

# *Weekly COVID-19 Oversight & Enforcement Report*

March 11, 2021

<b>A. Congress</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Republican leaders <a href="#">urged</a> their House Democrat counterparts to hold a joint hearing regarding the undercounting of COVID-19 deaths in New York nursing homes. The letter was signed by Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee Ranking Member Brett Guthrie (R-KY), Republican Whip and Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis Ranking Member Steve Scalise (R-LA), Ways and Means Ranking Member Kevin Brady (R-TX), Ways and Means Health Subcommittee Ranking Member Devin Nunes (R-CA), Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY), and Oversight and Reform Committee Ranking Member James Comer (R-KY).</li> <li>2. On March 10, the House Small Business Committee held a <a href="#">hearing</a> on “The Next Steps for the Paycheck Protection Program.” The hearing featured “an overview of the PPP program and an update for Members on the current state of the First and Second Draw loans, as well as loan forgiveness.” The committee also sought “feedback on the impact of the five programmatic changes recently announced and suggestions from stakeholders regarding the future of the program.”</li> <li>3. The House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Workforce Protections will hold a <a href="#">hearing</a> today on “Clearing the Air: Science-Based Strategies to Protect Workers from COVID-19 Infections.” Witnesses include Dr. Linsey Marr, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Virginia Tech; Pascaline Muhindura, RN on behalf of National Nurses United; Manesh Rath, partner at Keller Heckman LLP; and Dr. David Michaels, a professor of occupational and environmental medicine.</li> </ol>
<b>B. Executive Agencies</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A Miami couple has <a href="#">pleaded guilty</a> after fraudulently seeking \$1.1 million in PPP and EIDL loans. They claimed to generate over \$1 million in income from farms based in the backyards of their small residential homes, when in fact they had no employees and the farms did not exist.</li> <li>2. A Massachusetts man was <a href="#">charged</a> with wire fraud based on allegations that he submitted false documents in support of his application for PPP and EIDL loans. Charging documents allege that the defendant provided fake bank statements for the fake companies, which were dated before the bank account was ever opened. He also submitted fraudulent tax forms, representing that he was the president of two LLCs which paid hundreds of thousands of dollars in wages to employees in 2019. In fact, the defendant was in federal custody during most of 2019 after violating probation</li> </ol>

arising from a conviction for conspiracy to commit securities fraud. In total, he received approximately \$200,000.

### **C. State Attorneys General**

1. Washington AG Bob Ferguson announced a comprehensive [settlement](#) of his lawsuit against Seattle-based ticketing company Brown Paper Tickets, in which the company agreed to refund all tickets purchased to canceled events, as well as to repay event organizers. AG Ferguson's actions came after his office received 1,200 complaints from consumers about Brown Paper Tickets' business practices following the onset of the pandemic, which led to live event cancellations. As a result of the settlement, event organizers and ticket purchasers throughout the United States, and internationally, will receive approximately \$9 million. The settlement also requires the company to pay \$70,000 to cover the costs of the AG's investigation.
2. Colorado AG Phil Weiser announced a [settlement](#) under which travel agency Voyageurs International will reimburse high school students and their families approximately \$800,000 for trips canceled due to the pandemic. Over the past several months, a series of attorneys general have announced similar settlements with the Colorado-based company, in which it has agreed to provide full refunds, including cancellation fees, which the attorneys general have alleged violate consumer protection laws.
3. Minnesota AG Keith Ellison announced a settlement with Plainview Wellness Center, a gym that the AG's office had previously sued for remaining open in violation of state executive orders. In a [consent judgment](#), the gym agreed to pay a \$5,000 fine and to comply with all future government orders concerning COVID-19.

### **D. Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery (SIGPR)**

*No updates this week.*

### **E. Pandemic Recovery Accountability Committee (PRAC)**

*No updates this week.*

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