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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Western District of North Carolina

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

## **Husband And Wife Are Indicted For Stealing \$200,000 From A High School Booster Club**

### **Husband Is Facing Additional Charges for Obtaining Fraudulent COVID-19 Relief Loans and Using A Portion of the Funds to Cover Up the Theft**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – The president of a Charlotte high school Booster Club and his wife have been indicted on federal charges for stealing more than \$200,000 from the organization. The husband is also charged with fraudulently obtaining over \$236,000 in COVID-19 relief funds to cover up the theft, announced William T. Stetzer, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina.

Robert R. Wells, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Charlotte Division, Tommy D. Coke, Inspector in Charge of the Atlanta Division of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) which oversees Charlotte, and Mona Passmore, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division, Charlotte Field Office (IRS-CI) join Acting U.S. Attorney Stetzer in making today's announcement.

According to allegations contained in the eight-count indictment, between 2017 and June 2020, Anthony Sharper, 39, and Deana Sharper, 45, both of Charlotte, executed a scheme to defraud and embezzle at least \$200,000 from a Charlotte-area high school Athletic Booster Club by writing checks to themselves for purported reimbursement, wiring funds directly to their personal bank account, and using the Booster Club's debit cards and credit card to pay for personal expenditures. The indictment further alleges that, Anthony Sharper, who is a certified public accountant, also committed tax fraud by failing to report any of the embezzled funds on the couple's joint 2018 and 2019 tax returns filed with the IRS.

As alleged the indictment, to cover up the theft and to enrich himself, between March and May 2020, Anthony Sharper submitted three fraudulent applications for federal COVID-19 relief funds, including two fraudulent Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan applications, one in the name of the Booster Club and one in the name of his accounting firm, A. Sharper CPA, PLLC, and an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) application to the Small Business Administration (SBA) on behalf of his CPA firm. All three applications contained false information, including fake revenues and fake payroll and employment data. As a result of the fraudulent applications, the indictment alleges that Anthony Sharper obtained more than \$236,000 in COVID-19 relief funds intended for existing businesses harmed by the coronavirus pandemic.

After receiving the loan proceeds, Anthony Sharper used the funds to pay for personal expenditures and to cover up the couple's theft of the Booster Club's funds.

Both Sharper and his wife are charged with wire fraud which carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Anthony Sharper is also charged with two counts of making false statements to a financial institution, which carry a maximum prison term of 30 years and a \$1 million fine per count; making a false statement to SBA, for which the maximum statutory penalty is 30 years in prison and a \$1 million fine; two counts of engaging in monetary transactions in criminally derived property, which carry a maximum prison term of 10 years and a \$500,000 fine per count; and two counts of filing a false tax return, which carry a maximum penalty of three years in prison and a \$250,000 fine per count.

The criminal indictment also contains a notice of forfeiture, which gives notice that the defendants must forfeit to the United States all of the property, currency and monetary instruments involved in the offenses charged in the indictment. The government will pursue a forfeiture money judgment in the amount of at least \$436,000, which the government contends constitutes the proceeds of the violations alleged in the charging document.

Anthony and Deana Sharper will be ordered by the U.S. District Court to appear on a summons for their initial appearance, which will be scheduled by the Court. The charges contained in the indictment are allegations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

The FBI, USPIS, and IRS-CI investigated the case. The prosecution is handled by Assistant United States Attorney Caryn Finley of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Charlotte.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act is a federal law enacted on March 29, 2020, designed to provide emergency financial assistance to the millions of Americans who are suffering the economic effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>. Members of the public in the Western District of North Carolina are also encouraged to call 704-344-6222 to reach their local Coronavirus Fraud Coordinator.

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**Topic(s):**

Coronavirus

Financial Fraud

**Component(s):**

USAO - North Carolina, Western

Updated May 19, 2021