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FORMER PRESIDENT OF TRANSIT UNION LOCAL
1181 PLEADS GUILTY TO RACKETEERING

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that SALVATORE BATTAGLIA, a/k/a "Hotdogs," former President of Local 1181 of the Amalgamated Transit Union ("Local 1181"), pleaded guilty today to racketeering, based on the extortion of two bus company owners whose employees were members of the union and a third bus company owner whose employees were not union members. BATTAGLIA pleaded guilty before United States Magistrate Judge ANDREW J. PECK in Manhattan federal court. According to the Indictment to which BATTAGLIA pleaded guilty and other documents filed in the case:

From approximately 2002 to 2006, BATTAGLIA was President of Local 1181 -- a union that represents approximately 15,000 school bus drivers and school bus escorts who work for companies that contract with the New York Department of Education to provide school bus transportation to public schools throughout New York City.

The Genovese Organized Crime Family of La Cosa Nostra ("LCN") has influenced and controlled Local 1181 since the 1970s, and BATTAGLIA was proposed for membership in the Genovese Organized Crime Family in 2000. BATTAGLIA collected and received illegal payments of tens of thousands of dollars from bus company owners and operators whose employees were members of Local 1181, using both his union status and his organized crime status to induce payment.

During the guilty plea before United States Magistrate Judge PECK, BATTAGLIA admitted that, as President of Local 1181, he engaged in a pattern of racketeering activity including extorting three different bus company owners whose employees were members of the union. The Government and BATTAGLIA agreed that the applicable advisory Sentencing Guidelines range is 57 to 71

months' imprisonment. Neither the agreement nor the range is binding on the sentencing Judge.

The Indictment against BATTAGLIA was the product of a long-term investigation, and charged a total of twenty defendants -- all of whom were named as members or associates of the Genovese Organized Crime Family or of other LCN crime families -- with wide-ranging racketeering crimes and other offenses spanning more than a decade, including extortion, labor racketeering, loansharking, illegal gambling, and obstruction of justice. BATTAGLIA is the third high-ranking union official to be convicted for crimes committed during their times in office. On August 31, 2006, JULIUS BERNSTEIN, a/k/a "Spike" -- who was an employee and officer of Local 1181 for over 30 years, during which time he rose to the position of Secretary/Treasurer -- pleaded guilty to participating in the affairs of the Genovese Organized Crime Family from the 1950s to 2006, and committing crimes during that period including labor racketeering, extortion, robbery, gambling, and obstruction of justice. On August 11, 2006, ANNE CHIAROVANO -- an employee of Local 1181 for over 40 years, during which time she rose to the position of Director of the Employees' Pension and Welfare Fund -- pleaded guilty to the obstruction of the FBI's investigation into the connection between Local 1181 and the Genovese Organized Crime Family.

BATTAGLIA faces a maximum sentence of twenty years' imprisonment. Sentencing is scheduled for May 16, 2008 at 11:00 a.m. before United States District Chief Judge KIMBA M. WOOD.

Mr. GARCIA praised the efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the New York City Police Department; the United States Department of Labor, Office of Labor Management Standards; the United States Department of Labor, Office of the Inspector General; and the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District.

Assistant United States Attorneys BENJAMIN GRUENSTEIN and ELIE HONIG are in charge of the prosecution.

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