



Allentown Mayor Ed Pawlowski will be forced from office as a result of his conviction. Prosecutors said he masterminded a scheme to rig city contracts to secure campaign donations.

Allentown mayor convicted of 47 corruption charges

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ALLENTOWN — The mayor of Allentown was convicted by a federal jury Thursday of selling his office to campaign donors in a wide-ranging scheme meant to fuel his political ambitions for statewide office.

Jurors in the corruption trial of Mayor Ed Pawlowski found him guilty of 47 of the 54 charges he faced, a verdict that will force the Democrat from office after a 12-year tenure as mayor.

Pawlowski, who began a fourth term in January, cried in the courtroom after the verdict was read, and his wife collapsed in a hallway.

A codefendant, lawyer Scott Alinson, was convicted of bribing Pawlowski for legal work for his firm.

Prosecutors said Pawlowski masterminded a scheme to rig city contracts for legal, engineering, technology and construction work, all in a bid to raise money for his statewide political campaigns.

Pawlowski ran for governor in 2014 and U.S. Senate in 2015, suspending the latter campaign

days after the FBI raided City Hall.

Convicted of charges that include conspiracy, bribery, fraud, attempted extortion and lying to the FBI, Pawlowski will remain free on bail pending sentencing. A sentencing date was not set.

He faces up to 20 years in prison on each count.

The jury "held Mayor Pawlowski accountable for selling his office to the highest bidder to fund his personal ambitions," U.S. Attorney Louis D. Lappen said in a statement.

Pawlowski's lawyer, Jack McMahon, said he was "surprised and disappointed" by the verdict.

The mayor's political consultants cooperated with the government and recorded hundreds of conversations with him, many of which were played for jurors. Several city workers and vendors who pleaded guilty testified against Pawlowski.

McMahon told jurors it's not unusual for a politician to solicit campaign contributions from government contractors. He contended that Pawlowski had been

set up by the mayor's political advisers, Mike Fleck and Sam Ruchlewicz, who made secret recordings that helped form the basis of the prosecution's case. Fleck pleaded guilty; Ruchlewicz wasn't charged.

The defense also sought to use the government tapes to its own advantage, playing for jurors a June 2015 conversation in which the mayor — unaware he was being recorded — complained about an engineering executive who'd been pressuring him for city work.

"I'm not a pay-to-play guy," Pawlowski said on the recording. Pawlowski, who won reelection in November while under indictment, took the stand in his own defense and insisted he'd done nothing wrong.

The Chicago native was Allentown's economic development chief before taking office as mayor in January 2006.

The city's moribund downtown was transformed on his watch, with valuable state tax incentives producing a new hockey arena, gleaming office buildings and upscale apartments.

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