



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 11, 2017

Former Florida Democrat Congresswoman Corrine Brown Sentenced to Five Years in Prison

The courtroom — which was filled with supporters last May when former Representative Corrine Brown (shown, center) from Florida's Fifth District was convicted of milking her fake charity — was nearly empty last Monday [when she was sentenced for that crime](#). Even California's Nancy Pelosi failed to make an appearance or even to record publicly any comment following the sentencing, despite her expression of support for Brown following the conviction.



Brown, who had “served” the people in her district for 25 years before being charged, convicted, and then sentenced, originally pled innocent, claiming that her friends running the charity were sloppy in their bookkeeping. The prosecution was merciless in its development of the case, describing how Carla Wiley started the One Door for Education Foundation in 2011 in Virginia, but never raised much money until she brought in Brown's chief of staff, Elias “Ronnie” Simmons, to help. Simmons then brought in Brown to help with fundraising. Apparently, Brown saw her opportunity and took it.

Using her creds, she raised over \$830,000 in four years, telling donors that the money would be used for scholarships and the purchase of iPads for students. The prosecution told the jury that only \$1,200 was spent for those purposes while the rest was pocketed by Brown, Simmons, and Wiley, mostly funneled into Brown's personal bank accounts.

Last May, Brown was convicted on 18 out of 22 original charges, including one count of conspiracy, five counts of mail fraud, seven counts of wire fraud, one count of scheming to conceal from investigators material facts in the case, one count of obstruction of justice, and three counts of tax fraud. When *The New American* reported on her conviction at the time, Brown faced a maximum of 357 years in prison. Last Monday she got five. Plus she owes \$62,650.99 to the IRS and must pay a portion of 452,515.87, [according to ABC News](#). It's unclear whether Brown will be allowed to keep her congressional pension.

Her two partners in the charity crime received less time: Simmons was given four years and Wiley just one year and nine months, with court supervision for three years afterward. All three have had their passports revoked, reflecting the high risk of their leaving the country before they begin serving their sentences. The judge allowed them to remain out of jail during the holidays, but they must report to federal prison early next week.

The FBI Special Agent in Charge Charles Spencer declared: “It is incredibly disappointing that an elected official, who took an oath year after year to serve others, would exploit the needs of children and abuse the charitable hearts of constituents to advance her own personal and political agendas, and deliver them with virtually nothing.”

The scam was brazen, which made it easy for the prosecution to build an airtight case against Brown, Simmons, and Wiley. A check made out to the charity would be deposited and then immediately a cash



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withdrawal was made from it through an ATM. Simmons deposited \$800 every day into Brown's personal account, and paid himself a little extra for his trouble. Over the years, the prosecution showed that Simmons withdrew \$93,536 while Wiley also pocketed some \$182,730.

There was a "phantom" employee whom the charity "hired" and then paid for work not performed. It turned out later to be a relative of Brown's. At the time original charges were made against the trio the charity was empty.

Judge Corrigan, angry as he was at what he called the "brazen" abuse by Brown and her cohorts, decided to cut her a break. He allowed as how her 25 years of previous "service" counted for something, even though she, even at the last, refused to admit guilt over the scam. Said Corrigan, "She cannot be accorded the same sentencing consideration as someone who accepts responsibility for her wrongful action, expresses remorse and promises to make amends."

So, instead of throwing the book at her — at last count the 18 convictions carried a maximum sentence of 277 years — Corrigan sentenced her to just five years in federal prison. That assumes of course that she shows up after the holidays to begin serving her time.

Photo: AP Images

An Ivy League graduate and former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelmann@thenewamerican.com.

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