



## **WisPolitics: Jensen agrees to civil forfeiture to settle three felony charges**

12/20/2010

WAUKESHA -- Former Assembly Speaker Scott Jensen agreed today to plead no contest to a civil forfeiture in a deal that settles the three felony misconduct in office charges filed against him in 2002 stemming from the "caucus scandal."

In all, Jensen was ordered to pay a fine of \$5,000 and \$89 in court costs, as well as \$67,147 within 60 days to cover the legal fees taxpayers paid on his behalf.

Jensen also agreed not to appeal his misdemeanor conviction from his original trial in Dane County court. Waukesha County DA Brad Schimel said that bars Jensen from seeking office because no one can appear on a Wisconsin ballot who has been convicted of violating the public trust.

Jensen declined to answer questions following today's hearing in Waukesha County Circuit Court, instead handing reporters a statement calling it "a day of thanksgiving."

"For nearly a decade, this investigation has been a dark cloud over our lives," Jensen said. "It would have been easy for these events to have changed us and made us embittered. But we have been blessed in many ways. Most importantly, by the extraordinary support of our families, our friends and supporters and even people we had not met before."

Jensen was originally charged in October 2002, accusing him of running a campaign shop out of his state office. Jensen contested the charges to the state Supreme Court before he went to trial in 2006, when a Dane County jury convicted him on three felonies for misconduct in office and a misdemeanor charge.

Jensen then appealed his conviction, winning a reversal. He also then won an appeal to move his re-trial to Waukesha County under a state law approved several years after he was charged allowing lawmakers to be tried in their home counties.

Schimel said the agreement would not please everybody, but would save taxpayers from a lengthy and expensive second trial.

"I have attempted to put aside politics and make a decision that the public will accept as a reasonable and responsible discharge of my duties as District Attorney," he said.

Jensen was the only one of the five lawmakers originally charged in the probe that went to trial. Then-Senate Majority Leader Chuck Chvala, D-Madison, Sen. Brian Burke, D-Milwaukee, then-Assembly Majority Leader Steve Foti, R-Oconomowoc and then-Assistant Majority Leader Bonnie Ladwig, R-Mt. Pleasant, all reached plea deals to avoid trials.

In the other legislators' plea agreements, Chvala pleaded guilty to two felony charges; Burke, to one felony and one misdemeanor; and Foti and Ladwig, to one misdemeanor each.

- By Kay Nolan  
For WisPolitics



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