PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Attorney Lelling Announces MOU with Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery Brian D. Miller

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Massachusetts

BOSTON – United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling announced today that the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Special Inspector General Brian D. Miller of the Office of the Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery (SIGPR), to investigate and prosecute fraud in the distribution of the massive relief package authorized by the CARES Act.

"It's an unfortunate reality that a certain kind of criminal capitalizes on crises to take advantage of government programs," said U.S. Attorney Lelling. "Since the outset of this pandemic, my office has worked with our law enforcement partners to disrupt fraudulent schemes targeting the government's pandemic relief efforts. This partnership with SIGPR marks an important step in enhancing that effort."

The MOU will allow the U.S. Attorney's Office and SIGPR to enhance their cooperative efforts in investigating and prosecuting matters involving loans, loan guarantees and other investments made by the Secretary of the Treasury under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020, while using criminal and civil resources efficiently.

“I am looking forward to working with United States Attorney Andy Lelling and his team in Boston,” said Special Inspector General Miller. “Identifying fraud and preventing any waste or abuse of the money provided under the CARES Act is a top priority for both of our offices, and we are determined to bring those who attempt to steal from American taxpayers to justice. This partnership, I am confident, will help to ensure the security and efficiency of the CARES Act funds.”

The MOU outlines four objectives: 1) to provide a coordinated response to CARES Act funding fraud, with an emphasis on organized criminal activity, as well as criminal and civil fraud affecting federal money, vulnerable victims, and fraud recidivists; 2) to speed up legal process, case intake, and prosecution of CARES Act-related fraud; 3) to link and associate isolated CARES Act-related complaints with larger schemes and related unlawful activity; and 4) to deter future CARES Act funding fraud by increasing awareness of successful criminal prosecutions and civil enforcement actions against individuals and companies involved in CARES-related financial fraud.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys from the Criminal Division and the Civil Division of the U.S. Attorney’s Office will serve as liaisons to the partnership with SIGPR. The District of Massachusetts will also provide other staffing support for these investigations.

Massachusetts residents who believe they are victims of fraud or other criminal activity related to the pandemic should contact the U.S. Attorney’s Office at USAMA.VictimAssistance@usdoj.gov or call 1-888-221-6023. Members of the public can also contact the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) by visiting www.IC3.gov. If you or someone you know are in immediate danger, please call 911.

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COVID-RELATED FRAUD

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