

US Attorney's Office Will Drop Charges against Former Va. Governor

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Former Va. Governor

Robert McDonnell has spent years fighting corruption charges. [caption]

Former Virginia governor Robert F. McDonnell has faced four years of fighting corruption charges, along with his wife. Thursday, the U.S. Attorney's Office announced that it would drop the case against the former governor. Officially, they asked that the case be dropped to a lower court, where prosecutors would later file a motion to dismiss.

This marks the end of an exhausting story for McDonnell, sussing out the appropriateness of his relationship with Richmond businessman Jonnie R. Williams, Sr.

McDonnell and his wife Maureen were found guilty of accepting over \$1,750,000 in loans and gifts, including fancy jewelry, vacations, and even payments for their daughter's wedding reception. In exchange, they helped Williams promote a nutritional supplement he had developed. Not only did the McDonnells connect the businessman with state officials and healthcare leaders, they also gave him access to the governor's mansion for a product launch.

The decision to drop the case comes less than a week after it was reported that prosecutors had recommended continuing to press charges to superiors at the Justice Department. Apparently, this recommendation was either overruled, or the U.S. Attorney's Office that was handling the case was convinced to change their mind.

Legal expert Jacob Frenkel of the firm [Dickinson Wright](#) believes that the prosecutor's choice to drop the case is the right one.

"The decision not to prosecute vindicates those who believed all along that this case was an inappropriate extension of the bribery and gratuity statute," Frenkel said, referring to the case as an instance of "prosecutorial overreaching."

Although McDonnell no longer faces prison time, his reputation may have been irrevocably hurt by his interactions with Williams. According to a Washington Post poll, two-thirds of Virginians believe that McDonnell should not pursue further public office. Even 60% of Republicans believe that the former governor's future is best spent as a private citizen.

Photo source: Washington Post