

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG STRANGE ANNOUNCES STATE CONVICTION FOR THEFT OF GRANT MONEY DIVERTED TO LEGISLATOR

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Luther Strange announced the conviction yesterday of Samuel P. Pettagruie, 58, of Leeds, on state charges related to the theft of grant funds inappropriately diverted to former State Senator E.B. McClain. Pettagruie pleaded guilty in Jefferson County Circuit Court to one count of third-degree theft. He received a sentence of 12 months and was granted probation for one year. His sentence will be served concurrently with a federal sentence of five years probation imposed for his 2009 conviction of 47 counts of money laundering, mail fraud, bribery and conspiracy.

The circumstances leading to Pettagruie's conviction were stated in a warrant as follows: In April 2002, McClain, as a state Senator directed a \$65,000 grant from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs to an organization called the Community Resource Center in Jefferson County, of which Pettagruie was executive director. McClain notified Pettagruie that the grant money was coming and directed Pettagruie to divert \$45,000 back to McClain. Pettagruie wrote a check for \$45,000 to McClain, which McClain deposited into his checking account. Both men were aware that McClain was not entitled to the money and had done no work for it.

"The public corruption surrounding this case was an outrageous abuse of the people's trust, and an example of the great need for this office to have a good and effective working relationship with other law enforcement and prosecutors. I am pleased that the state charges in this matter are being resolved, and proud of the continuing good work of the Attorney General's Investigations Division and Public Corruption and White Collar Crime Division."

A joint investigation by the State and by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Alabama resulted in federal convictions against both men. McClain is currently in federal custody serving a sentence of five years and 10 months for 47 counts of money laundering, mail fraud, bribery and conspiracy. State charges of theft and theft by deception still are pending against McClain, 60, of Midfield.

The State investigation and prosecution was handled by the Attorney General's Investigations Division and by Assistant Attorney General Bill Lisenby, Jr. of the Attorney General's Public Corruption and White Collar Crime Division. St. Clair County District Attorney Richard Minor was appointed to supervise the investigation and prosecution on behalf of the State of Alabama.

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