



*United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York*

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**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
YUSILL SCRIBNER,  
EDELI RIVERA,  
JESSIE ERWIN  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE  
(212) 637-2600**

**FBI  
BRYAN TRAVERS  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE  
(212) 384-2720, 2715**

**IRS  
ROBERT GLANTZ  
(973) 296-9225**

**FORMER NEW JERSEY STATE SENATOR WAYNE R. BRYANT  
AND ATTORNEY ERIC D. WISLER INDICTED  
ON CORRUPTION CHARGES**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York and Acting United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey, MICHAEL B. WARD, the Special Agent-in-Charge for the New Jersey Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), and VICTOR W. LESSOFF, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New Jersey Field Office of the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division ("IRS-CID"), announced today an Indictment charging former New Jersey State Senator WAYNE R. BRYANT and attorney ERIC D. WISLER with multiple counts of fraud and bribery.

According to the Indictment filed today in Newark federal court:

BRYANT was a State Senator representing New Jersey's 5<sup>th</sup> District, which included Camden, and served as Chairman of the Senate's Budget and Appropriations Committee. BRYANT also was a named, equity partner at a law firm in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. WISLER was a named, equity partner at a law firm in Teaneck, New Jersey. Among WISLER's clients was a private equity investment firm located in Raleigh, North Carolina, and a management firm that undertook several "brownfields," redevelopment projects in New Jersey by which contaminated land was to be made suitable for development.

In 2004, WISLER arranged for his firm to enter into a retainer agreement with BRYANT's firm, which called for BRYANT's firm to be paid a retainer fee of \$8,000 per month. The payment was purportedly to cover fees for legal work relating to land use, condemnation, and other matters for a development project in the New Jersey Meadowlands. In truth and in fact, however, the payments made under the retainer agreement were actually bribes paid in exchange for official action that BRYANT took in favor of the various redevelopment projects undertaken by WISLER and his clients, including a proposed \$1.2 billion redevelopment of Camden's Cramer Hill neighborhood, which sat in BRYANT's legislative district. BRYANT rendered his approval and support for this project despite significant backlash among his constituents regarding the use of eminent domain and relocation of residents in that neighborhood. BRYANT also expressed support for funding from the New Jersey Department of Transportation and Camden's Economic Recovery Board, whose function was to allocate \$175 million in funding that Camden received under the 2002 Municipal Rehabilitation and Economic Recovery Act ("MRERA"), which BRYANT sponsored.

BRYANT provided a consistent vote for legislation that was favorable to WISLER's clients, such as a 2004 amendment to the Redevelopment Area Bond Financing Law that facilitated bond financing for the Meadowlands project, appropriations legislation by which the Meadowlands project received more than \$200 million in loans from the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust ("NJEIT") and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection ("NJDEP"), and "fast-track" legislation that required the NJDEP and other state agencies to expedite their review of applications for permits or have those permits deemed granted. BRYANT also sponsored a bill in 2005 for a \$112 million loan from NJEIT to be used for the Meadowlands project.

BRYANT's firm was paid approximately \$192,000 in fees between August 2004 and August 2006. However, no actual legal work was performed under the retainer agreement. No attorneys at BRYANT's firm performed any services under the retainer agreement, and no attorneys at WISLER's firm interacted with attorneys of BRYANT's firm with respect to the Meadowlands Project.

According to the Indictment, both WISLER and BRYANT took steps to conceal the existence of the retainer agreement. Despite working extensively with colleagues at his law firm on a variety of matters pertaining to the Cramer Hill and Meadowlands developments, WISLER failed to inform any of them about the

existence of the retainer agreement. WISLER specifically drafted the retainer agreement to be for work on certain phases of the project for which the invoices were not reviewed by the public agencies that loaned money to the project. BRYANT failed to inform Camden's Chief Operating Officer ("COO") of the retainer agreement, despite his friendship with the COO and regularly interacting with the COO on matters regarding Cramer Hill.

In addition, the Indictment alleges that WISLER and BRYANT caused false invoices to be drafted that fraudulently indicated that BRYANT's firm was performing legal services under the retainer agreement. These invoices formed the basis for false and fraudulent billings to the Raleigh investment firm by which it paid the retainer fees to BRYANT's firm through WISLER's firm.

The Indictment charges BRYANT and WISLER with twenty counts of honest services mail fraud and one count of receiving bribes. It charges BRYANT with extorting payments under color of official right. It also charges WISLER with 17 counts of mail and wire fraud in connection with the false and fraudulent billings to his client. If convicted, BRYANT and WISLER face a maximum sentence of twenty years in prison for each count, except for the receiving bribes charge, for which each faces a maximum sentence of ten years in prison. The Indictment also seeks the forfeiture of the approximately \$192,000 in illicit payments made to BRYANT.

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This investigation is being supervised by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York due to the recusal of the U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey. PREET BHARARA was named Acting United States Attorney for the case under Title 28, United States Code, Section 515.

Mr. BHARARA praised the investigative work of the FBI and the Criminal Investigations Division of the IRS in this case. He also thanked the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, and the Criminal Investigators assigned to the U.S. for their outstanding work.

This case is being supervised by the Public Corruption Unit of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York. Assistant U.S. Attorneys JAMES B. NOBILE, BRADLEY A. HARSCH and JENNY R. KRAMER of the Special Prosecutions Division

of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey, are in charge of the prosecution.

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