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MONROE, LA CITY COUNCILMEN SENTENCED TO PRISON

Monroe, La.: United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced today that Robert E. "Red" Stevens, 60, and Arthur Gilmore, Jr., 54, both of Monroe, Louisiana, were sentenced late yesterday afternoon by Chief Judge Robert G. James to serve 51 months and 41 months, respectively, following their convictions on public corruption charges. The men were convicted after a two-week trial which ended on May 10, 2011. Each was found guilty of violating the RICO Act (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) and the Hobbs Act, for taking bribes in connection with their official duties.

The RICO Act focuses specifically on racketeering which includes any violation of state statutes for gambling extortion and bribery, among other offenses. The Hobbs Act is a federal law that prohibits actual or attempted extortion and was enacted as a statute to combat racketeering. The Hobbs Act is frequently used in public corruption cases.

The charges against Stevens and Gilmore arose out of their positions as city councilmen in the City of Monroe. Both men were elected to office in 1996 and served until their convictions.

Stevens and Gilmore were indicted on June 23, 2010, following a lengthy undercover investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Louisiana State Police. Evidence submitted at trial showed that Stevens accepted six payments from a local Monroe businessman who was working with the investigators as a cooperating witness. Gilmore accepted three payments and wanted to purchase a piece of property in one of the businessman's subdivisions for \$5,000 to \$10,000 when the property was listed for sale at more than \$170,000. As a part of the undercover case, the businessman made both men aware that he expected them to support his projects in exchange for the payments. All of the transactions between the defendants and the businessman were recorded and these recordings were played for the jury at trial.

“The Department of Justice continues to make the prosecution of public corruption cases like this a priority. Mr. Stevens and Mr. Gilmore violated the public’s trust by accepting bribes in connection with their work on the city council. I hope the verdict and sentences in this case send a strong message that this type of criminal activity will be vigorously prosecuted by my office because the citizens of this district deserve better from their elected officials,” stated U. S. Attorney Stephanie A. Finley.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Monroe Resident Agency, and the Louisiana State Police and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney C. Mignonne Griffing.