

Madigan Indicted On Racketeering Charges

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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CHICAGO - Michael Madigan, 79, former Illinois Speaker of the House, and once one of the most powerful men in the state for years, has been indicted on racketeering charges. An indictment was returned by a federal grand jury on March 2, 2022, after an investigation that took more than two years.

A scheme with utility business Commonwealth Edison was part of the grand jury investigation.

Madigan is accused of illegally soliciting business for his private property tax law firm in the indictment.

The alleged scheme stretches from Chicago to Springfield and connects politicians, lobbyists, business and utility executives and Madigan's law firm.

Madigan's close friend Michael McClain is named as a co-defendant, and prosecutors allege he carried out criminal activities at Madigan's behest.

The indictment accuses Madigan and McClain and other members of the conspiracy of unlawfully soliciting benefits from businesses and other private entities, and accuses Madigan of engaging in multiple schemes to benefit from private legal work unlawfully steered to his law firm.

Madigan and McClain are charged with racketeering conspiracy and individual counts of using interstate facilities in aid of bribery, and wire fraud, prosecutors said.

Madigan was the longest-serving leader of a state or federal legislative body in the history of the United States from 1971 to 2021. He represented the 27th District in Illinois from 1971 to 1983 and the 30th District from 1983 to 1993, and the 22nd District from 1993 to 2021. He was replaced by Democrat Emanuel "Chris" Welch.

Madigan resigned from his role as speaker in January 2021, then later his seat. He has always denied any wrongdoing. There was not an arrest of Madigan on Wednesday.

Madigan released a statement responding to the charges, saying, "I was never involved in any criminal activity. The government is attempting to criminalize a routine constituent service: job recommendations. That is not illegal, and these other charges are equally unfounded. Throughout my 50 years as a public servant, I worked to address the needs of my constituents, always keeping in mind the high standards required and the trust the public placed in me. I adamantly deny these accusations and look back proudly on my time as an elected official, serving the people of Illinois."

Rep. Elik Statement on Madigan Corruption Charges

State Representative Amy Elik (R-Fosterburg) issued the following statement after the federal indictment of former House Speaker Mike Madigan:

“This indictment makes it perfectly clear that Mike Madigan and his criminal enterprise engaged in a massive corruption scheme for years which benefited him and his Democrat associates. Madigan kept his power for decades because of his corrupt scheme of doing business in state government. The same Democrat lawmakers that gave Madigan the power for decades are the same Democrats preventing stronger anti-corruption laws from becoming law. It’s clear Madigan’s abuse of public trust has tainted state government for a long time, it’s time to write a new chapter that begins with stronger ethics reforms to root out corruption in state government.”

Governor Pritzker’s Statement on the Michael Madigan’s Indictment:

"An indictment of this magnitude is a condemnation of a system infected with promises of pay-to-play, and the era of corruption and self-dealing among Illinois politicians must end. The conduct alleged in this indictment is deplorable and a stark violation of the public’s trust. Michael Madigan must be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law.

"Ultimately, every person in elected office is responsible for doing the right thing – and not lining their own pockets. I am fully committed to eradicate the scourge of corruption from our political system, and today’s indictment is an important step in cleaning up Illinois. I have faith that our justice system will help restore the public’s trust in government.

"When I ran for office, I made clear that I would be beholden to no one, and that I would serve the best interests of the people of Illinois. I have upheld that vow. For the past three years, my administration has made clear that such abuses will not be tolerated, and we’ve tightened our ethics laws. I will continue to work with the General Assembly to restore the public’s trust."

Davidsmeyer: Indictment Statement

Assistant Leader C.D. Davidsmeyer (R-Jacksonville) released the following statement after former Illinois House Speaker Michael J. Madigan was indicted on federal charges of racketeering and bribery.

“Mike Madigan and his corrupt Chicago Machine have finally been charged by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for bribery, extortion, racketeering and public corruption. Madigan and his associates created a criminal enterprise, at the expense of the Illinois citizens and good public policy. They used their power in the legislature to benefit themselves.

Sadly, I have sincere concerns that this corruption continues. There are many concerns that politicians are now picking the lobbyists they will work with, in order to get their buddies lobbying contracts. Remember, it was Speaker Welch who chaired the House

Special Investigation Committee to investigate Madigan and it is he who found no fault. That committee purposely swept ethics concerns under the rug, and now the federal government is dealing with the fallout.

It's past time for the Illinois General Assembly to pass real ethics reform to give the Legislative Inspector General the tools needed to root out the corruption at its core.

Illinoisans are tired of Democrats' corruption. Illinoisans are hurting. They want safe neighborhoods, good schools, lower taxes and good infrastructure.

It is time to let the Courts decide what happens to Madigan and his criminal enterprise and it is time for the General Assembly to get to work helping the people who voted them into office."

Speaker Welch's Statement on Madigan Indictment

"As Chair of the Special Investigating Committee, I made it clear that this matter needed to be handled in a court of law, completely separate from the legislature. As is evident by this federal indictment, the full weight of the justice system was needed to ensure all charges are investigated properly and thoroughly. At my direction, the Office of the Speaker has fully cooperated with the investigation and will continue to do so."

Democratic Party of Illinois Chair Rep. Robin Kelly released the following statement regarding today's announcement that former DPI Chair Michael J. Madigan has been indicted:

"For the past year, I have been honored to lead our party as the first person of color and the first woman to chair the Democratic Party of Illinois. The DPI is committed to building a party that is more transparent, more diverse, and more inclusive in everything we do. Today's announcement is a stark reminder that elected leaders must hold themselves to the highest ethical standards. We will observe the legal process as it unfolds, but there can be no tolerance of anyone guilty of violating the public trust. While he stepped down as party chair more than a year ago, Michael J. Madigan remains a State Central Committeeman from the 3rd Congressional District. He should resign from that position as well.

"Since I became chair a year ago, our focus has been on electing Democrats up and down the ticket across Illinois and continuing to fight for the things all Democrats believe in, including raising wages, lowering costs, defending reproductive choice, protecting the environment, investing in our infrastructure, providing high quality education for all, and more. We will not let actions of the past distract us from our mission in 2022 and beyond."

