



U.S. NEWS

Former US Sen. Bob Menendez gets 11 years in prison for taking bribes and acting as agent of Egypt

1 of 16 | Former U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez was sentenced to 11 years in prison for his conviction for accepting bribes of gold and cash and acting as an agent of Egypt. Menendez said he plans to appeal. (AP video: Joseph Frederick,

BY LARRY NEUMEISTER AND [MICHAEL R. SISAK](#)

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NEW YORK (AP) — Former U.S. Sen. [Bob Menendez](#) was sentenced Wednesday to 11 years in prison for accepting bribes of gold and cash and acting as an agent of Egypt — crimes his lawyer said he's been mocked for as "Gold Bar Bob."

The judge delivered the sentence after Menendez tearfully addressed the court, saying he'd lost everything he cared about, except his family. The Democrat resigned last year after becoming one of only a handful of U.S. senators ever convicted while in office.

"You were successful, powerful, you stood at the apex of our political system," U.S. District Judge Sidney H. Stein told Menendez in a packed Manhattan courtroom. "Somewhere along the way, and I don't know when it was, you lost your way and working for the public good became working for your good."

The ex-senator was convicted of [selling his once-considerable clout](#) for bribes worth a fortune. FBI agents who searched his house found \$480,000, some of it stuffed inside boots and pockets of clothing, and gold bars worth an estimated \$150,000.

Prosecutors said that in exchange for the loot, which also included a luxury car, Menendez did corrupt favors for three New Jersey businessmen. They said he tried to protect associates from criminal investigations, helped two of them in business deals with foreign powers, and also met with Egyptian intelligence officials and took steps to help that country access millions of dollars in U.S. military aid.

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Prosecutors seek 15 years in prison for former New Jersey Sen. Bob Menendez after bribery conviction



"What's been the result?" Stein said. "You lost your senate seat. You lost your chairmanship and you lost your good name."

Menendez, 71, portrayed himself to the judge as a sympathetic figure, stressing his decades of public service and declaring that he was chastened by the experience. Afterward, talking to reporters with TV cameras and microphones outside, he turned defiant.

"I am innocent," he proclaimed, vowing to appeal.

Menendez, who beat [a prosecution in another corruption case a decade ago](#), aligned himself with President Donald Trump's recent criticisms of the judicial system, particularly in New York City.

"This process is political and it's corrupted to the core. I hope President Trump cleans up the cesspool and restores the integrity to the system," Menendez said, reading from a sheet of paper.

The judge ordered him to report to prison June 6.

New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy, a Democrat, said that despite Menendez's accomplishments, "he will be remembered for putting his own interests and financial gain ahead of the public interest." Menendez's successor, Democratic U.S. Sen. Andy Kim, said the sentencing is a reminder that nobody should be above the law, "no matter your title or the power you hold."

Two of the men convicted of bribing Menendez also got substantial prison terms Wednesday. The judge sentenced real estate developer Fred Daibes to seven years in prison. Wael Hana, an entrepreneur, was sentenced to eight years.

Daibes, 67, tearfully told Stein his conviction had left him "borderline suicidal." Hana professed that he was innocent.

A third businessman pleaded guilty and [testified against Menendez](#) at a trial last year. Menendez' wife, Nadine, faces a March trial on many of the same charges.

A dozen U.S. senators have been indicted while in office, but only four before Menendez were convicted and had those convictions stand up on appeal.

Menendez resigned last August, a month after his conviction, but he'd been sapped of his power by then. After he was charged in 2023, he was forced to surrender his powerful post as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

His trial traced his dealings with Egyptian officials and his quest to aid three men who showered him with lucrative gifts found during a 2022 raid on his home in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

Prosecutor Paul Monteleoni said Menendez committed a "truly grave breach of the trust" by serving

Egypt's interests as he worked to protect a meat certification monopoly Hana had established with the Egyptian government.

"His time in the Senate was a privilege. It should have been its own reward — or would have been if he wasn't corrupt," Monteleoni said.

Among other things, Menendez provided Egyptian officials with information about U.S. Embassy staff in Cairo and ghostwrote a letter to senators encouraging them to lift a hold on \$300 million in military aid to Egypt.

For other bribes, prosecutors said, Menendez attempted to persuade a federal prosecutor in New Jersey to go easy on Daibes, a politically influential real estate developer accused of bank fraud.

Businessman Jose Uribe testified that he helped Nadine Menendez get a Mercedes-Benz convertible after the senator sought to pressure state prosecutors to drop criminal probes of his associates.

Menendez has insisted that his interactions with Egyptian officials were normal for the head of the Foreign Relations Committee and that he always put American interests first. He denied taking any bribes and said the gold bars belonged to his wife.

"Your honor, I am far from a perfect man. I have made more than my share of mistakes and bad decisions," Menendez told the judge. "I've done far more good than bad. I ask you, your honor, to judge me in that context."

Stein said he took Menendez's public service, age and health into consideration when deciding his punishment, which could have been as much as 24 to 30 years in prison under sentencing guidelines.

Menendez's lawyers described how the son of Cuban immigrants emerged from poverty and the trauma of his father's suicide when he was 23 to become "the epitome of the American Dream" — rising from mayor of Union City, New Jersey, to decades in Congress — before his conviction "rendered him a national punchline."

"Despite his decades of service, he is now known more widely as Gold Bar Bob," defense lawyer Adam Fee told the judge.



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