

**PRESS RELEASE**

# **Atlantic City Councilman Charged with Submitting False Voter Registrations, Making False Statements, and Fraudulently Obtaining Unemployment Benefits**

Friday, March 17, 2023

**For Immediate Release**

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of New Jersey

CAMDEN, N.J. – An Atlantic County, New Jersey, man has been charged with falsifying voter registrations, making false statements to the FBI about interactions with prospective voters, and submitting false unemployment benefits claims with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL), U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger announced today.

MD Hossain Morshed, 49, a councilman elected to Atlantic City's Fourth Ward, is charged in a criminal complaint unsealed today with one count of fraudulent procurement and submission of voter registration applications, one count of making false statements, and one count of wire fraud. Morshed made his initial appearance before U.S. District Judge Ann Marie Donio in Camden federal court and was released on \$100,000 unsecured bond.

According to the documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

***Falsification of Voter Forms***

In April 2019, in advance of the June 2019 primary election, Morshed gave a prospective voter a New Jersey voter registration application that had already been filled out and which falsely asserted that the prospective voter had a residential address in the Fourth Ward in Atlantic City. Even though the address written on the form was not where the voter actually lived, Morshed urged the prospective voter to sign the application. Subsequently, Morshed visited the prospective voter at the voter's actual residence (which was not in the Fourth Ward) and presented the prospective voter with a vote-by-mail application to sign which included the same false Fourth Ward Atlantic City address that was on the voter registration application and listed yet another false Atlantic City address for where the mail-in ballot should be sent to the voter.

The Atlantic County Superintendent of Elections subsequently received the falsified voter registration application that Morshed had the prospective voter sign and thereafter, the Atlantic County Board of Elections received the prospective voter's completed mail-in ballot, and that ballot was counted towards the June 2019 primary election. The prospective voter later admitted not receiving, completing or returning the mail-in ballot. During lawfully recorded conversations between this voter and Morshed concerning possible questioning by law enforcement, Morshed directed the voter, if questioned by law enforcement, to make false representations about where the voter lived and who filled out the voter forms that Morshed had given to the voter.

When Morshed was subsequently approached and questioned by FBI agents about his provision of voter registration and vote-by-mail applications to New Jersey residents, he made materially false statements, including that he had never provided any voter documents to any prospective voter, never assisted any prospective voter in filling out such documents, and never collected any such documents from any prospective voter. Morshed also falsely stated that he had never asked residents of municipalities outside of Atlantic City to register to vote in Atlantic City's Fourth Ward.

### ***Fraudulently Obtaining Unemployment Benefits***

From April 2020 through September 2021, Morshed also defrauded the NJDOL of \$39,208 in unemployment benefits to which he was not entitled. Morshed applied for and was approved to receive various unemployment benefits related to New Jersey's Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program even though he was earning compensation for his employment as an Atlantic City Councilperson, and additional income as a driver.

The false voter registration submission and false statements counts each carry a maximum potential penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, or twice the gain or loss from the offense. The wire fraud count carries a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, or twice the gain or loss from the offense.

U.S. Attorney Sellinger credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge James E. Dennehy; the FBI's Newark, Atlantic City Resident Agency's Public Corruption Task Force, including the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor William Reynolds; the Atlantic City Police Department, under the direction of Officer-in-Charge Chief James A. Sarkos; the New Jersey State Police, under the direction of Col. Patrick J. Callahan; and the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Jeffrey H. Sutherland; as well as special agents of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Northeast Region, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Jonathan Mellone; and the postal inspectors of

the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Philadelphia Division, under the direction of Inspector in Charge Christopher A. Nielsen, with the investigation leading to the charges.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Eric A. Boden, Attorney-in-Charge of the Trenton Office, and Assistant U.S. Attorney James H. Graham of the General Crimes Unit, under the supervision of the Special Prosecutions Division.

The charges and allegations contained in the complaint are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

[morshed.complaint.pdf](#) (144.33 KB)

*Updated March 18, 2023*