



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Delaware

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, July 6, 2021

Newark Woman Charged with Wire Fraud, SBA Fraud, and Money Laundering

WILMINGTON, Del. – U.S. Attorney David C. Weiss announced today that a federal grand jury returned an indictment today charging a Newark woman with wire fraud, loan fraud, and money laundering in connection with seventeen fraudulent loan applications under programs authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (“CARES Act”).

According to the indictment, Ana Soto, 40, fraudulently applied for loans designed to support small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Between March 2020 and January 2021, using the names of five separate companies, Soto submitted applications to the U.S. Small Business Administration (“SBA”) and its authorized lenders, inflating, among other metrics, the revenues and number of employees of the companies in attempt to obtain greater payments under either the Paycheck Protection Program (“PPP”) or Economic Injury Disaster Loans (“EIDL”). In some instances, Soto falsely claimed businesses that had either already closed or not yet open at the onset of the pandemic were entitled to funds. While many of these applications were denied, as a result of her illegal conduct, Soto obtained approximately \$246,000. Soto then used the money for personal expenses, not authorized by the PPP or EIDL program, including the purchase of a personal use vehicle.

U.S. Attorney Weiss commented on the charges, “In the midst of a global crisis, this defendant took advantage of government programs designed to support small businesses and the employees of those businesses. The defendant’s opportunism, at the expense of the U.S. government and its citizens, deserves sanction and today’s indictment represents the first step in seeking to hold her accountable for her actions.”

Soto is charged with wire fraud, SBA fraud, and money laundering. If convicted, she faces up to 20 years in prison. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties.

IRS Criminal Investigation and the FBI Baltimore Division’s Wilmington Resident Agency conducted the investigation in this matter. Assistant U.S. Attorney Lesley F. Wolf is prosecuting the case.

A copy of this press release is located on the website of the [U.S. Attorney’s Office](#) for the District of Delaware. Related court documents and information is located on the website of the [District Court](#) for the District of Delaware or on [PACER](#).

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>.

An indictment contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed to be innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.

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Topic(s):

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