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FORMER ABRAMOFF COLLEAGUE KEVIN RING CONVICTED OF CONSPIRACY, HONEST SERVICES FRAUD AND PAYING GRATUITIES RELATED TO ILLEGAL LOBBYING SCHEME

WASHINGTON – Today a federal jury in Washington convicted Kevin A. Ring, a former lobbyist who worked with Jack A. Abramoff, on five counts related to a scheme to corrupt public officials by providing a stream of things of value, the Department of Justice announced.

The jury found Ring guilty on one count of conspiring to corrupt congressional and executive branch officials by providing things of value to them and their staff in order to induce or reward those who took official actions benefitting Ring and his clients. In addition, Ring was convicted of one count of paying a gratuity to a public official and three counts of honest services wire fraud for engaging in a scheme to deprive U.S. citizens of their right to the honest services of certain public officials. The jury acquitted Ring on three counts of honest services fraud. A previous federal jury failed to reach a verdict in the case and the court declared a mistrial.

“Through the talent and hard work of prosecutors from the Criminal Division’s Public Integrity and Fraud Sections, another member of ‘Team Abramoff’ has been held accountable for his actions. For years, this team of lobbyists schemed to corrupt public officials, and, because of their actions, Americans were denied the honest services of public servants,” said Mythili Raman, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division. “Through the continued vigilance of our prosecutors and our law enforcement partners, we are committed to bringing to justice those who seek to corrupt our democratic process.”

“The public trusts that government processes will be untainted by those who would seek to corrupt them,” said John G. Perren, Acting Assistant Director of the FBI’s Washington Field Office. “The FBI will vigorously investigate those who seek to disregard the laws that our country was built on and illegally influence those in office.”

“The Office of the Inspector General is committed to holding accountable those who engage in illegal conduct as part of schemes to corrupt public officials,” said Glenn A. Fine, Inspector General for the Department of Justice.

According to evidence presented at trial, as a lobbyist working in Washington, Ring solicited and obtained business throughout the United States, including with Native American tribal governments operating and interested in operating gambling casinos. Trial testimony established that Ring sought to further his clients' interests by lobbying public officials in the legislative and executive branches of the federal government.

Ring and his co-conspirators identified public officials who would perform official actions that would assist Ring and his clients, and then groomed those public officials by providing things of value with the intent of making those public officials more receptive to requests on behalf of their clients in the future. Evidence presented at trial showed that Ring and his co-conspirators provided things of value as a means of influencing, inducing and rewarding official actions, and in exchange for official actions. These things of value included all-expenses-paid travel, meals, drinks, golf outings, tickets to professional sporting events, concerts and other events, and an employment opportunity for the wife of a congressman. According to evidence introduced at trial, these things of value were often billed to Ring's and Abramoff's clients. Evidence established that Ring and his co-conspirators engaged in this illegal conduct with current and former congressional staff members, including chiefs of staff, as well as officials at the Department of Justice and the White House.

Evidence at trial demonstrated the nature of Ring's lobbying efforts and his attempts to corrupt and reward public officials. In one e-mail message, Ring instructed his co-conspirators to "thank your friends on the Hill and in the Administration. In fact, thank them over and over again this week – preferably for long periods of time and at expensive establishments." On another occasion, Ring described to a co-conspirator lobbyist what he expected of a public official who had attended a sporting event: "Glad he got a chance to relax. Now he can pay us back." Similarly, Ring e-mailed a co-conspirator public official and stated: "You are going to eat free off our clients. Need to get us some [appropriations] money." Testimony at trial from Ring's co-conspirators described Ring joking about things of value he used to corrupt public officials by saying "Hello quid, where's the pro quo."

Evidence presented at trial demonstrated that Ring corruptly sought assistance from public officials on numerous client projects, such as appropriations and authorizations, congressional letters to executive branch entities, as well as meetings and other legislative and official actions. Evidence at trial showed that Ring's corrupt actions resulted in his clients receiving, among other actions, \$14 million in congressional transportation appropriations and an additional \$7 million from the Department of Justice to build a jail.

Ring faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison for conspiracy, two years in prison for payment of a gratuity and 20 years in prison for each of the three counts of honest services wire fraud. Ring could also be ordered to pay a fine of up to \$250,000 on each count of conviction. U.S. District Judge Ellen S. Huvelle scheduled sentencing for Mar. 1, 2011, at 2 p.m.

Ring remains charged with an additional two counts of obstructing justice. Those charges stem from alleged efforts by Ring to thwart a grand jury and congressional investigation by preventing the reporting of his criminal conduct to federal authorities. The court severed

those two counts and Ring is scheduled to stand trial at a later date. Ring is presumed innocent of these charges until proven guilty in a court of law.

To date, 20 individuals, including lobbyists and public officials, have pleaded guilty, been convicted at trial, or are awaiting trial in connection with the ongoing investigation into the activities of Abramoff and his associates. Abramoff pleaded guilty in January 2006 to conspiracy to commit honest services fraud, honest services fraud and tax evasion. He was sentenced in September 2008 to 48 months in prison.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant Chief Nathaniel B. Edmonds of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section and Trial Attorney Peter Koski of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section. The investigation of this case is being conducted by the FBI's Washington Field Office and the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General.

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