



U. S. Department of Justice

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**TALLAHASSEE COUPLE SENTENCED TO FEDERAL PRISON FOR WIRE FRAUD
CONSPIRACY, MONEY LAUNDERING CONSPIRACY, AND MAKING FALSE
STATEMENTS RELATING TO COVID-19 RELIEF PROGRAMS**

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA – Wilbert Jean Stanley, III, 43, and Felicia Jackson Stanley, 43, both of Tallahassee, Florida, were sentenced, after previously pleading guilty to one count each of wire fraud conspiracy, money laundering conspiracy, and making false statements in connection to COVID-19 pandemic relief. Wilbert Stanley was sentenced to 40 months in federal prison, and Felicia Stanley was sentenced to 24 months in prison. Jason R. Coody, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida announced the sentences.

“The theft of any amount of taxpayer funds is inexcusable but stealing over \$4.8 million dollars from honest, hardworking Americans truly in need of pandemic relief is simply abhorrent,” said U.S. Attorney Coody. “Today’s sentences both punish the defendants’ criminal conduct and should serve as a significant deterrent to others who would steal from their fellow citizens to unlawfully enrich themselves. With our law enforcement partners, we remain committed to investigating and vigorously prosecuting those who engage in acts of covid-related fraud.”

Court documents reflect that between March 1, 2020, and September 1, 2021, the Stanleys made false and fraudulent representations in applications to the Small Business Administration (SBA), financial institutions, and other lenders, for three different federal COVID-19 relief programs: Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs), and Shuttered Venue Operators Grants (SVOGs). The false representations included inflated average monthly payroll expenses and the use of false tax forms as supporting documentation. The Stanleys submitted a total of 166 false and fraudulent EIDL applications, of which 50 were funded, in their names for businesses that they owned and in the names of other individuals (whom they recruited). The Stanleys also submitted 20 false and fraudulent PPP loan applications, and 3 false and fraudulent SVOG applications in their names for businesses that they owned and in the names of other individuals (whom they recruited). For most of the applications that the Stanleys submitted (which were not in their names), the Stanleys had an arrangement with the named applicants to receive a kickback from the named applicants, which was paid from the PPP, EIDL, and SVOG proceeds.

“Diverting federal funds intended to provide critical relief from the effects of a pandemic steals resources from those who need it most,” said Brian Payne IRS-CI Special Agent in Charge. “These sentences reinforce our commitment to stopping criminals so every American taxpayer can maintain confidence in our system of taxation.”

“These sentences bring justice to the defendants who fraudulently obtained millions from Federal programs that were created to provide assistance to businesses struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Special Agent in Charge Kyle A. Myles of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Office of Inspector General (FDIC-OIG). “The FDIC-OIG will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to hold those accountable who steal from such programs and threaten to undermine the integrity of the banking system.”

In total, through their false applications for federal COVID-19 relief funds, the Stanleys attempted to obtain over \$7 million for themselves and others, to which they were not entitled. The Stanleys were successful in fraudulently obtaining over \$4.8 million in such funds.

Additionally, the Stanleys engaged in multiple monetary transactions that involved at least \$10,000 of fraudulently obtained PPP loan, EIDL, or SVOG proceeds that they obtained through their scheme. Many of these transactions included payments for the purchase of real estate and to invest in virtual currency.

“These sentences demonstrate that those that steal taxpayer dollars will face the consequences for their actions,” said SBA OIG’s Eastern Region Special Agent in Charge Amaleka Brathwaite-McCall. “I want to thank the U.S. Department of Justice and our law enforcement partners for their dedication and pursuit of justice.”

The Stanleys’ imprisonment will be followed by 3 years of supervised release. Additionally, the Stanleys were ordered to pay restitution to the SBA in the amount of \$2,802,690.76, and the Court entered an order of forfeiture with respect to several parcels of real property and accounts at financial institutions.

This case was investigated by the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation-Office of Inspector General (FDIC-OIG), Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA), and the U.S. Small Business Administration-Office of Inspector General (SBA-OIG. Assistant United States Attorney Justin M. Keen prosecuted the case.

This case was prosecuted as part the Department of Justice’s prosecution of fraud schemes that exploit the CARES Act relief programs. The CARES Act is a federal law enacted in March 2020, designed to provide emergency financial assistance to the millions of Americans suffering the economic effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the two programs that were developed through CARES Act is the PPP. It provides funding to businesses through PPP loans for payroll costs, interest on mortgages, rent and utilities. PPP allows the interest and principal on loans to be forgiven if the business spends proceeds on certain expense items within a designated time and uses a certain percentage of the loan on payroll expenses. The SVOG program was established by the Economic Aid to Hard-Hit Small Businesses, Nonprofits, and Venues Act, and amended by the American Rescue Plan Act. The program included over \$16 billion in grants to shuttered venues, to be administered by SBA. The SVOG program’s mission is to support the ongoing operations of eligible live venues and operators, live venue promoters,

theatrical producers, talent representatives, live performing arts organization operators, museums, and motion picture theaters during the uncertain economic conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Justice remains vigilant in detecting, investigating, and prosecuting wrongdoing related to the crisis.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation's principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](#) website. For more information about the United States Attorney's Office, Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

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