

More Details On Patrick Cannon Guilty Plea To Corruption

By Administrator
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RALEIGH, (SGRToday.com) - The Associated Press has moved the following story about Tuesday's guilty plea from the former Democratic mayor of Charlotte, Patrick Cannon.

CHARLOTTE, (AP) — Former Charlotte Mayor Patrick Cannon pleaded guilty Tuesday to a public corruption charge, ending a remarkable rise for a man raised by a single mother in one of the city's poorest neighborhoods.

Cannon's guilty plea was on a single count of honest services wire fraud, which carries a sentence of up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. An FBI sting recorded him accepting thousands of dollars in cash and airline tickets from undercover agents posing as businessmen, according to court documents.

"Yes, sir, your honor, I am," Cannon, 47, told U.S. Magistrate Judge David Cayer when asked whether he was guilty.

Cayer asked whether Cannon understood the potential sentence of 20 years. Cannon replied, "Yes, sir, your honor, I do."

Cayer accepted the guilty plea, and Cannon left the courthouse free on bond. A sentencing date will be set at a later hearing before a U.S. district court judge. Prosecutors said Cannon's continued release would help promote further cooperation with the ongoing FBI investigation.

"I am deeply sorry. I love Charlotte. It is the city of my birth," Cayer said in prepared remarks before a bank of TV cameras after the federal courthouse. "Today I have acknowledged being guilty of accepting monies for constituent services, something that should never have been done while serving in elected office."

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Cannon was arrested March 26. The Democrat resigned the same day, less than six months after taking office. The investigation began in August 2010 after a tip from a local undercover officer about public corruption. At the time, Cannon was a city councilman.

Cannon was first elected to the City Council in 1993 and became mayor in November, replacing Anthony Foxx, who was named transportation secretary by President Obama. Cannon also started his own company that manages 25,000 parking spaces, most of them in the city's central business district.

According to the federal criminal complaint, Cannon accepted more than \$48,000 in cash, airline tickets, a hotel room and the use of a luxury apartment from FBI agents posing as real estate developers who wanted to do work with North Carolina's largest city. Cannon also is accused of soliciting up to \$1 million more in bribes from the undercover agents.