

# Former Wilmington City Council President Convicted of Official Misconduct

Attorney General Kathy Jennings announced Monday that the Division of Civil Rights & Public Trust (DCRPT) has convicted former Wilmington City Council President Theopalis Gregory for Official Misconduct.

“This conviction affirms that our state will not tolerate abusing public office and enriching oneself at the taxpayers’ expense,” said Attorney General Jennings. “Delawareans deserve integrity and, at the bare minimum, lawful behavior from their public officials. I’m grateful to the jury, and to our team in the Division of Civil Rights & Public Trust, for ensuring that those who abuse their power and influence to break the law are held to account. We put this case before the people, and the people spoke.”

Gregory was indicted in September 2019 after an investigation by the then-Office of Civil Rights and Public Trust found that he had used his position on City Council to secure a City grant that would enrich both himself and a non-profit that he founded. In October 2016, Gregory revived Students Disabilities Advocates, Inc. (SDA), a private entity he controlled, which had been dormant for 18 years.

Shortly after the 2016 election, Gregory is alleged to have told his successor, City Council President Hanifa Shabazz, that \$40,000 in City grant funds were earmarked for SDA, and to have repeatedly pressured Shabazz, while still in office, to grant the request after she was sworn in. Because SDA lacked non-profit status at the time, Gregory is further alleged to have used the Police Athletic League of Wilmington (PAL-W) as a pass-through for the funds.

One day after Mr. Gregory left office, PAL-W submitted a grant application, which was approved and signed by Shabazz in January 2017, requesting \$40,000 for SDA as a pilot program. The grant included in its budget a \$20,000 payment to Gregory, who publicly acknowledged receiving at least \$15,000 personally. Gregory also admitted to the Wilmington Ethics Commission in April 2019 that his actions violated the Wilmington City Code.

Gregory will be sentenced by a Superior Court judge at a date to be determined. Official Misconduct, a Class A Misdemeanor, carries a statutory sentence range of 0 to 1 years in prison and a presumptive sentence of up to 12 months Level I probation for first offenses. Deputy Attorney General David Skoranski secured the conviction.