



M U L T I S T A T E

**Nicholas Kantas, who married into powerhouse lobbyist family, runs for judge with help from lobbyists** (Cook County, IL)

Attorney Nicholas Kantas' father-in-law, recently retired Illinois lobbyist Al Ronan, isn't helping him in his race for Cook County judge, according to Kantas' campaign.

But Kantas is getting assistance from other clout-heavy lobbyists, including his wife Maren Ronan, who's Al Ronan's daughter and helping Kantas knock on doors to reach voters.

Several other powerhouse political lobbyists have given money to Kantas ahead of the June 28 Democratic primary. Among the lobbyist contributors in recent months:

- CapitolHall Partners LLC, which gave him \$1,000 in April. Based in Chicago and run by Margaret Houlihan Smith, the firm lobbies for clients including Accel Entertainment LLC, one of the biggest video gambling companies in Illinois, and ComEd, which is ensnared in a racketeering case involving former Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan.

"Maren is one of my dearest friends," Smith says. "She's actually my roommate in Springfield. I've known her probably for 30 years, and I think the world of her. That's why I'm supporting them. It's personal friendship."

She says Kantas is well qualified. "We need more people like him," Smith says.

- Springfield lobbyist Julie Curry, who gave Kantas \$1,000 in April. Her Curry & Associates, LLC, is a lobbyist for a real estate company run by Rick Heidner, a video poker magnate. In 2019, the FBI went looking for "items related to" Heidner when it served a [search warrant](#) in a raid of then-state Sen. Martin Sandoval's Springfield office as part of a political corruption investigation. Authorities later said Heidner wasn't a target of the investigation.

Curry's firm has a contractual relationship with Maren Ronan's lobbying firm, Maren Ronan Ltd., which is based in Western Springs.

Curry says Kantas and his wife are “personal friends.”

- Heather Vaught, who gave Kantas’ campaign \$1,000 in January. Clients of her La Grange lobbying company Heather Wier Vaught, P.C., include the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America and the Sports Betting Alliance, records show.

Vaught, who’s a lawyer, handled legal work for Madigan while he was speaker and as aides in his political and government operations were facing sexual harassment accusations.

“I’ve been friends with Maren Ronan for 20 years,” Vaught says. “We went to law school together. Nobody even asked me to give money.”

Kantas — who’s running in a judicial district that stretches from the northwest to the southwest suburbs — also is relying on Berwyn attorney Michael Del Galdo, a Madigan ally and former Madigan political fundraiser, for his campaign. Del Galdo is listed as having provided \$2,285 in legal services to Kantas’ campaign, according to Illinois State Board of Elections records.

Kantas says of Del Galdo’s role: “Mike’s been helpful in parts of the campaign. He’s not doing anything on a day-to-day basis. I’m running the campaign.”

Del Galdo also is working to help [ShawnTe Raines-Welch](#) win another judicial seat in the same district. She’s married to Illinois House Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch, a Madigan ally who succeeded him in the powerful post.

Kantas, 43, lives in Western Springs and is a supervising prosecutor in Cook County State’s Attorney Kim Foxx’s office.

His opponent on the primary ballot, Amanda Pillsbury, also is a prosecutor under Foxx.

The Lyons Township Democratic Organization, run by Bridgeview Mayor Steve Landek, helped throw a fundraiser for Kantas in Hickory Hills, records show. Landek, who also is a state senator, is a longtime ally of Madigan, who stepped down from the Illinois House in 2021 after being linked to the ComEd scandal.

Al Ronan’s former lobbying firm was closed after the business pleaded guilty to charges in a bid-rigging case in the early 2000s. He opened another firm but says he’s now retired.

Maren Ronan's lobbying company has taken over many of her father's most recent lobbying clients, including one of the major players in the red-light camera industry.

"I haven't done anything on the campaign" for Kantas "because I had a stroke almost a year ago," Al Ronan says. "So you know what? I wish him the best, I know how hard he's working."

Kantas says his wife isn't raising money for his campaign.

"She's helping me go door to door and reaching out to voters," he says.

He says he's getting campaign contributions based on "my experience and my qualifications."

### **[Campaign finance regulators withdraw \\$56,600 fine levied against Anchorage Rep. Tuck](#)** (Alaska)

Alaska's campaign finance agency has withdrawn a \$56,500 fine it had imposed on Anchorage Democratic Rep. Chris Tuck, saying he showed that the 2020 campaign contribution the agency alleged was late-reported was actually made outside of a required reporting window.

"The previously assessed penalty is withdrawn, and no action will be taken by the Alaska Public Offices Commission," the agency said in a letter last week that Tuck shared with the Daily News.

Tuck announced last week that he was not seeking reelection. The state redistricting board had placed him in a new district with another Anchorage Democratic representative, Andy Josephson, and the two said they did not want to run against each other.

Tuck had said he was leaving the Legislature to spend more time with his daughter.

The campaign finance agency had alleged that Tuck had failed to report a contribution within a 24-hour window as required by state law if a donation arrives within nine days before an election. Tuck subsequently showed that the donation in question was actually received before the 24-hour reporting window and disclosed in a previous campaign finance report, the commission said in its letter last week.

