



Former NY Union Leader Pleads Guilty

By LARRY NEUMEISTER – 11 hours ago
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NEW YORK (AP) — A seven-term Democratic state assemblyman and former president of the nation's largest municipal labor council pleaded guilty Friday to racketeering, admitting he took tens of thousands of dollars in kickbacks and forced union members to hang his Christmas lights.

Brian McLaughlin, 55, confessed in U.S. District Court in Manhattan to accepting the cash and personal services over a decade. He said he also used union money to pay personal expenses, including car payments and home improvements.

He will be imprisoned between 8 and 10 years as part of a plea deal with the government that will result in many of the other charges being dropped. Judge Richard J. Sullivan set sentencing for Sept. 12.

McLaughlin took 45 minutes to describe what he did that qualified him to plead guilty to racketeering and making false statements for crimes committed between 1995 and 2005.

McLaughlin remains free on \$250,000 bail, which was established after the government accused him of stealing more than \$2.2 million from the state, labor unions and even a Little League fund.

The admissions may result in forfeiture of \$2.2 million in illicit proceeds and a residence on Long Island.

The million-member New York City Central Labor Council that McLaughlin once oversaw is an umbrella group of unions that has supported Mayor Michael Bloomberg.