

STATEMENT OF FORMER FEDERAL PROSECUTION TRIAL TEAM AND FORMER
UNITED STATES ATTORNEY REGARDING PRESIDENTIAL COMMUTATION IN U.S. V.
BLAGOJEVICH

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**STATEMENT OF FORMER FEDERAL PROSECUTION TRIAL TEAM AND FORMER UNITED
STATES ATTORNEY REGARDING PRESIDENTIAL COMMUTATION IN *U.S. V. BLAGOJEVICH***

Reid J. Schar
Chris Niewoehner
Hon. Carrie E. Hamilton
Patrick J. Fitzgerald

CHICAGO — The following statement was issued today regarding the President's
commutation of the sentence of former Illinois Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich:

"Although the President has exercised his lawful authority to commute the
remaining portion of Mr. Blagojevich's prison sentence, Mr. Blagojevich remains a
felon, convicted of multiple serious acts of corruption as governor. The criminal
conduct for which a jury unanimously convicted Mr. Blagojevich included the
following actions:

- (1) extorting the CEO of a children's hospital by withholding important state
funding to help sick children until the CEO provided campaign contributions;
- (2) extorting the owners of a racetrack by intentionally holding up the signing
of important state legislation until the owners provided campaign contributions in
response to an explicit demand for them;
- (3) extortionately demanding funding for a high-paying private sector job, as
well as campaign contributions, in exchange for naming a replacement to an open
U.S. Senate seat; and
- (4) lying to the FBI to cover up his criminal activity.

The law and extensive facts underlying Mr. Blagojevich's conviction were reviewed
by independent judges on an appellate court and by the Supreme Court of the

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United States. These courts affirmed Mr. Blagojevich's conviction and sentence, and the appellate court described the evidence against him as "overwhelming."

Extortion by a public official is a very serious crime, routinely prosecuted throughout the United States whenever, as here, it can be detected and proven. That has to be the case in America: a justice system must hold public officials accountable for corruption. It would be unfair to their victims and the public to do otherwise.

While the President has the power to reduce Mr. Blagojevich's sentence, the fact remains that the former governor was convicted of very serious crimes. His prosecution serves as proof that elected officials who betray those they are elected to serve will be held to account."

Mr. Schar, Mr. Niewoehner, and Judge Hamilton are former Assistant United States Attorneys in Chicago who represented the government at trial in *U.S.A. v. Blagojevich*. Mr. Fitzgerald was the United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois during the investigation and prosecution of Mr. Blagojevich. This statement is issued in their individual capacities.

Reid J. Schar

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