

NEWS | POLITICS & ELECTIONS

## Trump Grants Clemency to Executive Who Orchestrated \$205M Medicare Fraud Scheme

Republicans have claimed they're "saving" Medicaid from "waste, fraud and abuse" with massive cuts.

By Sharon Zhang, TRUTHOUT  
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President Donald Trump speaks to reporters in the Oval Office at the White House on March 31, 2025, in Washington, D.C.

JABIN BOTSFORD / THE WASHINGTON POST VIA GETTY IMAGES

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**P**resident Donald Trump has quietly commuted the sentence of a Florida health care executive convicted of leading a Medicare fraud scheme to pilfer \$205 million from the program through false means — even as the GOP claims that their massive cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and other programs are aimed at weeding out “waste, fraud and abuse.”

Last Wednesday, Trump granted clemency to two dozen people, including Lawrence Duran, who was convicted in 2011 (<https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/owner-miami-area-mental-health-company-sentenced-50-years-prison-orchestrating-205-million>), for defrauding Medicare and money laundering, among other charges. Duran, who owned a mental health care company with seven locations across Florida (<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/crime/article307566596.html>), and his girlfriend received \$87 million from the scheme.

As the *Miami Herald* (<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article3208683.html>) points out, this was, at the time, the largest therapy-related Medicare fraud scheme in history, with hundreds of thousands of false claims. Duran was sentenced to 50 years in prison, and he and other collaborators were ordered to pay \$87 million in restitution.

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Trump commuted (<https://www.justice.gov/pardon/clemency-grants-president-donald-j-trump-2025-present>) Duran's sentence, and wrote in his clemency order that Duran would be subject to “no further fines [or] restitution” related to his case.

The commutation is striking as Trump administration officials and top Republican leaders have spent weeks claiming that the reconciliation bill — which could kick tens of millions of people off of Medicaid, Medicare, and other benefits — is actually aimed at saving American taxpayers from paying into fraud within the program.

The GOP's claim that they are targeting fraud in their proposed cuts has always been questionable at best (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/02/us/politics/trump-big-beautiful-bill-facts.html>), and an outright lie in most contexts (<https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/republicans-lying-cuts-medicaid-1235352465/>). Some have even falsely insisted (<https://www.politico.com/news/2025/06/02/medicaid-trump-cuts-defense-00381625>), that their changes to Medicaid aren't cuts at all.

But experts have said (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/02/us/politics/trump-big-beautiful-bill-facts.html>) that their policies have little to nothing to do with eliminating fraud or waste, and rather are aimed at kicking people off of life-saving benefits. (Though the GOP has coalesced around Medicaid talking points, the Congressional Budget Office has estimated that Medicare will also see (<http://democrats-budget.house.gov/news/press-releases/cbo-confirms-gop-budget-bill-triggers-medicare-cuts>) \$500 billion in cuts under the reconciliation bill.)

In that vein, Trump's commutation is perhaps another show that the GOP has little interest in saving Americans from those aiming to defraud taxpayer-funded programs.

The commutation falls in line with Trump's pattern of pardoning people convicted of white collar crimes, including numerous people (<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trumps-pardons-fraudsters-white-collar-criminals/>), convicted of major fraud schemes. The goal, analysts have said, is seemingly to worsen (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/29/us/politics/trumps-pardons-redefine-crime.html>) the two-tiered criminal legal system that disproportionately targets non-white people, the poor and the left.

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