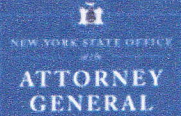


Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman

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A.G. Schneiderman & Comptroller DiNapoli Announce Indictment Of NYC Councilman Ruben Wills In Public Corruption Scheme

Councilman Accused Of Stealing City And State Money For Personal And Political Use, Enlisting Relative In The Theft Of Public Campaign Funds

Indictment Of NYC Councilman Ruben Wills In Pub...



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NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman and Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli today announced the indictment of New York City Council Member Ruben Wills for allegedly pocketing both public campaign funds and charitable grant money for personal benefit. Mr. Wills and a member of his family that he enlisted as a co-conspirator have been indicted by a Queens grand jury after an investigation exposed the theft of approximately \$30,000 and a subsequent attempt by the Councilman to cover their tracks.

“The crimes Mr. Wills is accused of committing represent a shameful breach of the trust his constituents placed in him,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “New Yorkers are repeatedly asked to have faith in our leaders, and it appears that faith has been shattered once again. Every time my office arrests a corrupt public official, it sends the message that elected office does not come with a blank check or a license to break the law.”

“The Comptroller’s Office joint task force with the Attorney General has uncovered another apparent example of disgraceful behavior.” State Comptroller DiNapoli said. “Public funds intended to help people were allegedly used instead for shopping trips to high-end stores. Charges such as these are an insult to the Councilman’s constituents and to the taxpayers who paid the bills. I thank Attorney General Schneiderman for his hard work in pursuing this matter and working with us to fight public corruption across the state.”

The documents made public today detail a calculated scheme to defraud New York taxpayers while lining the Councilman’s own pockets. Wills is accused of stealing from two government agencies: the New York City Campaign Finance Board (“CFB”) and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (“OCFS”).

In the 2009 campaign for the City Council seat he now holds, Wills received matching funds from the CFB. Rather than spending the funds on legitimate campaign expenditures as required by law, Wills allegedly had his campaign committee pay \$11,500 to Micro Targeting, a shell company created for the purported translation and distribution of

New York City Press Office: (212) 416-8060

Albany Press Office: (518) 473-5525

nyag.pressoffice@ag.ny.gov



A.G. Schneiderman & MTA Announce MTA Police Force To Be Equipped With Life-saving Heroin Antidote

MTA Joins A.G. Schneiderman’s COP Program



0:00 / 19:09

A.G. Schneiderman & Comptroller DiNapoli Announce Indictment Of NYC Councilman Ruben Wills In Public Corruption Scheme

Indictment Of NYC Councilman Ruben Wills In



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campaign literature. But Micro Targeting never provided those services. Rather, according to documents made public in court today, Councilman Wills had a relative, Jelani Mills, redirect the money from Micro Targeting to NY 4 Life, a non-profit corporation Wills controlled, while falsely representing to the CFB that the money had been spent on qualified campaign expenditures. Wills then withdrew the money in the NY 4 Life bank account in a series of cash withdrawals and personal purchases. For example, he used NY 4 Life funds in the purchase of a \$750 Louis Vuitton handbag he bought at Macy's.

According to today's court filings, NY 4 Life figured prominently in the theft from OCFS, as well. This part of the scheme involved \$33,000 in state funds provided to NY 4 Life via a grant earmarked by former State Senator Shirley Huntley while Wills was serving as Huntley's chief of staff. To obtain that money, NY 4 Life signed a contract with OCFS, promising to conduct four public service projects. Instead, NY 4 Life allegedly conducted just one program that cost approximately \$14,000, and Wills kept the remaining \$19,000 in grant funds and used it for both political and personal expenses, including purchases at Nordstrom's and Century 21 department stores. In addition, he made large cash withdrawals from the NY 4 Life account and used grant funds to issue checks to individuals who did little or no work related to the OCFS contract. Wills then concealed the theft by falsely identifying certain expenditures as relating to OCFS programs, which NY 4 Life had not conducted, and refused to account for the missing money, according to today's allegations.

"This City Councilman, instead of working for the public good, stole from the public coffers, according to the charges," said Mark G. Peters, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation. "DOI shared its expert knowledge on nonprofit fraud as part of this investigation and will continue to work with the State Attorney General and its law enforcement partners to put an end to this type of public corruption."

"Today's indictment is further proof that those who misuse public funds will face the consequences," Amy Loprest, executive director of the New York City Campaign Finance Board said. "Strong enforcement has always been a cornerstone of the city's campaign finance program because it gives New Yorkers confidence that their investment in city elections will be protected."

"The thousands of public dollars stolen, allegedly at the hands of a public official, not only victimized some of our most vulnerable citizens, but the taxpayers who put their trust in someone elected to represent them," said Sheila J. Poole, Acting Commissioner for OCFS. "I commend the Attorney General for safeguarding taxpayer money, bringing to justice those who prey on the public, and protecting the best interests of children and families of this state."

The indictment charges Ruben Wills with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Scheme to Defraud in the First Degree, Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree and Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. If convicted of the top charge of Grand Larceny, he faces a maximum of seven years in prison. The same indictment charges Jelani Mills with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree and Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree. If convicted of the Grand Larceny charge, he faces at least two years in prison and a maximum of seven years.

The investigation was handled by Investigators Gerard Matheson and Angel LaPorte. Also assisting in the investigation were Analyst KerryAnn Rodriguez and Investigative Analyst Brian Selfon. The Attorney General's Investigations Bureau is led by Chief Investigator Dominick Zarrella.

Assistant Attorneys General Jerrold L. Steigman and Rachel Doft, of the Public Integrity Bureau, are prosecuting the case. The Bureau is led by Deputy Bureau Chief Stacy Aronowitz and Bureau Chief Daniel G. Cort. The Attorney General's Criminal Justice Division is led by Executive Deputy Attorney General Kelly Donovan.

The joint investigation was conducted with the Comptroller's Investigations Unit and Bureau of State Expenditures. The Attorney General would like to thank the New York City Department of Investigation, the New York City Campaign Finance Board and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services for their assistance with the investigation.

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The charges are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

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Anyone with additional information on this or any other public corruption matter is encouraged to contact the Attorney General's Office at 1-800-996-4630 or the Comptroller's Office at 1-888-672-4555; file a complaint online at investigations@osc.state.ny.us; or mail a complaint to: Office of the State Comptroller Investigations Unit, 110 State Street, 14th floor, Albany, NY 12236.

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