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**U.S. INDICTMENT ALLEGES FORMER IDOC DIRECTOR PAID \$50,000 IN
KICKBACKS BY TWO LOBBYISTS REPRESENTING STATE PRISON VENDORS**

CHICAGO – A former Director of the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), who allegedly received approximately \$50,000 in illegal kickbacks, and two lobbyists accused of paying him the kickbacks while representing vendors that had multi-million-dollar contracts with the state prison agency, were indicted today on federal charges. The defendants, **Donald N. Snyder, Jr.**, who was IDOC director from 1999 until early 2003, and lobbyists **John J. Robinson**, a former Undersheriff of Cook County, and **Larry E. Sims** were charged in a six-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury, announced Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois.

Snyder, 52, of downstate Pittsfield, Il., allegedly received the kickbacks while he served in the state cabinet during the administration of former Gov. George Ryan. Today's indictment stems from an investigation that grew out of the *Operation Safe Road* probe of corruption during Ryan's terms as Governor and, earlier, Secretary of State. Snyder, who was appointed by Ryan, had approval

authority over the award of millions of dollars in contracts to vendors, including health care providers, who provided inmate health care services in IDOC institutions.

Robinson, 59, of Barrington Hills, who was Undersheriff of Cook County from 1991 until 2001, also worked between 1996 and 2003 as a paid consultant/lobbyist for several vendors and/or institutions seeking to promote and develop their business with IDOC. Robinson formed J. Patrick Noll (JPN), which developed and promoted correctional business on behalf of clients, including Vendor A, an Illinois health care company that was awarded millions of dollars in contracts to provide health care services at Illinois prisons during Snyder's tenure at IDOC. Under a 1996 contract with Vendor A, JPN was initially paid \$2,500 a month, plus five percent of Vendor A's income from Illinois corrections contracts, with a provision that the monthly retainer would rise to \$4,500 a month when Vendor A's Illinois prisons contracts exceeded \$4 million, the indictment states.

Sims, 58, of Pleasant Plains, Il., near Springfield, was a lobbyist for several vendors, including Vendor B, a Pennsylvania health care company that was trying to promote and develop its corrections business and was awarded millions of dollars in contracts to provide healthcare services to IDOC inmates during Snyder's tenure.

Snyder and Robinson were each charged with five counts of mail fraud, and Sims was charged with one count of perjury for allegedly lying to a grand jury during the investigation. The indictment also seeks forfeiture of \$50,000 from Snyder. All three defendants will be arraigned at a later date in U.S. District Court in Chicago.

“As a top state official, Mr. Snyder was bound by various rules governing his acceptance of gifts or favors of any kind. He was forbidden from receiving cash kickbacks from anyone, much less

from lobbyists representing companies doing millions of dollars in business with IDOC,” Mr. Fitzgerald said. “The indictment alleges that he brazenly violated the duty he owed to the state and its citizens to perform his job honestly.”

Mr. Fitzgerald announced the charges with Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Thomas P. Brady, Postal Inspector-in-Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service; Alvin Patton, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division; and Michelle McVicker, Special Agent-in-Charge of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General, all in Chicago.

According to the indictment, Robinson and Sims were involved in separate kickback deals with Snyder, but in both instances – in consideration for the cash payments – Snyder allegedly gave each of them information and assistance on issues and concerns they raised on behalf of their various vendor clients. To conceal the scheme, Snyder allegedly filed false Statements of Economic Interest with the state, failing to disclose the cash payments he received from Robinson and Sims, and Sims allegedly filed false lobbyist registration statements, failing to disclose any of the money he paid to Snyder. All three allegedly lied to federal agents investigating whether Robinson and Sims had given anything of value to Snyder.

Regarding the payments by Sims to Snyder, the indictment alleges that in late 1999 or early 2000, Snyder and Sims discussed the compensation that Sims received from Vendor B, and Sims agreed to pay Snyder a portion of the monthly fee that Sims received from that client. Beginning in early 2000 and continuing until approximately the end of 2002, Sims gave cash to Snyder each month, totaling approximately \$30,000, after Sims received his monthly fee from Vendor B.

Regarding the payments by Robinson to Snyder, the indictment alleges that in late 1999 or early 2000, Snyder agreed to accept cash derived from the consulting or lobbying fees that Robinson earned from their representation of one or more vendors doing business with IDOC. From early 2000 until December 2002, Robinson allegedly paid kickbacks to Snyder totaling approximately \$20,000, which amounted to about one-fourth of the monthly fees that Robinson's company, JPN, received from Vendor A. Robinson paid Snyder periodically when they met at various corrections-related meetings or events, the indictment alleges.

The perjury count against Sims alleges that on May 5, 2005, he lied when he testified before a grand jury that he never gave Snyder any cash gifts, and that he could not remember if he ever gave Snyder any gifts at all other than a Green Bay Packers sweatshirt on one occasion. Sims, in fact, had given Snyder cash kickbacks derived from lobbying fees that Sims received from Vendor B.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Joel Levin and Laurie Barsella.

If convicted, Snyder and Robinson each face a maximum penalty of five years in prison on one count of mail fraud and 20 years in prison on each of the other four counts of mail fraud, and Sims faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison if convicted of perjury. All three defendants also face a maximum fine of \$250,000 on each count. The Court, however, would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed under the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The public is reminded that an indictment contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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