



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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U.S. CHARGES NEW YORK STATE SENATOR WITH MAIL FRAUD

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and ROSE GILL HEARN, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation, announced today that EFRAIN GONZALEZ, JR., a New York State Senator, has been charged with a scheme to defraud a not-for-profit corporation, the West Bronx Neighborhood Association, Inc. ("West Bronx").

According to the Indictment, West Bronx was organized as a not-for-profit corporation under the laws of the State of New York. According to West Bronx's by-laws, West Bronx was organized to, among other things, maintain and foster an interest in civic and community affairs; secure greater economy and efficiency in local, state and national government; and encourage, promote and foster community welfare. GONZALEZ was at various times an honorary advisory board member of West Bronx.

During the approximate period November 2000 through May 2006, according to the Indictment, GONZALEZ caused West Bronx checks to be sent to credit card companies and private vendors to pay for approximately \$37,000 worth of his personal expenses. The expenses included items such as rent for residences in Monroe, New York, and the Dominican Republic; New York Yankees tickets; membership fees at a Dominican vacation club; apparel; and college tuition.

Mr. GARCIA stated, "Misuse of not-for-profit funds by anyone -- public servant or not -- is a serious breach of trust. Those with authority over such funds have a special responsibility to use them only for their intended purposes."

GONZALEZ, 58, lives in the Bronx. He surrendered to authorities this morning, and is scheduled to be presented later today before United States Magistrate Judge Gabriel W. Gorenstein.

If convicted, GONZALEZ faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative efforts of the New York City Department of Investigation for its work on this case. According to Mr. GARCIA, the investigation is continuing.

Assistant United States Attorney SERENE K. NAKANO is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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