



***United States Attorney  
District of New Jersey***

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**FORMER NEW JERSEY STATE ASSEMBLYMAN DANIEL VAN PELT SENTENCED  
TO 41 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR ATTEMPTED EXTORTION AND BRIBERY**

TRENTON, N.J. – Former New Jersey State Assemblyman Daniel M. Van Pelt was sentenced today to 41 months in prison for accepting \$10,000 in cash in exchange for agreeing to provide assistance in securing government approvals for purported real estate projects in Waretown, N.J., United States Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

A jury convicted Van Pelt, 46, in May following a two-week trial before United States District Judge Joel A. Pisano, who also imposed the sentence today in Trenton federal court. Van Pelt was convicted of both counts of the Indictment against him: one count of attempted extortion under color of official right and one count of bribery. At the time he accepted the payment, Van Pelt was also a Waretown Committeeman and the Township Administrator in Lumberton, N.J.

U.S. Attorney Fishman stated: “Selling official influence is a crime. As long as public officials continue to wield power for profit, we’ll continue to prosecute them and send them to jail.”

According to documents filed in this case and the evidence at trial:

On February 11, 2009, Van Pelt and a cooperating government witness (“CW”) met at the Ocean Breeze Diner in Waretown. When the CW suggested to Van Pelt that he was willing to pay Van Pelt for his assistance in obtaining government approvals, including Coastal Area Facilities Review Act (“CAFRA”) permits from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Van Pelt suggested to the CW, “Hey, you should hire me as a consultant,” and laughed. At the end of the meeting, the CW offered to pay Van Pelt \$10,000 for his assistance. Ten days later, on February 21, 2009, Van Pelt and the CW met at a restaurant in Atlantic City, and Van Pelt accepted an envelope from the CW containing \$10,000 in \$100 bills. After handing over the envelope, the CW told Van Pelt that he wanted Van Pelt’s assistance obtaining CAFRA permits and Van Pelt responded, “Well you call me anytime.”

On February 23, 2009, Van Pelt deposited \$5,500 of the bribe money in his personal bank account. He deposited \$4,400 six days later, and used the money to pay bills and trade stocks on E\*TRADE. He never formed a consulting company.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Pisano sentenced Van Pelt to two years of supervised release.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael B. Ward, in Newark, and IRS – Criminal Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Victor W. Lessoff, for the investigation leading to today’s sentence.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Dustin Chao, of the U.S. Attorney’s Office Special Prosecutions Division, and Rachael A. Honig, Deputy Chief of the Office’s Criminal Division in Newark.

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Defense counsel: Robert Margulies, Esq., Jersey City, N.J.