



# Department of Justice

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**CRM**

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2009

(202) 514-2007

Web Address: [WWW.Doj.GOV](http://WWW.Doj.GOV)

TDD (202) 514-1888

## **FORMER CONGRESSMAN WILLIAM J. JEFFERSON**

### **CONVICTED OF BRIBERY, RACKETEERING, MONEY LAUNDERING**

#### **AND OTHER RELATED CHARGES**

WASHINGTON - A federal jury today convicted former United States Congressman William J. Jefferson, 62, of New Orleans, La., of using his office to corruptly solicit bribes, the Justice Department announced.

After hearing evidence for more than one month in a federal court in Alexandria, Va., a jury found Jefferson guilty on 11 charged counts, including solicitation of bribes, honest services wire fraud, money laundering, racketeering and conspiracy. Jefferson was acquitted on three counts of honest services wire fraud, an obstruction of justice charge and of violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis III accepted the verdict and scheduled sentencing for Oct. 30, 2009. Jefferson faces a maximum penalty of 150 years in prison and the jury will reconvene tomorrow to address whether he will additionally face forfeiture of up to \$456,000 plus stock certificates.

“We have been reminded today that we are a nation of laws, and not men,” said Dana J. Boente, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. “It should be a clear signal that no public official – and certainly not a U.S. Congressman – can put their office up for sale and betray that office. It cannot be tolerated. It cannot just be another cost of doing business. And today, a jury of his peers held Congressman Jefferson accountable for his actions.”

“Trust and integrity in public officials is at the heart of our democracy,” said Joseph Persichini Jr., Assistant Director of the Washington Field Office of the FBI. “What a better way to ensure those virtues, than to expose those who breach that trust. I am proud of the fantastic team of career prosecutors, agents and analysts who worked long hours to provide the facts and evidence which resulted in this just conclusion today.”

According to evidence at trial, from August 2000 to August 2005 Jefferson used his position as an elected member of the U.S. House of Representatives to corruptly seek, solicit and direct that things of value be paid to himself and his family members in exchange for his

performance of official acts to advance the interests of people and businesses who offered him the bribes. The things of value, according to evidence at trial, included hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of bribes in the form of payments from monthly fees or retainers, consulting fees, percentage shares of revenues and profits, flat fees for items sold and stock ownership in the companies seeking his official assistance.

Evidence at trial showed that Jefferson performed a wide range of official acts in return for things of value, including leading official business delegations to Africa, corresponding with U.S. and foreign government officials, and utilizing congressional staff members to promote businesses and businesspersons. The business ventures that Jefferson sought to promote included telecommunications deals in Nigeria, Ghana and elsewhere; oil concessions in Equatorial Guinea; satellite transmission contracts in Botswana, Equatorial Guinea and the Republic of Congo; and development of different plants and facilities in Nigeria.

Others involved in this scheme included Vernon L. Jackson, a Louisville, Ky., businessman who was sentenced to 87 months in prison after pleading guilty to charges of conspiracy to commit bribery and the payment of bribes to a public official; and Brett M. Pfeffer, a former Jefferson congressional staff member who was sentenced to 96 months in prison after pleading guilty to charges of conspiracy to commit bribery and aiding and abetting the solicitation of bribers by a member of Congress.

This case is being prosecuted by Mark D. Lytle and Rebeca H. Bellows, Assistant U.S. Attorneys for the Eastern District of Virginia and Trial Attorney Charles E. Duross of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section. The case is being investigated by the FBI's Washington Field Office, with assistance of the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network.

###

09-775

[Print This Page](#)