



U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Middle District of Florida
400 N. Tampa Street, Suite 3200
Tampa, FL 33602
Toll Free Victim Contact: (866) 482-9913

United States v. Leo Govoni et al.
Case No. 8:25-cr-299-VMC-NHA
Case Summary

As alleged in the June 2025 indictment, Leo John Govoni (67, Clearwater) and John Leo Witeck (60, Tampa) engaged in a fraud scheme that involved stealing more than \$100 million from, and ultimately bankrupting, a non-profit organization in Clearwater that managed trusts for vulnerable individuals with special needs, many of them children and/or people with disabilities.

Govoni and Witeck are charged with one count of conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud, four counts of mail fraud, six counts of wire fraud, and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering. Govoni is also charged separately with one count of bank fraud, one count of illegal monetary transaction, and one count of making a false bankruptcy declaration. The bank fraud offense carries a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison. Each count of wire fraud, mail fraud, conspiracy to commit wire and mail fraud, and the money laundering conspiracy offense carries a maximum penalty of 20 years' imprisonment. The illegal monetary transaction count carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison and the false bankruptcy declaration carries a maximum penalty of 5 years' imprisonment.

According to the indictment and court documents, around the year 2000, Govoni co-founded the Center for Special Needs Trust Administration (CSNT), a non-profit that managed trusts for individuals with disabilities and other special needs, including those who received settlements, court awards, and other payments. CSNT grew to be one of the largest administrators of special needs trusts in the country, with beneficiaries located in Florida and nationwide. As of February 2024, CSNT managed more than 2,100 special needs trusts containing approximately \$200 million in assets.

As alleged in the indictment, from June 2009 through May 2025, Govoni, Witeck, and their co-conspirators solicited, embezzled, and misappropriated CSNT client-beneficiary funds—which they treated as a slush fund to enrich themselves and others—and concealed their illegal activities through complex financial transactions and deceit, including sending fraudulent account statements with false balances to victims and their families. Govoni allegedly used stolen money to purchase real estate, travel via private jet, fund a brewery and other business ventures, make deposits in his personal bank accounts, and pay debts for himself and others. In

February 2024, CSNT filed for bankruptcy and disclosed that more than \$100 million in client-beneficiary funds was missing from its trust accounts.

Govoni is also charged with bank fraud related to a \$3 million mortgage refinance loan and the alleged laundering of \$205,054 of the fraud proceeds to pay off a home equity line of credit on his residence. Govoni is further alleged to have made false declarations to the bankruptcy court related to the CSNT bankruptcy proceedings.

A bankruptcy court has appointed a trustee to oversee CSNT. Many victims of the criminal conduct are also unsecured creditors in CSNT's bankruptcy proceeding. The Unsecured Creditor's Council represents the interests of unsecured creditors. If you have not received information about the bankruptcy case that is also taking place, information can be obtained by visiting <https://dm.epiq11.com/case/centerforspecialneedstrustadministration/info>.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed one or more violations of federal criminal law, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.

If you have not already completed the FBI's online questionnaire, please consider visiting <https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/victim-services/seeking-victim-information/seeking-victim-information-in-center-for-special-needs-trust-investigation>. Participation is voluntary.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida maintains a website dedicated to this prosecution. Please visit <https://www.justice.gov/usao-mdfl/Govoni> for additional case information.