



U.S. Department of Justice

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**FORMER BROOKLYN ASSEMBLYWOMAN SENTENCED TO PRISON  
FOR MULTIPLE FRAUD SCHEMES AND WITNESS TAMPERING**

***Pamela Harris Defrauded Government Agencies out of Tens of Thousands of  
Dollars and Obstructed Justice***

Former New York State Assemblywoman Pamela Harris was sentenced today by United States District Judge Jack B. Weinstein in federal court in Brooklyn to six months in prison and 400 hours of community service following her conviction for two counts of wire fraud, one count of disaster relief fraud and one count of witness tampering. As part of the sentence, the Court imposed restitution of \$70,400 and forfeiture of \$10,000. Harris was arrested on January 9, 2018, resigned from the New York State Assembly on April 2, 2018 and pleaded guilty on June 12, 2018.

Richard P. Donoghue, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, William F. Sweeney, Jr., Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI), and Mark G. Peters, Commissioner, New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced the sentence.

“With today’s sentence, Pamela Harris has been held responsible for stealing tens of thousands of dollars in government funds set aside for underserved children and funds allocated for victims of Hurricane Sandy, as well as lying and presenting fraudulent documents to the FBI when her crimes were uncovered,” stated United States Attorney Donoghue. “She committed these fraudulent acts both before and while she served as a New York State Assemblywoman in Brooklyn, betraying the trust placed in her by her constituents. This Office, together with our law enforcement partners, will continue to hold accountable corrupt public officials who act as if they are above the law.”

“Today, this onetime state Assemblywoman, convicted of using the disaster of Superstorm Sandy for personal profit, was held to account for her crimes with a decisive price – prison,” stated DOI Commissioner Peters. “Her illegal conduct exemplifies the term, ‘corrupt politician,’ claiming to be a public servant while she stole from disaster relief funds intended to

assist victims of Hurricane Sandy, some of whom were constituents in her district trying to recover from the storm. This type of corruption is what saps public confidence in government. Today's sentencing offers a measure of justice. DOI is gratified to have worked with the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York and the FBI on this successful investigation and prosecution."

According to the indictment, court filings and facts presented during the sentencing hearing, between 2012 and 2017, Harris defrauded the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the New York City Council (NYC Council), among other entities, of tens of thousands of dollars, and then pressured witnesses to lie to FBI agents who were conducting the grand jury investigation into her fraud schemes.

Between 2012 and 2014, Harris defrauded FEMA out of nearly \$25,000 in temporary relocation funds by falsely claiming that she had been forced out of her Coney Island residence because of damage caused by Hurricane Sandy. In furtherance of the scheme, she claimed that she was paying rent in Staten Island and submitted fake lease agreements and fraudulent rent payment receipts to FEMA. In reality, Harris continued to live at her Coney Island residence and pocketed the FEMA payments for her own benefit. Harris subsequently made similar misrepresentations to other organizations providing hurricane relief funds, including New York City's Build it Back Agency.

Between August 2014 and January 2017—both before and while she served as a New York State Assemblywoman—Harris defrauded the New York City Council of \$45,600 in discretionary funding allocated to Coney Island Generation Gap (CIGG), a not-for-profit organization that she controlled. Harris falsely represented that she intended to use the funds to pay for rental space and to provide cash stipends to adolescents who participated in CIGG programs. In support of these claims, she submitted fraudulent lease agreements containing forged signatures and fraudulent sign-in sheets with forged signatures of the adolescents. When CIGG received the funds, Harris diverted them to her own bank account and used them to pay her personal expenses. Harris also misappropriated CIGG's money from its bank accounts to fund her purchase of a sauna and a hot tub and to make mortgage payments on her residence.

Between March 2017 and September 2017, as the investigation into her fraudulent conduct progressed, Harris obstructed the investigation, including by pressuring close family members and a CIGG associate to lie to the FBI and destroy evidence.

The government's case is being handled by the Office's Public Integrity Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Erik Paulsen and Robert Polemeni are in charge of the prosecution.

**The Defendant:**

PAMELA HARRIS  
Age: 57  
Brooklyn New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 18-CR-11 (JBW)