

# Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.  
Western District of New York

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## **FORMER UNION PRESIDENT SENTENCED FOR STEALING FROM UNION**

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Ellis Woods, 61, of Clarence, N.Y., who was convicted of wire fraud, was sentenced to 12 months in prison by U.S. District Court Judge Richard J. Arcara.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Russell T. Ippolito, Jr., who handled the case, stated that the defendant devised a scheme to defraud the Buffalo Educational Support Team ("BEST"). BEST is a union representing more than 900 teacher's aides and assistants in the Buffalo school district. While working as the elected President of BEST, Woods was provided a union issued credit card. Between November 18, 2008, and February 7, 2011, Woods used the union credit card to pay for personal expenses, including gambling expenses that he incurred at local area casinos. In total, Woods stole \$44,987.70 in union funds.

"Like any elected official, a union officer owes a duty of trust to her/his constituents," said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "This Office will not permit any person in such a position to enrich themselves at the expense of their members."

The plea is the result of an investigation by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Christopher M. Piehota.

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