



U.S. Department of Justice

**RONALD W. SHARPE**  
*United States Attorney*  
*District of the Virgin Islands*

*Ron de Lugo Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse*  
*5500 Veterans Drive, Suite 260*  
*Charlotte Amalie*  
*St. Thomas, VI 00802-6424*

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## PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Virgin Islands Senator Alvin Williams, Jr. Indicted for Operating and Participating in a Criminal Enterprise that Engaged in Bribery, Wire Fraud and Mail Fraud**

**St. Thomas, USVI** - A federal grand jury today returned an indictment charging Virgin Islands Senator Alvin Williams, Jr., 34, with operating and participating in a criminal enterprise whose members and associates, engaged in illegal activities, including bribery, mail fraud and wire fraud. Two of Williams' legislative staff members, including Kim Blackett, 29, also were charged in the indictment.

The indictment was announced by United States Attorney for the District of the Virgin Islands Ronald W. Sharpe, Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent-in-Charge Joseph S. Campbell, Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent-in-Charge Eric Barnard, United States Marshal Cheryl Jacobs, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division (IRS- CI) Special Agent-in-Charge José A. Gonzalez, Department of Education Special Agent-in-Charge Yessyka Santana, Virgin Islands Police Commissioner Henry White, and Virgin Islands Inspector General Steven van Beverhoudt. All of these agencies comprise a joint federal and local Public Corruption Task Force.

"The prosecution of public corruption is a top priority of the U.S. Attorney's Office," U.S. Attorney Sharpe said. "It is a breach of the public trust for public officials to use their office for personal gain. I encourage anyone with direct knowledge of illegal acts or who has any information concerning corruption in the Virgin Islands to call the Public Corruption Task Force at (340) 715-6516."

"Despite previous indictments of law enforcement officers and other public officials, some individuals continue their efforts to use public office for private financial gain," said FBI Special Agent-in-Charge Joseph S. Campbell. "The FBI is committed to fighting public corruption and will continue to target individuals who do not uphold their responsibilities as public officials and therefore, undermine the public trust."

According to the indictment, on September 5, 2009, Williams gave the Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Public Works \$10,000 in cash in an attempt to bribe the Commissioner with

regard to granting future work to Ace Development, Inc., a company in which Williams had an interest.

The indictment, which contains both Virgin Islands and federal charges, further alleges that from February 21, 2007, to November 18, 2011, Williams solicited a bribe from the developers of the Raphune Vista housing project on St. Thomas. The indictment also alleges that Williams promoted legislative action and supported the authorization of funding and zoning of the project in exchange for which Ace Development, Inc. received a contract related to the construction of the Raphune Vista project. The indictment further alleges that, as part of the contract, Ace Development, Inc. used and/or rented to the developers of the housing project, pieces of construction equipment.

The indictment alleges that between September 1, 2008, and September 31, 2008, Williams solicited and received a bribe of \$10,000.00 in campaign contributions from the developers of the Tutu Park wind turbine project, in exchange for Williams' influence and promotion of legislation in support of the wind turbine project. The indictment also alleges that between September 22, 2008, and September 2009, Williams solicited a bribe of \$25,000.00 in campaign contributions from the developers of the Tutu Park wind turbine project, in exchange for Williams' influence and promotion of legislation in support of the project.

The indictment also charges that from January 2006 to December 2011, Williams and a legislative staff member failed to deposit certain campaign contributions into the requisite campaign account, made individual expenditures and cash expenditures other than petty cash expenditures from a campaign account, and submitted false Campaign Disclosure reports that failed to include certain campaign contributions. The indictment further charges that in the Summer of 2010 and in August 2010, Williams solicited bribes to legislative staff members by offering to increase the staff members' salaries, allegedly for merit; in exchange for which the staff members would withdraw a portion of the increased salaries in cash and make the cash available to Williams. The indictment further alleges that from September of 2010, to July 28, 2011, Williams received a bribe when he increased the salary of a legislative staff member, allegedly for merit; in exchange for the legislative staff member withdrawing a portion of the increased salary in cash and making the cash available to Williams.

The indictment also alleges that from April 2007 to February 2008, and from January 2008 to October 5, 2011, Williams and a legislative staff member committed federal wire fraud as Williams sought online degrees from the University of Phoenix. The indictment alleges that the staff member falsely submitted various documents that were generated, created and authored by others under the direction of and in the name of Williams. The indictment also charges that from January of 2008, to October 5, 2011, Williams and defendant Kim A. Blackett, a member of Williams' legislative staff defrauded the Virgin Islands government by using legislative and public funds for doing non-legislative work, namely pursuing an on-line university degree for Williams.

“As the law enforcement arm of the U.S. Department of Education, the Office of Inspector General will aggressively pursue anyone who games the Education system for their own selfish purpose,” said Yessyka Santana, Special Agent-in-Charge of the U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General Southeastern Regional Office.

The indictment seeks forfeiture of any property which constitutes or is derived from the proceeds of Williams' alleged illegal activities, including proceeds in the amount of \$1,129,365.76.

“These individuals have allegedly abused their powers by utilizing their positions to discreetly conduct illegal activities,” said IRS-CI Special Agent-in-Charge José A. Gonzalez. “IRS-CI is committed to following the money trail to ensure that public officials who use their office to line their own pockets are brought to justice and deprived of their ill-gotten gains.”

If convicted of the charges, Williams and Blackett face a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and \$250,000 in fines.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws. Every defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

The case is being investigated by the Public Corruption Task Force. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Kim R. Lindquist, Nolan Paige and Kelly Lake.