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### **Former Homestead Mayor loses appeal of corruption case**

The Third District Court of Appeals of Florida today upheld the conviction of former Homestead Mayor Steve Bateman, who was charged with unlawful compensation and illegal lobbying.

The case stemmed from a joint investigation by the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust and the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office into a business consulting agreement Bateman made with Community Health of South Florida (CHI) in 2012 to help with a pump station permit approval while he was mayor of the South Miami-Dade municipality.

After Bateman was hired by CHI, he frequently consulted with Homestead's public works director to discuss the status of the pump station in his capacity as mayor, but did not disclose he was also acting as a consultant for CHI on that project. Bateman's problems escalated when he arranged and attended meetings with the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Deputy Mayor. He expressed concern that the Department of Environmental Resources Management was delaying approving and issuing the needed permits and requested to expedite the permitting process. During those interactions, Bateman presented himself as making the request in his capacity as Mayor of Homestead and did not disclose his contractual relationship with CHI nor did he register as a lobbyist for the firm, despite being legally required to do so. Bateman then billed CHI for eight hours, representing the two meetings with the county leaders and for meeting with the Homestead city engineer to prepare for the county meeting. Two days later, he billed CHI for six hours representing a phone conference with the County Deputy Mayor and the Homestead city engineer.

Bateman was originally sentenced to 22 months in Florida State prison on the Unlawful Compensation count with a 60 day concurrent sentence on the unregistered lobbying charge and was out on bond pending the appeal. The case was tried by Assistant State Attorney Isis Perez.

*The Ethics Commission was created in 1996 as an independent agency with advisory and quasi-judicial powers. It is composed of five members, serving staggered terms of four years each. Through a program of education and outreach, the Commission seeks to empower the community and bolster public trust.*

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