

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Statement on the Justice Department Naming Kevin A. Chambers as Director for COVID–19 Fraud Enforcement

March 10, 2022

In my State of the Union Address, I made clear that we must conduct strong oversight and robust criminal enforcement of pandemic fraud. And I announced that the Department of Justice commitment would name a chief prosecutor for pandemic fraud, a watchdog to go after the criminals who stole billions in relief money meant for small businesses and working Americans. Today I applaud the Justice Department for moving forward so swiftly to fill that role.

In the early days of the pandemic, the previous administration consistently undermined the watchdogs whose job it was to keep relief funds from being wasted or abused. Emergency loans that were supposed to help small businesses keep the lights on and keep employees on the payroll were siphoned off by wealthy scammers. Foreign and domestic criminal syndicates intercepted benefits meant for Americans in dire need of relief. Reports of identity theft spiked by 3,000 percent from 2019 to 2020, and far too many working families bore the brunt of this unchecked fraud.

The watchdogs are back. The COVID–19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force has already initiated more than 1,000 criminal cases, aiming to recover billions of dollars for the American people. We are taking the same meticulous approach that I employed when President Obama put me in charge of overseeing the Recovery Act in 2009. My administration is working with the oversight community to help put in place tools to prevent fraud in areas like small-business loans and unemployment insurance. With a chief pandemic prosecutor now in place, the Department of Justice will escalate our efforts to crack down on bad actors and take all efforts to seize relief money stolen from American families, businesses, and schools during the last administration and deliver it back to the American people.

Categories: Statements by the President : COVID–19 Fraud Enforcement Director, Department of Justice naming of Kevin A. Chambers.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Chambers, Kevin A.; Obama, Barack.

Subjects: Business and industry : Small businesses, promotion efforts; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic prevention efforts; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment insurance; Justice, Department of : COVID–19 Fraud Enforcement, Director for; Law enforcement and crime : Identify theft; Law enforcement and crime : Transnational criminal organizations.

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