



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

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Northern District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Defendants charged with stealing millions of dollars from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

ATLANTA – Lakisha Swope and Treisha Pearson have been arraigned on charges of conspiracy, wire fraud, bank fraud, and money laundering after allegedly participating in a scheme to steal over \$3.5 million from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

“Swope and Pearson allegedly stole millions of dollars destined to help small business owners,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Kurt R. Erskine. “PPP dollars often provide a bridge for businesses suffering from the effects of the pandemic. However, PPP funds are not unlimited, and those who seek to enrich themselves fraudulently through this program will be prosecuted.”

“These two defendants are accused of misdirecting federal emergency assistance from businesses who need it to stay afloat, to their own pockets, during a pandemic,” said Chris Hacker, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Atlanta. “Their alleged greed affects every tax paying citizen and the FBI will make every effort to make sure funds provided by programs like PPP are used as intended.”

According to Acting U.S. Attorney Erskine, the charges, and other information presented in court: Lakisha Swope and Treisha Pearson, together with others, allegedly submitted false PPP applications for a number of entities claiming over \$5 million in loans. These PPP applications allegedly contained materially false information such as false representations regarding the applicant entities' total number of employees and average monthly payroll.

As a result of these false statements, lenders issued over \$3.5 million in PPP loans to these various entities. Swope and Pearson, along with other members of the conspiracy, then allegedly used the fraudulently obtained funds for unauthorized expenditures including luxury clothing, restaurants, personal rent, hotels, and vacation rentals.

Lakisha Swope, 43, of Alpharetta, Georgia and Treisha Pearson, 49, of Brookhaven, Georgia, face charges of conspiracy, wire fraud, bank fraud, and money laundering. Both defendants were indicted on February 24, 2021.

Members of the public are reminded that the indictment only contains charges. The defendants are presumed innocent of the charges and it will be the government's burden to prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

This case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas J. Krepp is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact the U.S. Attorney's Public Affairs Office at USAGAN.PressEmails@usdoj.gov or (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is <http://www.justice.gov/usao-ndga>.

Topic(s):

Coronavirus

Financial Fraud

Component(s):

USAO - Georgia, Northern

Updated March 3, 2021