcement is just the latest example of the critical role the Secret Service plays in rooting out financial fraud to protect our financial infrastructure and economic security,” said Secretary Mayorkas. “I am incredibly proud of the

Secret Service and their continued dedication to protecting our communities from exploitation.”

“Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of Americans have been depending on the men and women of the Secret Service to safeguard the integrity of essential financial relief,” said U.S. Secret Service Director James M. Murray. “For more than 150 years, the Secret Service has been identifying and investigating individuals and organizations engaged in fraud and determined to undermine the nation’s financial stability – a mission we continue to uphold today.”

The Secret Service Global Investigative Operations Center quickly began and continues a coordinated campaign to alert our nationwide network of Cyber Fraud Task Forces and our public and private sector partners in an effort to mitigate attempts by criminal elements to defraud taxpayer funded relief.

Leveraging additional longstanding relationships, the U.S. Secret Service has also partnered closely with the Department of Labor Office of the Inspector General and the Small Business Administration (SBA) to coordinate efforts and prevent fraud schemes capitalizing on EIDL, PPP and unemployment insurance programs.

“The amount of unemployment insurance benefits provided in response to the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented in the history of the nation’s unemployment insurance system. Unfortunately, the significant increase in benefits made the program a target for those seeking to defraud government programs,” stated Larry D. Turner, Acting Inspector General, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General. “As the primary federal law enforcement agency responsible for investigating unemployment insurance fraud, the Department of Labor Office of Inspector General will continue to work with the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Department of Justice, and all of our partners on the National Unemployment Insurance Fraud Task Force to vigorously pursue those who defraud the unemployment insurance program and safeguard benefits intended for unemployed workers.”

“The pandemic required a whole-of-government response, and the oversight of these funds also requires a whole-of-government effort,” said SBA Inspector General Hannibal “Mike” Ware. “OIG values its partnership with the U.S. Secret Service and its counterparts across government to combat fraud in SBA’s pandemic response programs. The men and women of OIG and the Secret Service have taken this fight directly to the fraudsters.”

The investigative work specific to pandemic relief fraud remains ongoing. The Secret Service continues to participate in many local, regional and headquarters level task forces led by the Department of Justice, including the National Unemployment Insurance Fraud Task Force. These partner entities further combat the widespread criminal activity associated with those programs and share data, collaborate on investigations and prevent the duplication of government efforts.

For more information on the investigative mission of the U.S. Secret Service, visit www.secretservice.gov.