### **[A Year Of Embarrassing Scandal May Help Hawaii Finally Reform Campaign Finance](#)** (Hawaii)

In the opening months of this election year, Hawaii voters witnessed the outrageous spectacle of two influential state lawmakers pleading guilty in a corruption scandal that seemed to confirm everyone's worst suspicions about "pay to play" in local politics.

The convictions of former Senate Democratic Majority Leader J. Kalani English and Rep. Ty Cullen centered on their relationship with [a prolific campaign contributor named Milton Choy](#), who has showered local political leaders with legal donations for years. In this case, Choy also paid cash bribes to English and Cullen to influence legislation, according to court records.

Anger at that sort of misconduct by elected officials historically has triggered backlash and reform, such as the federal reforms that followed the Watergate scandal in 1972. At least two Democratic candidates for governor think Hawaii may be at that kind of political pivot point.

U.S. Rep. Kai Kahele and businesswoman [Vicky Cayetano](#) are both offering up specific proposals for reforming the state campaign finance system.

Lt. Gov. Josh Green, who has [raised the most money](#) by far of any gubernatorial candidate this year, has not provided any specific proposals for campaign finance reform. However, he said in a written statement he has "always supported common sense campaign finance reform including public financing of campaigns."

Kahele, who entered the race for governor last month proclaiming that "[Hawaii is not for sale](#)," says he wants to expand public financing of campaigns, reduce the maximum amounts individuals can donate to candidates, and ban outright donations from corporations and unions.

The Kahele campaign is only accepting donations of \$100 or less, and longtime political observers say he is making campaign finance reform more central to his run for governor than any major candidate for that office in state history. Kahele says he is gambling his political future on the idea that Hawaii is ready for change.

"In my opinion, publicly funded elections is the reform that makes all other reforms possible," Kahele said. He points out public campaign financing was once considered so important that it was written into the Hawaii State Constitution in 1978, but major candidates rarely rely on public financing today.

"I realized that if I was going to try and do something big and bold and take this state in a new direction, this had to be it," he said.

Sandy Ma, executive director of Common Cause Hawaii, said the organization is not endorsing Kahele's bid for governor.

"These are all great ideas, how to get there?" she said. "The proof is in the pudding, how is he going to get there?"

Some political insiders say the voters are far more worried this year about the price of rice and gasoline than obscure details of how politicians finance their campaigns. Some accuse him of pandering to win over voters.

Critics also point out Kahele [raised plenty of money](#) himself from big political donors in past election cycles, behaving exactly the way he now criticizes others for doing.

Kahele acknowledged that history, admitting "I was part of the problem." He helped his father, the late state Sen. Gil Kahele raise money, and also solicited cash for his own campaigns. He barely knew anything about public financing, he said.

But when he arrived in Washington, D.C. as a congressman, Kahele said he saw "how money is such a toxic influencer of campaigns, and just D.C. in general." He also watched the humiliating saga back home play out around Cullen and English, who were Kahele's former colleagues and friends.

### *Kahele's Ideas*

Kahele has said his "first and foremost" proposal is to dramatically reduce how much money individual donors are allowed to contribute to candidates. He believes that change will steer more candidates into public funding, and give ordinary voters more of a voice.

For example, Kahele proposes to reduce the maximum donation that can be made to a candidate for Hawaii governor in each four-year cycle from \$6,000 to \$750 for candidates who decline public funding. Candidates who accept public funding would be eligible to receive contributions of up to \$1,500 per donor for every four-year cycle.

Aaron McKean, legal counsel for state and local issues at the Campaign Legal Center, said various states impose [various limits](#) on campaign contributions, and the maximum contributions for candidates in Hawaii could certainly be reduced if the state chose to do so.

As for Kahele's idea of banning direct contributions from corporations and unions to candidates, experts said such a ban is already in place at the federal level, and can also be adopted by the

states. However, unions and corporations would still be free to donate money to political action committees to support their favored candidates.

As for public funding, Kahele also wants to “supercharge” the state’s existing public funding system. He is proposing the state offer an 8-to-1 match for each small donation of less than \$100 that participating candidates receive. As an example, a \$25 private donation would be matched by \$200 in public funding, making small donations more significant.

Currently candidates who accept public funding receive only a 1-to-1 match for small donations of less than \$100, up to a ceiling that is set for each race. The maximum public funding available to any candidate for governor is now \$208,117 for the primary election, and the same amount for the general election.

Kahele says he has raised more than \$100,000 in small donations for his run for governor in a matter of weeks. That money will be matched dollar for dollar with public funds, and it puts Kahele on track to qualify for up to \$208,117 in total matching public funds for the primary election.

McKean said other jurisdictions including New York City already offer more generous matches for small contributions than Hawaii’s 1-to-1 match. The idea is to make sure small donations have impact, he said, and [research shows](#) New York’s matching program led to greater political participation from a more diverse array of neighborhoods.

