

# Congressman Ney Pleads Guilty, Awaits Sentencing on Abramoff-Related Charges

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On October 13, 2006, Representative Bob Ney (R-Ohio) pled guilty in federal court to corruption charges after federal investigators determined that Ney had performed a number of official acts in exchange for gifts, trips and campaign contributions from former lobbyist Jack Abramoff and his associates.

The indictment charged that Ney conspired to violate several federal statutes, including his obligations to provide "honest services" to the public and to make truthful statements in his travel and annual financial disclosure forms. As part of the plea agreement, Ney admitted to accepting numerous free meals and drinks at various Washington, DC area restaurants and receiving free use of Abramoff's suites at the MCI Center Arena, Camden Yards Stadium and Signatures restaurant. Ney also acknowledged accepting trips worth over \$170,000 to Scotland, New Orleans and Lake George, NY in exchange for various official actions. The plea agreement even detailed Ney's efforts to conceal his gambling winnings on one London excursion by asking a staff member to carry thousands of dollars worth of British pounds through a U.S. Customs Service checkpoint.

Ney admitted to soliciting and accepting these things of value in exchange for a number of acts that benefited Abramoff's clients, including the insertion of language into the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to lift an existing commercial gaming ban for a pair of Abramoff's tribal clients. Ney also contacted numerous executive branch agencies at Abramoff's request and inserted language into the Congressional Record supporting a license application for an Abramoff client seeking a multi million dollar contract in connection with the installation of a wireless telephone infrastructure for

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Congress.

Despite his guilty plea and calls from the House leadership to resign, Ney has refused to step down from his post, although he is not a candidate for reelection. Ney will be sentenced in January 2007 and, if the judge accepts the government's recommendation, will serve 27 months in prison.