
Weekly COVID-19 Oversight & Enforcement Report

December 17, 2020

A. Congress
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chair of the House Oversight & Reform Economic and Consumer Policy Subcommittee Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) sent a letter to Peter Navarro, Assistant to the President and Director of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, requesting information about all pandemic-related government contracts in which he played any role. 2. Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-TX) introduced the bicameral COVID-19 in Immigration Detention Data Transparency Act, which would require immigration-detention facilities to collect and publicly report data about COVID-19 cases and the preventative measures in place in these facilities. 3. With paid sick days and family leave for an estimated 22 million workers set to expire on December 31, Senators Patty Murray (D-WA) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) urged their colleagues to extend the bipartisan paid sick days and family leave provisions they successfully fought to secure in March under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) in the next COVID relief package.
B. Executive Agencies
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A California man was arraigned on federal charges alleging that he used stolen identities to fraudulently obtain unemployment insurance benefits under the CARES Act, which he used to purchase a Maserati SUV. 2. A New Jersey man has been charged with fraudulently obtaining a \$5.6 million PPP loan by falsifying payroll and tax information in his application. He allegedly invested the money in the stock market, made a payment to a luxury car dealership, and sent hundreds of thousands of dollars to accounts in Pakistan. 3. A San Diego physician was indicted for selling COVID-19 “treatment kits,” which he advertised to potential customers as a “miracle cure.” The doctor allegedly smuggled hydroxychloroquine from China by labeling it “yam extract,” and informed his patients that it was 100% guaranteed to cure COVID. The case was part of FDA’s “Operation Quack Hack,” a federal effort to curb the sale of fraudulent COVID-19 treatments. 4. As part of the FDA’s effort to protect consumers, the agency issued warning letters jointly with the Federal Trade Commission to Indigenous Products, Heavenly Natural Products and Health & Wellness Center International One, L.L.C. dba Hotze Vitamins, three firms that sell unapproved

and misbranded products with fraudulent COVID-19 claims, and [iThrive.Health](#), a firm that promotes and participates in the sale of such products.

C. State Attorneys General

1. California AG Xavier Becerra filed a [petition](#) in California court requesting that it order Amazon to comply with his office's investigative demands for documents. General Becerra has been investigating the company's compliance with COVID-19-related protocols and the prevalence of coronavirus transmission at Amazon facilities throughout California.
2. Minnesota AG Keith Ellison filed a [lawsuit](#) against the Boardwalk Bar and Grill in East Grand Forks, claiming it refused to close for on-premises dining despite the mandates contained in Governor Walz's Executive Order 20-99. General Ellison is also seeking a temporary restraining order against the restaurant. This is the second time in recent weeks that General Ellison has filed a lawsuit against a business for failing to comply with this Executive Order; he earlier sought, and received, a [temporary restraining order](#) against Plainview Wellness Center.

D. Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery (SIGPR)

1. On December 14, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of New York announced a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with the SIGPR to investigate and prosecute fraud in the distribution of relief authorized by the CARES Act. The MOU will allow cooperation in matters involving loans, loan guarantees, and other investments made by the Secretary of the Treasury under the CARES Act, and is similar to the other MOUs SIGPR has executed with other U.S. Attorney's offices around the country.

E. Pandemic Recovery Accountability Committee (PRAC)

1. On December 15, the 75 agency Inspectors General that serve on the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency [voted](#) to make National Science Foundation IG Allison Lerner its next chair. Lerner will begin her term on January 1 and intends to name Justice Department IG Michael Horowitz—who has been acting PRAC chair since April after President Trump removed Glenn Fine as the chair—as the permanent chair of PRAC.

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