

Former Hill Staffer Convicted on Corruption Charges Arising Out of World Series Trip

March 2011

On February 10, 2011, a federal jury in the District of Columbia convicted former Hill staffer Fraser C. Verrusio on corruption charges stemming from his acceptance of an all-expenses-paid trip to Game One of the 2003 World Series. Verrusio, a former staff member for Representative Don Young (R-AK), was convicted after a 10-day trial on one count of conspiring to accept an illegal gratuity, one count of accepting an illegal gratuity, and one count of making a false statement in failing to report his receipt of gifts from a lobbyist and the lobbyist's client on his 2003 financial disclosure statement.

At the time of the trip, Verrusio was serving as the policy director for the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, which had responsibility for the Federal Highway Bill in the House. Verrusio accepted the all-expenses-paid trip to Game One of the 2003 World Series from a lobbyist working for an equipment rental company interested in inserting three amendments into the Federal Highway Bill. The trip included round-trip commercial airline travel from Washington, DC, to New York City, use of a chauffeured Cadillac Escalade for transportation while in New York City, a ticket to Game One, lodging, a steak dinner, drinks and entertainment at a strip club. The Federal Highway Bill was discussed during a steak dinner.

At the time of the trip, federal law required Verrusio to report his receipt of gifts valued at more than \$285 per year from a single source on his 2003 annual financial disclosure statement. Because the value of the trip exceeded this threshold, it should have been disclosed. Despite certifying that his disclosure form was "true, complete, and correct," Verrusio omitted any mention of these gifts in his disclosures.

Sentencing is scheduled for May 6, 2011. Verrusio faces the possibility of fines and imprisonment for his conduct.