

Prosecutor Asks Stevens Conviction be Thrown Out

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Libby Casey/APRN

The Justice Department wants the guilty verdict against former Senator Ted Stevens thrown out. It will not pursue a new trial, and wants all charges dropped. The office of Attorney General Eric Holder announced the news this (Wednesday) morning. In a statement, Holder said that after careful review, he's concluded that quote, "certain information should have been provided to the defense for use at trial." Holder said in light of that and considering all the case's circumstances, it's in the interest of justice to dismiss the indictment.

The Justice Department revealed today that testimony by the government's star witness wasn't turned over to the defense until last week.

Judge Emmet Sullivan, who presided over the trial, has scheduled a hearing in Washington D-C for next Tuesday (April 7th) to address the Government's motion. The Judge is expected to drop all charges.

Ted Stevens' lawyer says the former Senator WILL APPEAR in court next week.

Attorney Brendan Sullivan spoke to reporters in Washington today.

-- STEVENS 1: "...FIRST PLACE." (:26)

Sullivan's office released a written statement by Stevens this morning. In it, he said the cloud that's been surrounding him has been removed. He called it "unfortunate" that his re-election bid last fall was affected by quote, "proceedings now recognized as unfair."

The 85 year old also thanked his family, friends, and colleagues in the Senate who have stood by him, and thanked Alaskans who've supported him. Stevens is reported to be traveling in Alaska today.

Stevens was convicted in October of lying on senate financial forms about gifts worth more than a quarter-million dollars. He was never sentenced - instead, post-trial proceedings have been tied up with the fallout from accusations of government misconduct during the case.

An Anchorage based F-B-I agent filed a complaint shortly after the trial alleging a fellow agent and prosecutors acted unethically. A government witness also said his testimony was influenced by prosecutors, although he changed his story about that claim numerous times.

The Justice Department switched prosecutors last month after some of the team was held in contempt by the trial judge for failing to turn over documents to the defense.

Stevens' lawyer Brendan Sullivan blasted the initial prosecutors.

-- STEVENS 2: "...COURTROOM." (:28)

The Justice Department motion to dismiss the case, which was filed this morning, says the government recently discovered information about an interview its lawyers did last April with the government's main witness, Bill Allen.

Allen admitted during the trial that his oil field services company Veco performed major renovations to Ted Stevens' Girdwood home for free.

(MORE)

But in the interview last April, Allen said he did NOT remember conversations about giving Ted Stevens invoices for the work. That was different than what Allen said 6 months later at trial when he gave damaging testimony. He said mutual friend Bob Persons told him not to worry about sending Stevens an invoice, because Stevens was just protecting himself ((quote, "covering his ass")).

Also, Allen said a year ago that if his workers had performed efficiently, the fair market value of their labor and materials would have been more in line with what Stevens and his wife paid to contractors.
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The Justice Department says it found prosecutors' notes about last year's interview just last week, and turned them over immediately to Stevens' lawyers. It noted that the information would have been used by Stevens at trial to cast doubt on Bill Allen's testimony.

Attorney

General Holder says the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility is investigating.

Alaska

Senator Lisa Murkowski says the news is bitter-sweet. She says while she's pleased for Stevens and his family, she's disturbed by what happened.

-- STEVENS 3: "...NEVER MIND." (:15)

In a statement,

Alaska Congressman Don Young said justice has "finally been served."

Both

Murkowski and Young pointed out that lost his re-election bid shortly after the guilty verdict came down last fall.

His

replacement in the U-S Senate, Mark Begich, put out a statement this morning saying the Justice Department's decision to end the prosecution is "reasonable." Begich has long said Stevens should NOT serve jail time, and in this morning's statement said he hopes Stevens, his family and Alaskans can move on and put this behind them.

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