



# Department of Justice

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## **FORMER CAMPAIGN MANAGER FOR LINDA SCHRENKO SENTENCED FOR ATTEMPTED WITNESS TAMPERING**

Atlanta, GA - RICHARD LEONARD, 44, of Augusta, Georgia, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Clarence Cooper to one year of probation and a fine of \$3,000 for attempted witness tampering in an effort to dissuade an individual from providing truthful information to federal law enforcement agents regarding the source of cash contributions to the gubernatorial campaign of Linda Schrenko in 2002. LEONARD also was ordered to pay a special assessment of \$25, and to perform 75 hours of community service.

LEONARD, the former manager of Linda Schrenko's 2002 gubernatorial campaign, pleaded guilty on December 21, 2004, to the offense of attempted witness tampering and cooperated with federal authorities in the investigation and prosecution of Schrenko, and her co-conspirators, Merle Temple and Stephan Botes. Schrenko and Temple pleaded guilty to fraud charges, and Botes was convicted of fraud charges following a jury trial earlier this year.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said about the case, "Federal agents expect and federal law requires that citizens interviewed during criminal investigations tell the truth and not attempt to discourage other citizens from telling the truth to investigators. If they do attempt to tamper with witnesses, they will face prosecution. This sentence reflects that Mr. Leonard accepted responsibility for his conduct and cooperated in the prosecution of others who were more culpable."

According to Nahmias, the plea agreement and evidence in the case: LEONARD was the campaign manager of the Linda Schrenko gubernatorial campaign through the summer of 2002. In August 2004, during a recorded telephone call, LEONARD attempted to harass one of the individuals whom Leonard previously had recruited during the summer of 2002 to cash "focus group" checks, in the amount of \$590 each, and return the proceeds from those cashed checks as contributions to the Schrenko campaign. In that recorded conversation, LEONARD requested that individual not to make any mention of the Schrenko campaign during any interview with federal investigators because that would advance the investigation

of sources of funds for the Schrenko campaign. LEONARD further requested that individual to falsely state to federal investigators that the individual had been paid for participating in a focus group. In fact, claiming that the \$590 checks were payments for "focus group" participation was a fabrication and no focus group ever was held.

Schrenko's co-defendants, Merle Temple and Stephan Botes, are scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Cooper on September 11, 2006.

The case was investigated by Special Agents of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Inspector General, and the FBI.

Assistant United States Attorneys Russell G. Vineyard and Daniel A. Caldwell are prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias, United States Attorney or F. Gentry Shelnut, Chief, Criminal Division, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan).