

**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Michigan

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, March 8, 2019

## **Former President of Union Local Sentenced for Embezzling More than \$300,000 in Union Funds**

Southfield resident Mervin E. Hawk, 59, the former president of Local 1640 of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), was sentenced yesterday for embezzling over \$300,000 in union funds, U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider announced.

Schneider was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge Timothy Slater of the Detroit, Michigan Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and by Irene Lindow, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

United States District Judge Gershwin Drain sentenced Hawk to serve a prison term of 30 months. Hawk was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$362,623 and, upon release from incarceration, to serve a three-year term of supervised release.

Hawk pleaded guilty on November 16, 2018 to one count of Embezzlement of Union Funds. According to court records, Hawk was the president of AFSCME Local 1640 in Detroit, Michigan from approximately 2013 through 2015. As president, Hawk had signatory authority on the Local's primary bank account. Hawk embezzled over \$100,000 from this account, diverting the great bulk of these funds into his personal bank account for his personal use. In addition, acting without authorization of the Local's Executive Board, Hawk opened two additional bank accounts in the name of AFSCME Local 1640. Hawk was the sole signor on these additional accounts. Over the course of his scheme, Hawk deposited some \$200,000 in union dues into these unauthorized accounts, and used these monies for his personal enrichment and enjoyment, including considerable expenditures at Detroit casinos. All told, Hawk willfully stole over \$300,000 in union monies, dues, and assets.

"Union leaders hold positions of trust and union members deserve honest representation," stated United States Attorney Matthew Schneider. "When leaders use their positions to line their pockets rather than represent their members, they should expect to face justice."

"Mervin Hawk abused his fiduciary position as the former President of AFSCME Local 1640 by embezzling over \$330,000 in union dues for personal gain. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to safeguard the assets of union members," stated Irene Lindow, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge, Chicago Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General.

This case was investigated by special agents from both the FBI and the DOL-OIG, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney John K. Neal and former Assistant United States Attorney Charles J. Kalil II.