

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Northern District of Illinois

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

Former Illinois State Senator Sentenced to a Year in Federal Prison for Fraudulently Receiving Salary and Benefits From Labor Union

CHICAGO — Former Illinois State Sen. THOMAS E. CULLERTON was sentenced today to a year in federal prison for fraudulently receiving salary and benefits from a labor union.

Cullerton, 52, of Villa Park, Ill., pleaded guilty earlier this year to a federal embezzlement charge. U.S. District Judge Robert W. Gettleman imposed the year-and-a-day sentence after a hearing in federal court in Chicago.

The sentence was announced by John R. Lausch, Jr., United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Emmerson Buie, Jr., Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Field Office of the FBI; and Irene Lindow, Special Agent-in-Charge of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Inspector General in Chicago. The government was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Amarjeet S. Bhachu and Erika L. Csicsila.

Cullerton was hired in 2013 by Teamsters Joint Council 25 as a purported union organizer and remained on the payroll until February 2016. In addition to receiving a salary, monthly car and telephone allowances, and bonuses, Teamsters Joint Council 25 funded Cullerton's participation in Teamsters Local Union 734's health and pension funds, which enabled Cullerton to receive health and welfare benefits.

Cullerton admitted in a plea agreement that he did little to no work as an organizer during the time he was on the union payroll. When his supervisors requested that he perform his job duties, Cullerton routinely ignored them.

Cullerton fraudulently obtained from Joint Council 25 and its members approximately \$169,488 in salary, bonuses, and other benefits, approximately \$57,662 in health and pension contributions, and approximately \$21,678 in reimbursed medical claims. Cullerton admitted that he used the embezzled money to pay personal expenses, such as his mortgage, utilities, and groceries.

Topic(s):
Public Corruption

Component(s):
[Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#)
[USAO - Illinois, Northern](#)