

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
NORTHERN DISTRICT *of* ILLINOIS

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Northern District of Illinois

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Chicago Woman Charged With Filing False Income Tax Returns To Fraudulently Obtain Refunds and Stimulus Payments

CHICAGO —A Chicago woman has been indicted on federal criminal charges for allegedly fraudulently obtaining the personal identifying information of deceased individuals and using it to file for tax refunds and stimulus payments from the U.S. Treasury.

An indictment returned Monday in federal court in Chicago charges KATRINA PIERCE, 50, with ten counts of wire fraud, six counts of aggravated identity theft, three counts of making false statements to the U.S. Small Business Administration, and one count of possessing identification documents to defraud the United States. Arraignment is set for Oct. 5, 2021, at 9:30 a.m. before U.S. District Judge Virginia M. Kendall.

The indictment was announced by John R. Lausch, Jr., United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; and Justin Campbell, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the IRS Criminal Investigation Division in Chicago. The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian Havey.

According to the indictment, Pierce fraudulently requested and obtained death certificates for individuals from Illinois and several other states. Pierce then used personal identifying information of deceased individuals to file false income tax returns with the IRS so that she could fraudulently obtain tax refunds and stimulus payments under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the indictment states. Pierce allegedly claimed a deceased boy as a dependent on her own tax return and attached to other false returns bogus birth certificates that falsely claimed deceased children as dependents.

The indictment also accuses Pierce of fraudulently submitting applications to the SBA seeking loans under the COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program, a financial assistance program for small businesses suffering from a temporary loss of revenue due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Pierce submitted false applications under her own name and under the names of other persons, including farmers and small business owners in Illinois and other states, whose personal identity information was unlawfully taken and used without their knowledge, the charges allege. The indictment describes applications submitted by Pierce in which she fraudulently claimed to be the owner of a manufacturing business with 106 employees and a retail electronics business with 14 employees, with both businesses purportedly located at the same address – an apartment where Pierce was then residing.

The public is reminded that an indictment is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. If

convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under federal statutes and the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines.

Attachment(s):

[Download Pierce indictment](#)

Topic(s):

Coronavirus

Cyber Crime

Disaster Fraud

Financial Fraud

Identity Theft

Tax

Component(s):

[USAO - Illinois, Northern](#)

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