

Supreme Court Reverses “Bridgegate” Convictions, Clarifies Meaning of “Property” Under Federal Fraud Statutes

May 11, 2020 | Client Update

On May 7, 2020, the Supreme Court in *Kelly v. United States* reversed the convictions of two former New Jersey officials charged with fraud after closing lanes of the George Washington Bridge to punish the mayor of Fort Lee, New Jersey for refusing to endorse then-governor Chris Christie’s reelection campaign. News of the scheme resulted in a political scandal known as “Bridgegate.” The Court’s unanimous opinion, written by Justice Elena Kagan, acknowledges that while the defendants’ actions may have involved deception, corruption, and abuse of power, their aim was not to obtain money or property as required by federal fraud laws. This decision continues a recent trend narrowing the ability of federal law enforcement to prosecute political corruption, and may have implications for other fraud cases in which the definition of property in the hands of the government is at issue.

If you have any questions regarding the matters covered in this publication, please reach out to any of the lawyers listed below or your usual Davis Polk contact.

Greg D. Andres

+1 212 450 4724
greg.andres@davispolk.com

Martine M. Beamon

+1 212 450 4262
martine.beamon@davispolk.com

Angela T. Burgess

+1 212 450 4885
angela.burgess@davispolk.com

Neil H. MacBride

+1 202 962 7035
neil.macbride@davispolk.com

Tatiana R. Martins

+1 212 450 4085
tatiana.martins@davispolk.com

Fiona R. Moran

+1 202 962 7137
fiona.moran@davispolk.com

Paul J. Nathanson

+1 202 962 7055
+1 212 450 3133
paul.nathanson@davispolk.com

Linda Chatman Thomsen

+1 202 962 7125
linda.thomsen@davispolk.com

This communication, which we believe may be of interest to our clients and friends of the firm, is for general information only. It is not a full analysis of the matters presented and should not be relied upon as legal advice. This may be considered attorney advertising in some jurisdictions. Please refer to the firm's privacy notice for further details.

Related materials

[Read the full update](#)