



Office of Public Affairs  
U.S. Department of Justice



PRESS RELEASE

# Ohio Man Pleads Guilty to Operating an Illegal Gambling Business and Tax Fraud

Thursday, May 2, 2024

**For Immediate Release**

Office of Public Affairs

## Defendant Earned Millions of Dollars but Did Not File Tax Returns or Pay Tax

An Ohio man pleaded guilty today to tax evasion, operating an illegal gambling business and two counts of money laundering associated with his ownership and operation of illegal gambling businesses in Northeast Ohio.

According to court documents and statements made in court, from 2009 through 2022, Steven Saris owned and operated multiple illegal gambling businesses in Northeast Ohio including Café 62, Lucky's, Winner's World and Spin City. He also owned and operated such businesses in Springfield, Ohio, and throughout Florida. Saris concealed his involvement in these businesses by arranging for others to serve as nominee owners.

For tax year 2015, Saris filed a false tax return that did not report more than \$1.4 million in income he received from his gambling businesses. For tax years 2016 through 2021, Saris did not file tax returns or pay all the tax that he owed despite earning more than \$8.5 million in income from his gambling businesses. During that time, Saris made only two nominal payments in 2018 when he filed an application for an extension of time to file his 2017 return. Saris used

his proceeds from the illegal gambling businesses to gamble millions at legal casinos and to acquire and renovate at least two residential properties located in Canton, Ohio.

Saris' conduct caused a tax loss to the IRS of \$2,823,391.

In July 2018, law enforcement executed search warrants at multiple illegal gambling businesses and associated locations in Northeast Ohio. Following those search warrants, Saris made false statements to law enforcement. At the same time Saris was meeting with law enforcement regarding his supposed cooperation, Saris continued operating the illegal gambling businesses in Ohio and did not disclose these operations to law enforcement. In August 2022, law enforcement executed a court authorized search warrant at Saris' residence and for his cell phone. Upon being told of the search warrant for his phone, Saris told law enforcement that he did not know the location of his cell phone. Law enforcement recovered Saris' cell phone from the water tank of a bathroom toilet in Saris' residence.

Sentencing for Saris is scheduled for Aug. 8. He faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison for the counts of money laundering and five years in prison for both tax evasion and for operating an illegal gambling business. Saris also faces a period of supervised release, restitution and monetary penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General Stuart M. Goldberg of the Justice Department's Tax Division and U.S. Attorney Rebecca C. Lutzko for the Northern District of Ohio made the announcement.

IRS Criminal Investigation, Homeland Security Investigations, the Department of Treasury's Office of Inspector General, Stark County Prosecutor's Office, Ohio Casino Control Commission and Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission-Major Crimes Task Force investigated the case.

Trial Attorneys Sam Bean and Hayter Whitman of the Justice Department's Tax Division and Assistant U.S. Attorney David Toepfer for the Northern District of Ohio prosecuted the case.

*Updated May 2, 2024*

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## Topic

TAX

## Component

[Tax Division](#)

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## Beverly Hills Businessman Pleads Guilty to Tax Evasion

A California man pleaded guilty to evading more than \$1 million of federal and state taxes.

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## Ohio Man Sentenced for Tax Fraud Conspiracy

An Ohio man was sentenced today to one year and one day in prison for conspiring to defraud the United States.

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## California Man Pleads Guilty to Employment Tax Violations

A California man pleaded guilty to failing to pay over employment taxes withheld from the wages of his company's employees.

April 30, 2024



**Office of Public Affairs**

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