



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TWO PLEAD GUILTY IN FEDERAL EL PASO CORRUPTION INVESTIGATION

*Former El Paso I.S.D. trustee Sal Mena and Michigan businessman Gary Lange
admit roles in fraud and deprivation of honest services scheme*

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that in El Paso this morning, Salvador Marcos Mena, Jr., aka Sal Mena, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and deprivation of the right to honest services and one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and deprivation of the right to honest services. As a result, Mena faces up to twenty years in federal prison and a maximum \$250,000 fine per charge. No sentencing date has been scheduled.

According to the indictment filed in this case, Mena, during the time he was an elected Trustee of the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD), conspired with others to devise a scheme to defraud the EPISD and the citizens of El Paso living in the EPISD, of the right to his honest services performed in his capacity as an elected EPISD Trustee, in the affairs of the EPISD. It further alleges that the defendant set up a sham consulting contract with a vendor whereby he received income, but provided no consulting services. Additionally, in exchange for his vote, support and influence for vendors, he instructed vendors seeking to do business with EPISD to make contributions to his election and re-election campaigns. The Indictment also alleged Mena accepted cash bribes in exchange for his vote and official influence.

Also appearing this morning before U.S. District Judge Frank Montalvo, 56-year-old Gary Lange, of Okemos, Michigan, pleaded guilty to a one count Information charging him with conspiracy to commit mail fraud and deprivation of the right to honest services. By pleading guilty, Lange admitted to participating with Mena in a scheme to defraud the EPISD and the citizens of El Paso by paying Mena a \$5,000 bribe as well as making other political contributions in exchange for securing a multi-million dollar vendor contract. As a result, Lange, who is on a \$10,000 personal recognizance bond, faces up to twenty years in federal prison and a maximum \$250,000 fine. No sentencing date has been scheduled.

This is an ongoing investigation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and is being prosecuted for the government by Assistant United States Attorney Debra Kanof.

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