



Houston Woman pleads guilty to Cares Act fraud, theft of government funds

October 11, 2023

NEW ORLEANS — The spouse of a former Amtrak employee pleaded guilty September 12, 2023, to a two-count bill of information charging her with making false statements and theft of government funds related to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.

According to a press release from the U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Louisiana, Temika Santemore made false statements to the Small Business Administration to fraudulently obtain pandemic-related relief loans funded by the federal government, including Paycheck Protection Program loans. As a result, she received approximately \$13,540 in pandemic-related relief loans. Santemore also applied for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan from the SBA in July 2021 and illegally received \$5,000 for a dormant business she owned.

Sentencing is set for December 12, 2023. Santemore potentially faces a maximum sentence of up to five years in prison, up to \$250,000 in fines, and up to three years of supervised release for the false statements count. She faces a maximum of up to ten years in prison, up to \$250,000 in fines, and up to three years of supervised release for the theft count. There is also a \$100 mandatory special assessment fee for each count due after conviction.

Her husband, Stacey V. Santemore, a former Amtrak train attendant, was sentenced for similar charges July 25, 2022, to three years' probation, 12 months' home confinement, and was ordered to pay restitution of \$64,874.64 to the SBA and \$22,725 to the Louisiana Workforce Commission.

In addition to the Amtrak Office of Inspector General, the case was investigated by the Department of Labor OIG and the FBI.

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 (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

Reports of fraud, waste, or abuse, including suspected pandemic relief fraud; criminal or unethical acts affecting Amtrak's property or operations; or mismanagement in Amtrak programs or operations can be made 24 hours a day via the Amtrak OIG Hotline at 1-800-468-5469 or online at <https://direc.to/hPAu>.

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