



*United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York*

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**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
YUSILL SCRIBNER,  
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL,  
JANICE OH  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE  
(212) 637-2600**

**FORMER NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLYMAN SENTENCED TO  
SIX YEARS IN PRISON FOR PUBLIC CORRUPTION CRIMES**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that ANTHONY SEMINERIO, 74, of Queens, New York, was sentenced today to six years in prison by United States District Judge NAOMI REICE BUCHWALD for defrauding the people of New York of his honest services as an Assemblyman in the New York State legislature.

According to the Indictment, the Court's findings, and the evidence at the October 20, 21, and 30, 2009, sentencing hearing:

**Seminerio's Overall Scheme Using "Marc Consultants"**

SEMINERIO served as a member of the New York Assembly from 1978 until his June 23, 2009, resignation from that body. From 1999 through September 2008, SEMINERIO engaged in a scheme to defraud the public of his honest services by using a purported consulting firm, "Marc Consultants," to solicit and receive "consulting" payments from persons and entities having business before the State of New York. In fact, the Court found that SEMINERIO did not perform "any bona fide consulting services that fall outside the scope of activities an elected official could readily be expected to perform on behalf of his or her constituents." Instead, the Court found that he "solicited and received payments from a number of organizations and used his elected office to lobby state legislators and agency officials on behalf of those paying clients." Those entities included hospitals and related entities; a consulting firm associated with an educational institution; and a firm engaged in marketing supplemental insurance packages to public institutions.

**Seminerio's Extortion Of The Consultant**

In 1999, SEMINERIO, among other things, approached ARLENE PEDONE, the founder of a Queens-based consulting company for whom he had previously worked and demanded a share of the

company's revenue. When PEDONE resisted, SEMINERIO retaliated by writing and calling many of PEDONE's clients, telling them he was no longer associated with the firm, and pressuring some of them to stop paying PEDONE and instead hire SEMINERIO. As a result, PEDONE lost her client base and her company folded.

#### Seminerio's Extortion Of A Non-profit Executive

That summer, SEMINERIO also pressured ROBERT RICHARDS, the president of the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce, which depended largely on New York State funding. SEMINERIO asked RICHARDS to become his consulting client, repeatedly advancing his request when RICHARDS refused to respond. In January 2000, SEMINERIO met with RICHARDS at SEMINERIO's Albany legislative office and warned that if RICHARDS failed to hire him, SEMINERIO would block RICHARDS's efforts in the legislature in Albany. After this meeting, RICHARDS agreed to hire SEMINERIO and paid a monthly fee for approximately two years to Marc Consultants.

#### Seminerio's Bribery Scheme With A Client Hospital

More recently, on July 10, 2008, SEMINERIO called DENNIS WHALEN, a senior New York State health department official, and assured him that he had "a friend of me in the Assembly." WHALEN mentioned that he had been speaking with CARL KRUGER, a New York State Senator who supported the acquisition of the Caritas Hospitals in Queens, New York, by Parkway Hospital, which had previously refused to pay SEMINERIO consulting fees. SEMINERIO replied that he would rather see Jamaica Hospital, a client that had paid him nearly a decade's worth of consulting fees, "get it." SEMINERIO did not disclose to WHALEN that Jamaica Hospital had hired him, nor did he disclose that Parkway Hospital had refused to do so.

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JUDGE BUCHWALD rejected SEMINERIO's contention that his criminal activity was limited to a "single, isolated criminal act" of failing to disclose a conflict of interest to WHALEN during the July 10, 2008, call. The Court also rejected SEMINERIO's claim that his activities had been approved in 1996 and thereafter by the New York Legislative Ethics Committee. The Court criticized SEMINERIO's failure to disclose the true nature of his work to the Committee and rejected his reliance on the Committee's opinion as "a classic illustration of 'garbage in, garbage out.'"

In imposing the sentence, Judge BUCHWALD described in detail how SEMINERIO "accepted bribes and engaged in extortion as part of a decade-long scheme to use his office - both literally and figuratively - for personal gain and at the expense of the public trust." As the Court highlighted, SEMINERIO was secretly recorded providing his own view of what it means to be a public official: "It doesn't mean [expletive deleted]."

In addition to his prison term, Judge BUCHWALD ordered SEMINERIO to pay \$1,000,000 in forfeiture.

U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said, "When an elected official such as Seminerio violates the public trust, it threatens the public's confidence in our democracy. Seminerio was elected to serve the people, not himself. Judge Buchwald's powerful words and sentence reaffirm the commitment to the fair and impartial exercise of governmental power. We will continue to work tirelessly to prosecute those who betray for private gain the people they are elected to represent."

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in this case. The investigation is continuing.

The prosecution is being handled by the Office's Public Corruption Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys DANIEL L. STEIN and WILLIAM J. HARRINGTON are in charge of the prosecution.

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