



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney
Western District of Washington

700 Stewart Street, Suite 5220
Seattle, Washington 98101-1271

Tel: (206) 553-7970
Fax: (206) 553-0882

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**FEDERAL INVESTIGATION INTO FORMER SPOKANE MAYOR JIM WEST
CONCLUDES WITHOUT CRIMINAL CHARGES**

The investigation into allegations concerning former Spokane Mayor Jim West was officially closed today with no federal charges filed. First Assistant United States Attorney Mark Bartlett from the Western District of Washington announced the end of the probe saying FBI investigators did not find evidence that warranted the filing of federal charges. "Clearly, by his own admission, Jim West engaged in behavior that was improper," said Bartlett. "After reviewing evidence and conducting more than two dozen interviews, however, we did not find facts that would justify initiating federal criminal charges."

The investigation began shortly after the publication of a series of reports in The Spokane Spokesman-Review in May, 2005 that indicated West was using his position as Mayor to offer city hall jobs or internships in exchange for sex. At the request of the Eastern District of Washington, Bartlett, a veteran prosecutor, was appointed by the Department of Justice to coordinate the federal investigation. The FBI investigation was led by Special Agent Frank Harrill, a 10-year veteran agent who is currently assigned to the Spokane Field Division. Investigators used all tools available to evaluate a potential criminal case against West. "We want the public to feel confident that these allegations were scrutinized thoroughly. Jim West was treated like any other potential defendant in a criminal case," FBI Special Agent in Charge Laura Laughlin said.

Over the course of the investigation, more than two dozen witness interviews were conducted. Some of those interviewed have provided their information to the media, others have spoken only with investigators. Searches were conducted at West's home and office. Investigators examined business and city records. Forensic examinations were conducted on West's home and work computers. West was interviewed at length about all of the allegations and answered all questions put to him.

In a potential public corruption case such as this, the government would have to prove certain elements beyond a reasonable doubt to obtain a conviction. The government would have to prove that West specifically intended to defraud citizens of their intangible right to honest services. The central allegation was that the mayor denied citizens "honest services" by providing city hall jobs or internships in exchange for sex. The investigation uncovered no evidence that had occurred. A review of city records reveals that virtually every person who applied for an internship with the city was offered a position. There was no indication that West had improperly assisted any potential employees or interns.

Due to the great public interest in this investigation, the U.S. Attorney's Office is taking the unusual step of announcing its conclusion and providing as much information as possible about the investigation.

"It is important to remember the limited scope of the federal investigation," Bartlett noted. "Our probe determined federal criminal charges were not warranted. Our investigation did not address whether Jim West's activities were ethical, moral or appropriate."

The West investigation was conducted by the FBI using agents with the Public Corruption and the Computer Crime squads.

Contact: Emily Langlie, Public Affairs Officer, United States Attorney's Office, Western District of Washington, at (206)553-4110.