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# PRESS RELEASE

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## Defendant Pleads Guilty to Felony Theft and Identity Fraud in Fraudulent COVID -19 Unemployment Insurance Claims Case

**BALTIMORE, MD (December 14, 2023)** – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced the conviction of Leslie Awulley Quaye, 25, of Taneytown, Maryland, for his role in [filing fraudulent unemployment insurance claims](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Quaye pleaded guilty to one count of Theft by Deception with a value over \$100,000 and two counts of Identity Fraud, both felonies. Baltimore City Circuit Court Judge Lynn Stewart Mays will sentence Quaye on January 11, 2024.

Quaye's conviction stems from fraudulent unemployment claims that were filed in the names of identity fraud victims in July 2020, after the federal government allocated billions of dollars in funding to states for residents who were suddenly unemployed as a result of the State of Emergency measures implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic. By filing these fraudulent unemployment claims, Quaye caused the Maryland Department of Labor to distribute over \$140,000 in benefits onto bank debit cards. The defendant listed his own physical address on the fraudulent claims so that he could receive the debit cards, and, upon receiving the debit cards, used them to spend over \$40,000 of the funds intended for unemployed residents of the State of Maryland for his personal benefit. As part of his sentence, Quaye will be required to pay \$41,905.32 in restitution to the Maryland Department of Labor.

In making today's announcement, Attorney General Brown thanked Criminal Division, Fraud and Corruption Unit Assistant Attorney General Alyn Pearson and investigative auditor Amy Amy for their work on this case, as well as the Beacon team at the Division of Unemployment Insurance and the Maryland Department of Labor.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2023/121423.pdf>