



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
DISTRICT *of* RHODE ISLAND

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Rhode Island

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, April 19, 2021

Providence Man Indicted for CARES Act Fraud

PROVIDENCE – A federal grand jury in Providence on Friday returned a 17-count indictment charging a local man, who used the moniker “Mr. Vacation,” with using stolen Social Security numbers and personal identifying information of numerous individuals to apply for Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funded unemployment insurance compensation from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and for Economic Injury Disaster Loans from the Small Business Administration.

It is alleged in the indictment that beginning in March 2020, Courtney Hilaire, 28, obtained from the Internet personal identifying information, Social Security numbers, and dates of birth of numerous individuals, then accessed commercial public records data bases to obtain additional information about the identity of his victims. In July 2020, using the stolen identities, Hilaire filed a least six applications for unemployment insurance payments from the State of Pennsylvania. On at least seven occasions beginning in August 2020, Hilaire withdrew fraudulently obtained CARES Act unemployment funds from bank accounts he accessed through ATMs in Rhode Island.

It is also alleged in the indictment that Hilaire, using the moniker “Mr. Vacation,” solicited the assistance of another individual to defraud the Small Business Administration by fraudulently seeking CARES Act Economic Injury Disaster Loans, a program which provides economic relief to small businesses that have experienced a temporary loss of revenue during the pandemic. It is alleged that Hilaire filed at least twenty-eight fraudulent applications with the Small Business Administration for Economic Injury Disaster Loans if he was not entitled to receive.

Hilaire, charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud, 14 counts of wire fraud, and two counts of aggravated identity theft, is the latest individual charged in federal court in Providence with allegedly running schemes to defraud CARES Act programs. Earlier this month, the United States Attorney's Office publicly detailed investigations and charges brought against fraudsters who collectively have targeted more than \$31 million in CARES Act funding.

To date, the United States Attorney's Office in Rhode Island has charged 24 individuals with allegedly defrauding state unemployment agencies in Rhode Island and elsewhere and the Small Business Administration, of CARES Act relief funds made available to assist American families and business in need due to the pandemic. Several investigations are ongoing.

The indictment of Courtney Hilaire is announced by Acting United States Attorney Richard B. Myrus, Homeland Security Investigations Acting Special Agent in Charge William S. Walker, Warwick Police Chief Colonel Bradford Connor, and Pawtucket Police Chief Tina Goncalves.

A federal indictment is merely an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The investigation that resulted in an indictment being brought against Hilaire for CARES Act fraud was conducted by the Warwick Police Department, Pawtucket Police Department Special Squad, and Homeland Security Investigations.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney William F. Ferland.

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Topic(s):

Coronavirus

Financial Fraud

Identity Theft

Component(s):

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Contact:

Jim Martin

(401) 709-5357

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