



**ALVIN L. BRAGG JR.,  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**D.A. BRAGG ANNOUNCES GUILTY PLEA IN \$325K WAGE THEFT  
BY SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY SUBCONTRACTOR**

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin L. Bragg, Jr., today announced the guilty pleas of HIGH VOLT ELECTRIC CORP. OF AMERICA (“HIGH VOLT”) and its president MARK ASTUDILLO, 48, for a two-year scheme to steal at least \$325,000 from at least 7 workers’ wages and defraud the School Construction Authority while performing work as a subcontractor. Both ASTUDILLO and HIGH VOLT pleaded guilty in New York State Supreme Court to Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree. HIGH VOLT additionally pleaded guilty to Grand Larceny in the Second Degree. They were required to pay \$325,000 upfront and were debarred from New York City contracts for 5 years.

The indictment was the result of a joint investigation conducted with the New York City Department of Investigation and the School Construction Authority’s Office of Inspector General.

“With this resolution, High Volt Electric Corp’s workers will receive hundreds in thousands of wages they are rightly owed,” said District Attorney Bragg. “Young New Yorkers deserve safe, modern spaces to learn, and defrauding the School Construction Authority jeopardizes its ability to provide those spaces for the 1.1 million children in our city’s public schools. I thank the Department of Investigation and the School Construction Authority’s Office of Inspector General for their ongoing partnership.”

Acting DOI Commissioner Christopher Ryan said, “Prevailing wage laws exist to protect both workers and taxpayer-funded projects—ensuring employees are paid fairly for their labor and contractors follow the rules for public works projects. In this case, the company and its owner engaged in a scheme to steal workers’ wages and submitted false documents in an attempt to conceal the theft. Today’s guilty pleas hold accountable those responsible and also result in \$325,000 in restitution that will return the stolen wages to the workers. I thank the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office and the School Construction Authority for its partnership in protecting workers and City tax dollars.”

As admitted in their guilty pleas, from January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2025, the defendants defrauded New York City’ school construction program by falsifying payroll records and stole from at least 7 of their workers by paying far below the prevailing wage. HIGH VOLT worked as a subcontractor on School Construction Authority (“SCA”) projects across New York City for more than a decade, performing renovations and construction at numerous public schools, including P.S. 48, P.S. 7, P.S. 183, Bard High School Early College, and the American Sign Language and English Secondary School, among others.

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The SCA is responsible for building and modernizing New York City public schools. Contractors working on SCA projects are legally required to pay prevailing wages, which are set by the New York City Comptroller and based on collective bargaining agreements between trade unions and employers. To ensure compliance, contractors must submit certified payroll reports verifying that workers on public works projects are being paid the legally required wages and benefits.

Instead, HIGH VOLT and ASTUDILLO systematically falsified payroll reports while using non-union laborers on SCA projects. HIGH VOLT submitted certified payroll reports and daily sign-in logs falsely claiming that workers were paid the required prevailing wages. HIGH VOLT failed to list these workers on the certified payroll reports submitted to the SCA, while paying them far less than the prevailing wage required by law.

Investigators recovered internal daily calendars tracking job assignments across school construction sites from HIGH VOLT's offices. The calendars listed non-union laborers by coded designations such as "Helper A," "Helper B," and similar shorthand, corresponding to workers' initials. Investigators determined that these coded workers were intentionally omitted from the payroll reports submitted to the SCA. Investigators also identified instances in which HIGH VOLT submitted payroll records claiming that certain employees worked on SCA projects when those individuals were actually outside the United States at the time.

Based on these falsified records, the SCA paid HIGH VOLT for work performed under contracts that required compliance with prevailing wage laws. HIGH VOLT, in turn, paid its workers a fraction of the required prevailing wage rates. Through this scheme, they stole at least \$325,000 in public works contract payments, intended for its employees who performed the labor on New York City public schools.

Today's announcement is the latest in a series of prosecutions by the Office's Worker Protection Unit – created by D.A. Bragg in February 2023 – including, in the past year alone:

- The January 2026 [indictment](#) of an HVAC contractor for the MTA for allegedly stealing approximately \$339,000 from 13 employees through a cash kickback scheme.
- The November 2025 [guilty plea](#) of Raul Gutierrez-Salas, a manager of a tile repair company, with full restitution of \$6,700 worth of wages stolen from four workers.
- The July 2025 [sentencing](#), including jail time and \$110,000 in restitution, of Master-Rigger George Cole and his company for stealing from his workers who performed dangerous rigging on skyscrapers without insurance.
- The June 2025 [sentencing](#) of Anthony Martucci, with full restitution of \$36,786, for stealing from engineers and laborers working at an NYC Housing, Preservation, and Development contract on East 14<sup>th</sup>
- The June 2025 [guilty pleas](#) and later sentencing of Valor Security and President Alexander Shaporov for operating a sham safety training school.

Assistant D.A. Rachana Pathak (Chief of the Worker Protection Unit) is handling the prosecution of this case under the supervision of Assistant D.A.s Christopher Beard (Deputy Chief of the Rackets Bureau), Christopher Conroy (Chief of the Rackets Bureau) and Judy Salwen (Deputy Chief of the Investigation Division) and Executive Assistant D.A. Jodie Kane (Chief of the Investigation Division). Paralegal Lilah Hixon assisted with the investigation, as did Paralegal Grace Dodd, Sergeant Genesis Cornielle and Investigator Haley Fitzpatrick.

District Attorney Bragg thanked the New York City Department of Investigation, as well as the School Construction Authority's Office of Inspector General Willie Schaeffer, Investigators Leonard Rein and Jose Romero, and Investigative Accountant Anthony Edward.

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