



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the New York State Welfare Inspector General
Catherine Leahy Scott – Acting Welfare Inspector General

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 16, 2018
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GLOBETROTTING LONG ISLAND MAN CHARGED WITH UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND WELFARE FRAUD BY USING FICTITIOUS BUSINESS RECORDS AND CONCEALED INCOME

LONG ISLAND - New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott, State Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon and Suffolk County District Attorney Timothy D. Sini today announced the arrest of a Long Island man on charges he stole unemployment insurance and welfare benefits in part by claiming he was laid off from a defunct company and hid his true income.

Darshan Shah, 59, of Shire Court in Greenlawn, was arrested upon arrival Wednesday at John F. Kennedy International Airport and charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Welfare Fraud in the Third Degree, both felonies. Shah was arrested after returning home from one of numerous overseas trips he has taken in recent years.

The investigation by Inspector General Leahy Scott and the New York State Department of Labor Office of Special Investigations found that from January through August of 2015, Shah collected \$10,920 in unemployment insurance benefits based on records he filed claiming to have been laid off from companies he said provided him income in 2013 and 2014, Foster Diagnostic Imaging PC and ADA Inflight Catering. The investigation found Foster ceased to exist in 2011 and that ADA Inflight Catering showed a fictitious address in Shah's filings, both facts making him ineligible for the unemployment benefits.

In addition, the investigation found that Shah repeatedly filed false welfare documents with the Suffolk County Department of Social Services when applying for and recertifying for Medicaid benefits in 2014 and 2015. In those documents, Shah consistently did not report his true income. The investigation found Shah applied for and received \$4,568 in Medicaid health care payments to which he was not entitled.

“This defendant corruptly utilized critical social service programs through a sordid manipulation and abuse of financial records in order to enrich himself and enhance his world-traveling lifestyle,” said **Inspector General Leahy Scott**. “This case should send a strong message that my law enforcement partners and I will not tolerate fraud against welfare and unemployment insurance benefits meant for those who are truly in need, and that we will pursue and catch those who take part in such criminal activity.”

“Under Governor Cuomo, New York State has a zero-tolerance policy for the theft of important safety net benefits,” said **New York State Department of Labor Commissioner Reardon**. “This complicated fraud was designed to line the defendant's pockets, allowing him to support a lavish lifestyle on the backs of New Yorkers in need. Let this case serve as a warning to those who would seek to defraud the unemployment insurance system: you will be brought to justice.”

“The message is clear: we will not tolerate the theft of taxpayer dollars and the abuse of social services, which

are there to protect residents in need, by criminals for their own personal gain,” said **Suffolk County District Attorney Sini**. “I thank the New York State Office of Inspector General Leahy Scott and the State Department of Labor for partnering with my office to uncover fraud and recover the public’s money from individuals trying to game the system,”

Shah was arraigned on the charges in Suffolk County District Court and released pending his reappearance in court on August 30.

Inspector General Leahy Scott thanked Suffolk County District Attorney Timothy D. Sini and his office for their assistance with the investigation, arrest and prosecution of this case, and the New York State Department of Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon and her office, and the Suffolk County Department of Social Services for their partnership in the investigation.

The defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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The New York State Office of the Welfare Inspector General investigates fraud, abuse or illegal acts committed against public assistance programs designed to help those in need. Our office also investigates complaints about the agencies and local social services districts who administer social services programs. Complaints and referrals are kept confidential. We can be reached by calling toll free: 1-800-367-4448, utilizing our online complaint form: <http://www.ig.ny.gov> or sending an email to: inspector.general@ig.ny.gov. You also can write to our office at: Office of the Welfare Inspector General, Empire State Plaza, Agency Building 2, 16th Floor Albany, New York 12223