

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

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FORMER UNION LEADER ADMITS THEFT OF UNION FUNDS

BUFFALO, N.Y.--U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that former union leader Joseph R. Grygorcewicz, age 63, of Amherst, N.Y., pleaded guilty to embezzlement and theft of labor union assets before U.S. Magistrate Judge Leslie G. Foschio. The charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Russell T. Ippolito, Jr., who is handling the case, stated that while working as the elected Secretary-Treasurer of Local 1566, a union which represents railroad workers in the transportation industry, Grygorcewicz embezzled \$39,989.72 in union funds. As Secretary-Treasurer, Grygorcewicz had check writing authority and access to the checking account of Local 1566. The defendant wrote checks to himself and forged the signature of the president of the union to illegally obtain the money. Of the amount that Grygorcewicz embezzled, \$14,020.94 was paid back to the union before the crime was discovered.

The plea is the culmination of an investigation on the part of investigators from the United States Department of Labor, Office of Labor-Management Standards, under the direction of Joseph Wasik, District Director of the Buffalo District Office.

Sentencing will be scheduled before Chief U.S. District Judge William M. Skretny at a date to be determined.

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