

U.S. Justice Department Says Corruption Charges against Senator Robert Menendez 'Clear and Unmistakable'



Washington, August 26 (RHC)-- The U.S. Justice Department has sharply rebuked Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey and his lawyers for seeking to have federal corruption charges against the Democrat dismissed.

U.S. government prosecutors presented new evidence on Monday in federal court in New Jersey in the corruption case against Menendez, the former chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The federal prosecutors said they had clear evidence of a bribery scheme in which Menendez accepted campaign contributions and other gifts from a wealthy eye doctor in Florida in exchange for performing political favors on his behalf.

Menendez was indicted in April for bribery, accused of accepting nearly \$1 million worth of gifts and campaign contributions from Florida ophthalmologist Salomon Melgen to promote Melgen's personal and business interests. Both men have sought to have the case against them dismissed and alleged misconduct in the investigation by federal prosecutors, prompting lawyers for the Justice Department to file a stinging rebuke in federal court in New Jersey.

"The defendants' motions are replete with so many factual inaccuracies and material misrepresentations that it is difficult to dismiss them as simply inadvertent," lawyers for the U.S. government wrote. "Perhaps most troubling, the defendants accuse the government of concealing evidence from the grand jury, while themselves concealing from the court evidence material to their allegations."

Last week, Menendez announced that he will vote against the Iran nuclear accord in Congress, becoming the second senator from President Barack Obama's own party to oppose the agreement.

The embattled senator is a strong backer of Israel and has been a leading lawmaker advocating for more sanctions on Iran if nuclear negotiations fail.

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