

NEWS

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Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 20, 2008

Former Paterson School Board Member Arrested,
Charged with Taking Bribes to Influence Contracts

(More)

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NEWARK – Former Paterson Board of Education member Chauncey I. Brown, III was arrested today, charged in a criminal Complaint with attempted extortion under color of official right, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Chauncey I. Brown, III, 45, was arrested this morning at Alpha Care Ambulance Corp. in Paterson, where he is employed as an EMT, by Special Agents of the FBI Atlantic City Resident Agency. Brown appeared this afternoon before U.S. Magistrate Judge Claire C. Cecchi, who set bail at \$150,000 unsecured.

Brown's arrest is the latest arising from "Operation Broken Boards," an FBI public corruption undercover investigation that progressed from southern to northern New Jersey. On Sept. 6, 2007, eleven public officials and one private citizen were arrested in connection with this investigation.

According to the Complaint, Brown accepted two corrupt cash payments of \$2,000 and \$5,000 in the fall of 2006 from an FBI cooperating witness ("CW") purporting to be a representative of an insurance brokerage services company ("the Company"). Brown accepted these cash payments in exchange for Brown's assistance in attempting to steer insurance brokerage business with the Paterson Board of Education to the Company.

The Complaint also alleges that, during a consensually recorded meeting with Brown and another official, Brown advised the CW that Brown intended to present the Company's insurance services at an upcoming Board of Education workshop meeting. Brown further explained that the decision was "a no-brainer" and that securing the insurance brokerage business was "not gonna be a problem." Shortly after this conversation, Brown accepted a second corrupt payment of \$5,000. Brown further admitted that he had introduced an official affiliated with the Company to the Paterson Board of Education assistant superintendent to further assist the CW in securing this brokerage business.

The charge alleged in the Complaint carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. In determining an actual sentence, the judge to whom the case is assigned would, upon a conviction, consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodian terms must serve nearly all that time.

Despite the allegations in the Complaint, Brown is presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in

Charge Weysan Dun, for their investigation. He also credited for their assistance in the investigation prosecutors and investigators with the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Theodore F.L. Housel.

The case against Brown is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Gramiccioni.

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Defense counsel: E. Alexander Jardines, Esq., Union City