



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 12, 2017

## As Expected, Former Florida Democrat Congresswoman Convicted of Fraud

After 11 hours, the jury hearing the case against former Florida Democrat Representative Corrine Brown [reached a verdict on Thursday](#): guilty on 18 out of 22 charges filed against her in federal court. The jury convicted her of conspiracy, five counts of mail fraud, seven counts of wire fraud, one count of scheming to conceal material facts in the case, one count of obstruction of justice, and three counts of tax fraud.



As *The New American* reported on the case last year, Assistant U.S. Attorney General Leslie Caldwell provided some of the details:

Congresswoman Brown and her chief of staff [Ronnie Simmons] are alleged to have used the congresswoman's official position to solicit over \$800,000 in donations to a supposed charitable organization [One Door for Education], only to use that organization as a personal slush fund.

Richard Weber, the IRS's chief investigator added:

The defendants are alleged to have committed a multitude of criminal violations, including fraudulently receiving and using hundreds of thousands of dollars in contributions meant to a nonprofit organization for their own personal and professional benefits.

One Door for Education was supposed to fund scholarships for low-income students. It raised \$833,000 but funded only two, for a total of \$1,200. The balance found its way into the personal checking accounts of Brown, Simmons, and Carla Wiley, the charity's president. Simmons and Wiley turned state's evidence against Brown in an attempt to obtain more lenient sentences for their participation in the scheme.

When the indictments were handed down last year, Brown's supporters flocked to her corner, including Representative Nancy Pelosi and Neil Henrichsen, chairman of the Duval [Florida] County Democratic Party. Pelosi said Brown was "a champion for America's veterans" and that the indictment was "deeply saddening." Henrichsen said he was "disappointed about the indictment and we'll see how the judicial process plays out."

Now they know.

She lied on her tax returns. She and her accomplices created a "shadow" employee of the charity in order to pay out phony salary checks to him which were then deposited into the thieves' bank accounts. The original indictment ran 53 pages.

Following the jury's verdict, the assistant U.S. attorney said it was all about, "Corruption. Greed. And a significant entitlement attitude. That's what this case is about. It's about lying, cheating and stealing. It's about fraud and corruption of a member of the highest level of the American government."



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When asked to testify Brown denied any intent to commit fraud:

Let me just admit right here and now that there was a lot of sloppy bookkeeping. It was a mistake on my part and I needed to get on top of my taxes.

As a member of Congress, Brown was pulling down \$14,500 a month, in addition to allowances to pay for her office and her staff. How she let her income tax liability get away from her is hard to fathom. As far as the “sloppy bookkeeping” disclaimer, U.S. Assistant Attorney General Eric Olsham didn’t buy any of it. He told the jury:

She exercised total control. No one told her “no,” but that didn’t stop her, ladies and gentlemen, from using the power of her office to benefit herself.

After the verdict was read, Brown left the courtroom briefly, returning with a clutch of tissues in her hand. Her supporters shouted that they loved her as she piled into a car with her entourage and pulled away. Later she released a statement declaring that, despite the verdict, she was innocent of all charges:

While I respect the jury’s decision, I disagree with it, and I want to make it clear that I maintain my innocence. I did not commit these crimes, and I intend to file a motion for a new trial. I will continue to stand on my record of decades of faithful service to this community and the nation. I have a long record of charitable service to the community and that will continue even during this process.

I want to thank my family and friends for their prayers and support during this difficult time. I ask that you continue to pray for and support me. This fight is not over and as I’m sure you know, I will continue to fight to clear my name and restore my reputation.

When the original indictment was handed down last year, Brown, age 70, faced a maximum of 357 years in jail for her misdeeds. Following Thursday’s conviction, she’s down to 277 years. Sentencing will take place within the next 90 days.

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