

## **Press Release**

### **Mississippi Woman Pleads Guilty to Scheme to Defraud COVID-19 Relief Program of Over \$5,000,000**

Friday, February 21, 2025

#### **For Immediate Release**

U.S. Attorney's Office, Western District of Tennessee

**Memphis, TN** – A Mississippi woman has pled guilty to defrauding the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), a federal program intended to help small businesses survive the COVID-19 pandemic, of over \$5,000,000. Reagan Fondren, Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, announced the guilty plea today.

On February 20, 2025, **Lisa Evans, 42**, of Olive Branch, Mississippi, pled guilty before United States District Judge Thomas L. Parker to conspiracy to commit wire fraud. She will be sentenced on May 22, 2025, and faces a maximum term of 20 years in federal prison. There is no parole in the federal system.

According to information presented in court, Evans submitted fraudulent PPP loan applications for numerous individuals who were not entitled to PPP loans. The applications Evans submitted contained false representations, including fake federal tax documents. When the individual borrowers obtained the PPP loan funds, they then paid Evans kickbacks of 20 to 30 percent. The loss to the PPP program was \$5,126,258.

Acting U.S. Attorney Fondren stated: “Individuals cheating the Paycheck Protection Program stole money from U.S. taxpayers who desperately needed these loans to keep their small businesses afloat and pay their employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. I would especially like to commend and thank the federal law enforcement agencies who uncovered this fraud and brought this defendant to justice: the Federal Housing Finance Agency Office of Inspector General; the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Office of Inspector General; the U.S. Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, Gulf States Field Division; the U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Inspector General; the U.S. Secret Service, Memphis Field Office; and the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee. My office will continue to work with these law enforcement partners to bring those who committed pandemic benefit fraud in the Western District of Tennessee to justice and to recover stolen pandemic relief funds.”

Acting U.S. Attorney Fondren also thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Tony Arvin, who prosecuted this case.

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