



Another Chicago Alderman Indicted

After serving 26 years on the Chicago Police Department, Willie Cochran (shown) retired as a sergeant in 2003. He ran for alderman in 2007 at the same time that his predecessor, Arenda Troutman, was under indictment for bribery. She lost the election to Cochran, and spent four years in jail following her conviction.



Now, a 15-count federal indictment handed down on Wednesday charged Chicago Alderman Willie Cochran with wire fraud, federal program bribery, and extortion. If convicted on all counts, he faces 280 years in jail.

Cochran is accused of raiding a charity that raised funds for various activities in his 20th Ward, including hosting a summer back-to-school picnic, a Valentine's Day party for senior citizens, and other holiday season events. As the sole signatory on the account, Cochran is accused of taking \$5,000 from it to help pay for his daughter's education, and another \$25,000 to fund his gambling habit.

Cochran is also accused of soliciting a \$3,000 bribe from a liquor store owner seeking to sell his store to a buyer who would need a liquor license to complete the sale.

According to *Illinois Policy*, more than 30 of the last 100 Chicago aldermen have been convicted of crimes — 29 of them just since 1972.

But there is one bright spot: In April 2014, Chicago Alderman Anthony Beale of Chicago's 9th Ward *turned down* a bribe! It made headline news at the time. A man from Indiana owed Chicago more than \$42,000 in business fines and approached Beale for assistance in removing them in exchange for contributions to his campaign. Beale reported it to the authorities and the man was arrested.

In its reporting of the incident, *Illinois Policy* wrote, "Kudos to Beale for doing the right thing. Given Chicago's long history of corruption and the fact that just 28 percent of Illinois residents trust their state government, Chicago and Illinois could use more good news like this."

Photo: AP Images

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