

NEWS RELEASE

# Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **AG STRANGE ANNOUNCES STATE CONVICTION OF FORMER SENATOR MCLAIN FOR THEFT OF GRANT MONEY**

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Luther Strange announced the conviction yesterday of former state Senator E.B. McClain on state charges related to the theft of grant funds that were inappropriately diverted to him. McClain 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 and 10 months for 47 counts of money laundering, mail fraud, bribery and conspiracy. McClain, 71, is of Midfield.

Previously convicted on related charges was Samuel Pettagrue, 68, of Leeds. Pettagrue pleaded guilty on April 20 in Jefferson County Circuit Court to one count of third-degree theft involving the inappropriate diversion of grant funds to McClain. Pettagrue 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 the convictions of McClain and Pettagrue 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 Pettagrue was executive director. McClain notified Pettagrue that the grant money was coming and directed Pettagrue to divert \$45,000 back to McClain. Pettagrue 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 have been 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. 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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