

**Department of Justice**

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 14, 2015

**Former Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Legislature Sentenced to Five Years in Prison for Bribery and Extortion**

The former Executive Director of the Virgin Islands Legislature was sentenced to five years in prison today, announced Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe of the District of the Virgin Islands.

Louis "Lolo" Willis, 57, a resident of St. Thomas, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Curtis V. Gomez of the District of the Virgin Islands. On Nov. 19, 2014, a jury in the Virgin Islands convicted Willis of four counts of federal programs bribery and extortion under color of official right.

According to evidence presented at trial, Willis was the executive director of the Legislature between 2009 and 2012. His responsibilities included oversight of the major renovation of the Legislature building and awarding and entering into government contracts in connection with the project. Willis was also responsible for authorizing payments to the contractors for their work. Evidence presented at trial demonstrated that Willis accepted bribes, including \$13,000 in cash and checks, from contractors in exchange for using his official position to secure more than \$350,000 in work for the contractors and to ensure they received payment upon completion.

This case was investigated by the FBI's San Juan Field Office's St. Thomas Resident Agency, the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation and the Office of the Virgin Islands Inspector General. The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Justin Weitz of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section, Trial Attorney Traccee Plowell of the Criminal Division's Office of Enforcement Operations, Trial Attorney Jennifer Blackwell of the Environment and Natural Resources Division's Environmental Crimes Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Delia Smith of the District of the Virgin Islands.

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