

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Middle District of Pennsylvania

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, July 11, 2022

**Camp Hill Attorney Sentenced For Obstructing A
Department Of Labor Investigation**

HARRISBURG- The United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Pennsylvania announced that Charles W. Johnston, age 75, of Fairfax County, VA, was sentenced on July 8, 2022, to 12 months' probation and a \$50,000 fine by United States District Court Judge Jennifer P. Wilson. Following a 4-day trial, Johnston was previously convicted in November 2021 of obstructing a United States Department of Labor (DOL) investigation regarding the administration of the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 520 Pension Plan.

According to United States Attorney Gerard M. Karam, Johnston maintained a law practice in Camp Hill, PA for over 40 years and served as legal counsel to the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 520 Health and Welfare, Pension, and Annuity Plans since 1972. In 2014, as the attorney for the Local 520 pension plan, Johnston handled the plan's response to a federal subpoena for records in connection with the DOL's investigation into the pension plan's financial activities.

During trial, the government presented evidence that Johnson intentionally concealed and withheld from DOL investigators emails, documents, and an internal audit concerning miscalculations of the Local 520's pension and health and welfare benefits. These incriminating documents, which the government established Johnston possessed and was aware of, revealed significant and material mismanagement of the pension fund, and their disclosure would have exposed the pension plan to further investigation. However, when asked by investigators whether all the requested documents had been produced, Johnson lied and stated he had done so.

"Like all attorneys, Charles Johnston began his career by swearing an oath to uphold the law. He ended that career decades later, by breaking it," said Jacqueline Maguire, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Philadelphia Division. "Interfering with a federal investigation is an attempt to subvert the course of justice. It's a serious crime, and doubly so for an officer of the court. The FBI and our partners don't allow people to work to undermine our cases. As this prosecution shows, doing so is an incredibly bad idea."

"As the attorney for the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 520 Health and Welfare, Pension and Annuity Plans, Charles W. Johnston Esq., unlawfully obstructed a U.S. Department of Labor, Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA) investigation by deliberately concealing subpoenaed documents. The U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General will continue to work with EBSA and our law enforcement partners to investigate those who attempt to obstruct the U.S. Department of Labor from protecting the integrity of labor unions and their affiliated benefit plans," said Syreeta Scott, Special Agent in Charge, Philadelphia Region, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

"The U.S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration is committed to ensuring the integrity of employee benefit programs and prosecuting those who fail to comply with

its investigative authority by obstructing an investigation,” said Cristina O’Brien, Acting Regional Director of EBSA’s Philadelphia Regional Office.

The case was investigated by the U.S Department of Labor Office of Inspector General (DOL-OIG) and Employee Benefits Security Administration (DOL-EBSA), along with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Assistant U.S. Attorneys Joseph Terz and Samuel Dalke prosecuted the case.

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Component(s):

USAO - Pennsylvania, Middle

Updated July 11, 2022