



# OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY

## PRESS RELEASE



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### **State Attorney's Office Announces Arrests From Paycheck Protection Program Fraud Task Force**

State Attorney Dave Aronberg announced the arrests of three individuals accused of fraudulently obtaining more than \$1.1 million from the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program after the loans for small businesses became available in 2020. A task force started this spring by the State Attorney's Office and the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office made these arrests.

Under the PPP and EIDL programs, small businesses struggling financially from the COVID-19 pandemic received billions of dollars in forgivable loans to pay employee salaries and expenses. But a number of individuals across the country used it as a money grab, pretending to run businesses needing help with payroll expenses, interest on mortgages, and rent and utilities.

State Attorney task force investigators have been working on more than two dozen cases to date referred by federal authorities and public tips. The cases amount to over \$12 million in fraudulent loans from the program, where applicants have claimed nonexistent employees and other false business expenses.

The newly filed PPP fraud cases, which will be prosecuted in state court, involve felony charges of organized scheme to defraud and money laundering. Probable cause affidavits are provided for these three defendants, each of whom are accused of fleecing the government out of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

"PPP fraudsters are being exposed one by one," State Attorney Dave Aronberg said. "They will be held accountable for ripping off taxpayers while our country was in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. Their actions were despicable." The task force Tip Line is 1-844-324-5463.