

ARKANSAS BLOG

Jon Woods' attorney says he's innocent and will fight charges

by Max Brantley

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A statement from former **Sen. Jon Woods'** attorney strongly disputes his guilt in **Thursday's indictment** and says he will fight the charges.

Woods and two friends were charged with mail and wire fraud for a scheme to profit from state money sent to nonprofit agencies through a public economic development agency.

It said Woods' work to send money to nonprofits including **Ecclesia College** followed standard grant procedures and said Woods would "never abuse the trust and position given to him by his constituents."

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This would seem to end the speculation that Woods' indictment was delayed following former legislative colleague **Micah Neal's guilty plea** because he was providing additional cooperation to the government.

The letter:

Friday, March 03, 2017

Re: United States v. Jonathan E. Woods

For Immediate Release

Today attorney for Senator Jon Woods, Patrick Benca of Benca & Benca, stated that “Senator Woods is innocent of any wrong doing. I had faith that the investigating agencies would draw the correct conclusion that Senator Woods has committed no crime. Unfortunately, the indictment combines and selects unrelated events and conversations in an attempt to connect dots that are not linked and portrays standard grant request procedures, followed by all legislators, as somehow unique and illicit. Where evidence does not exist, gross assumptions have been inserted to weave a narrative that ensures a biased, slanted, and misrepresented ending. Senator Woods would never abuse the trust and position given to him by his constituents. I am confident that once all of the facts are presented to a jury of Senator Woods’ peers that he will be found innocent of all charges brought against him.” Senator Woods is represented by attorneys Patrick Benca, John Kennedy, and Jessica Duncan-Johnston of Little Rock.

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