

Reid Collins & Tsai Wins "Not Guilty" Verdict In Bribery Case Against Former SAISD Trustee

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Reid Collins Tsai LLP, an Austin-based law firm, is proud to announce that they have won a "not guilty" verdict in the bribery case against a former San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) trustee. William T. Reid IV, a former federal prosecutor, defended Mrs. Olga Hernandez in this case and did so on a pro bono basis. This was due to the fact that he was disturbed by the way she had been treated by the government. In fact, he compared Mrs. Hernandez to Muhammad Ali for her refusal to plead guilty and cooperate with the prosecutors, as SAISD consultant William Haff and former Mullen employee Joshua Cerna did.

Attorney William T. Reid IV remarked, "When the government does wrong, we the citizens need to stand up and that's what this jury did today."

In their case, the FBI and prosecutor alleged that Mrs. Hernandez accepted lavish gifts in return for her influencing the SAISD to vote for contracts in favor of insurance broker Samuel Mullen. Indeed, Mrs. Hernandez pointed out that the FBI and prosecutor encouraged Haff and Cerna to cooperate with them and to secretly record conversations to show that Mrs. Hernandez accepted the gifts. However, Reid was able to demonstrate that, while Mrs. Hernandez did indeed accept the gifts, she did so out of friendship.

The allegation was that the gifts were provided to Mrs. Hernandez as a bribe from the insurance broker, so that Mullen could win contracts from the school district. However, Mrs. Hernandez argued that she and her husband were friends with the brokers. She also stated that whenever she believed anything needed to be reported to the school board, she would do so. Reid explained that the FBI had tried to trap Mrs. Hernandez by providing a James Avery gift card worth \$500, which Cerna gave to her. Reid pointed out that Hernandez accepted the gift card because she thought it was for being a witness of Cerna renewing his vows with his wife. Furthermore, whenever Hernandez voted in favor of the Mullen Group, it was because of recommendations from the SAISD risk manager.

"There's no proof that she rigged a single thing. She fell victim and thought she was really friends with these people," explains Reid of Reid Collins & Tsai.

The case was tried by jury, and they deliberated for five hours. The jury requested clarification on several issues during their deliberations. Eventually, they returned a "not guilty" verdict. The court room erupted in congratulations and Mrs. Hernandez hugged her attorney immediately. She remarked, "I was just happy to give my side of the story, and that the jury believed it, because there was a lot said on the other side that was not true. I was never bribed."

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Reid Collins & Tsai represents corporations, hedge funds, offshore liquidators, trustees, and individuals to resolve complex commercial disputes nationally and internationally.

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