



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
MIDDLE DISTRICT *of* GEORGIA

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Middle District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, June 14, 2021

Columbus Couple in Custody, Charged with CARES Act Fraud

COLUMBUS, Ga. – Two Columbus residents were taken into custody today after a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging them both with wire fraud and theft of government property related to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Curtis Porch, 48, and Dereen Porch, 43, both of Columbus, GA, were taken into custody earlier today by federal agents after a federal grand jury returned a four-count indictment on Wednesday, June 9, charging them with three counts of wire fraud and one count of theft of government property. If convicted, the defendants face a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for wire theft and a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for theft of government property. An indictment is an allegation of criminal conduct. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. The defendants appeared in federal court this morning.

According to the filed indictment, the defendants allegedly submitted fraudulent loan applications to the Small Business Administration (SBA) in June and July 2020, seeking CARES Act money for shell companies that suffered no losses as a result of harm related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government alleges that companies either did not exist, did not conduct business or only existed on paper. As a result of the fraud, the defendants are accused of stealing or converting \$364,200 from SBA.

FBI and IRS-Criminal Investigations are investigating the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Melvin Hyde is prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely an allegation and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Topic(s):

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

[Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#)

[USAO - Georgia, Middle](#)

Updated June 22, 2021

