

PN

The Patriot-News

CELEBRATE JUNETEENTH

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATES THE EMANCIPATION OF SLAVES IN THE U.S. HERE IN CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA, THERE ARE NUMEROUS EVENTS TO MARK THE HOLIDAY. **D1**

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WASHINGTON

Trump administration tells states to tackle unemployment fraud



The nonpartisan Government Accountability Office estimated that fraud accounted for between 11% and 15% of the amount paid out through unemployment insurance programs from April 2020 through May 2023, during the pandemic. AP file photos

If states such as New York don't comply, they could face penalties, the Labor Department says.

Geoff Mulvihill Associated Press

The U.S. Department of Labor told states Wednesday to take immediate action to combat fraud, waste and abuse in their unemployment insurance programs — and that they could have administrative funds withheld if they don't comply.

The letters, which went to the governors of every state, are the latest in a series of actions from President Donald Trump's administration focused on fraud, waste and abuse in state-run programs that include federal funding.

Like with most of the other similar announcements, the administration focused on issues in states where Democrats control the government.

"We are officially putting governors on notice," Acting Labor Secretary Keith Sonderling said in a statement Wednesday. "The American people will no longer tolerate the blatant waste, fraud, and abuse of their hard-earned tax dollars — no state should allow it either. If states allow it, they will suffer the consequences."

The Labor Department said Wednesday that poor oversight, outdated technology, weak identity verification and lax controls have "allowed unprecedented fraud



"We are officially putting governors on notice," acting Labor Secretary Keith Sonderling said Wednesday.

to flourish."

In its announcement, it cited problems in California, Illinois and New York — three states where Democrats control the governments.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom's office blasted the move and criticized "lax regulations and rushed distribution" of unemployment benefits by the first Trump administration during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Meanwhile California outperforms other states in addressing fraud," Newsom spokesperson Marissa Saldivar said in a statement.

The federal Labor Department did not immediately respond to questions from The Associated Press about the details of

the alleged fraud.

The nonpartisan Government Accountability Office estimated that fraud accounted for between 11% and 15% of the amount paid out through unemployment insurance programs from April 2020 through May 2023, when the nation was under a public health emergency for the pandemic.

During that time — which included the last months of Trump's first term and over half of former President Joe Biden's time in office — access to the funds was eased, and the government noticed the issues as the money was going out.

In the new letter to the states, the department said that consequences from pandemic-era fraud "are still playing out."

The Labor Department said states would receive further directives in coming weeks. Vice President JD Vance is overseeing an anti-fraud task force focused on potential misuse of social programs.

The Department of Health and Human Services tried to withhold money for child care subsidies and other social service programs from five states — all governed by Democrats — but has been rebuffed by a court.

The department has also announced it's using artificial intelligence to police how states and other recipients of federal dollars are auditing their program.

The Department of Agriculture has threatened to withhold administrative funds from states that don't provide data on participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, including their immigration status.

MECHANICSBURG

Sidewalk remains blocked months after pole move

The situation began after residents complained about a traffic-signal pole that was hit repeatedly by tractor-trailers.

Kaylyn Greene kgreene@pennlive.com

Last year, a problematic pole was moved to fix a traffic problem in Mechanicsburg.

However, its new location caused a pedestrian problem — one that has not been fixed months after a borough office said a solution was in the works.

The situation began after residents complained about a traffic-signal pole that was hit repeatedly by tractor-trailers making illegal turns at East Main and Walnut streets in the Cumberland County borough.

The pole was moved to the middle of a sidewalk in the 300 block of Main Street, impeding pedestrians and leaving the sidewalk non-compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

As Jubilee Day and its hundreds of vendors and thousands of visitors are coming to Main Street today, that section of the sidewalk is still closed.

Mechanicsburg Borough Manager Jessie Novinger said back in December that the sidewalk issue would begin to be addressed.

The borough had a \$68,000 insurance payout from a trucking company that had hit the pole to take care of the matter.

Paul Bonney, a former volunteer member of the Local Traffic Advisory Committee (LTAC), submitted committee meeting minutes from January through March to PennLive. Those minutes show that Novinger told the committee that permits to reconstruct the sidewalk were denied twice by PennDOT, citing traffic signal contractor Atlantic Traffic Systems.

Bonney said LTAC was told the denials were because the "angle of the ramps did not satisfy ADA guidelines."

Atlantic Traffic Systems officials did not respond to PennLive's requests for comment.

SEE MECHANICSBURG, A7

LOCAL NEWS

ATV bill advances

The state House passed a bill that would give municipalities the ability to more forcefully regulate the use of dirt bikes and ATVs on roads. **A3**

SPORTS

U.S. Open test

The U.S. Open players are sure to be tested at Shinnecock Hills this week. But what winning score indicates the course was, indeed, tough? **C1**



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