But there would be a cost. Kristin Izumi-Nitao, executive director of the Hawaii Campaign Spending Commission, said her office has long supported increasing the amount of public funding available to candidates, but jumping to an 8-to-1 match for small contributions might exhaust the [Hawaii Election Campaign Fund](#) that supplies public campaign funding.

Izumi-Nitao said she needs to study such a plan to get a better handle on the cost, and to gauge how much money the community is willing to commit to the idea.

Another Kahele proposal would limit the amounts of unspent funds that elected officials can carry over from one campaign cycle to the next. In some cases lawmakers amass hundreds of thousands of dollars more than they need to win re-election, and carry that money over from one cycle to the next.

He wants to to limit carryover balances to 20% of the total amount a candidate raises, or no more than \$50,000. This year, Kahele can tap \$48,000 that was left over from his last state Senate campaign in 2020.

Kahele's political rival, Josh Green, emerged from his last Senate race in 2014 with more than \$503,000 in [unspent campaign funds](#). The amount of cash in the bank would have been daunting to anyone who might have considered challenging him for his Senate seat. It also gave Green a running start on fundraising when he decided to run for lieutenant governor in 2018.

### *Cayetano's Ideas*

Cayetano, Hawaii's former first lady and a longtime Hawaii businesswoman, also is making campaign finance reform a main element of her run for governor. She wants a more level playing field for candidates who are unable to raise large sums of money — those people “who really have the heart and the attitude to want to serve the public, but will never have the chance,” she said.

She proposes further restricting the amount of out-of-state money that candidates can raise to fuel their campaigns. State law now allows for up to 30% of a candidate's donations to come from out of state, and Cayetano wants that amount reduced down to 10% or 15%.

Cayetano also wants to see a cap on the total amount of money that any candidate is allowed to raise, and wants a ban on campaign fundraising during the Legislative sessions, something Kahele also supports. “I am just appalled that is still going on, that should be stopped,” she said of the session fundraising.

Lawmakers this year [passed a measure](#) to prohibit fundraising events during both regular or special sessions but stopped short of banning donations during session. That bill is pending before Gov. David Ige, who has the option of signing it into law, vetoing it or allowing it to become law without his signature.

Cayetano said she is open to the idea of reducing the maximum allowable donations to candidates. For example, the maximum amounts individual donors could contribute to gubernatorial candidates might be reduced from the current \$6,000 limit to perhaps \$3,000 or \$4,000, she said.

“It's something to consider, but is it a game changer? I don't think so,” Cayetano said.

She believes it is more important to reduce the amounts of money flowing into campaigns from the mainland, and to cap the total amounts candidates can raise. She said she also supports outright bans on both union and corporate contributions.

Cayetano said she would also support a proposal to limit the amounts of unspent funds elected officials can carry over from one campaign cycle to the next.

She said she is not opposed to strengthening the state's public financing system, but observed that kind of change requires the cooperation of the Legislature. State lawmakers solicit large sums in private campaign donations each election cycle, and "the reality is, how likely is something like that able to get passed?" she said.

But Cayetano said the larger issue of campaign spending reform is important. If the voters aren't excited about it, that's "because they don't see how it impacts the decisions that are made that impact their lives." Elected officials "misrepresent" the importance of campaign contributions, which actually matter a great deal, she said.

As of the end of December, Cayetano had raised \$825,274 for her run for governor, but that total included \$350,000 she loaned to her campaign.

### *Green Is The Biggest Fundraiser*

Green was unavailable for an interview on the campaign finance issue, but his campaign issued a written statement noting Kahele's [history of fundraising](#).

"Congressman Kahele's promises to reform campaign finance lack credibility and ring hollow given that every one of his top 20 congressional donors is a special interest, including corporations, lobbyists, and PACs mainly representing the airline, defense, transportation, and casino/gambling industries," it said.

The Green campaign statement pointed out that Kahele's congressional leadership political action committee "received large contributions from two mainland corporate PACs, Microsoft and Nike, just 30 days before he announced his campaign for governor with a message that 'Hawai'i is not for sale,' promising not to accept contributions from corporations, PACs, from the mainland, or any donation over \$100."

As of Dec. 31, Green had raised more than \$1.8 million for his campaign for governor, and had more than \$1.1 million in cash on hand.

Kahele's critics also point out he was among about 60 state and federal candidates who received donations from Milton Choy, the same businessman who triggered such an uproar at the Legislature this year after he paid bribes to English and Cullen to steer legislation related to wastewater.



Kahele said in a written statement that he returned \$2,500 to the Campaign Spending Commission after it was reported that Choy had given cash to Cullen and Kalani.

Kahele also directly criticized Green's fundraising, saying Green should not have pitched the benefits of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and made a [public show](#) of taking the vaccine in late 2020, and then accepted a \$2,000 campaign donation from Pfizer last October. Pfizer has been a regular donor to Green since 2011.

### **Anaheim City Council Deadlocks on Campaign Finance Reform Following FBI Corruption Probe** (Anaheim, CA)

Anaheim City Council members deadlocked on a campaign finance reform in an effort to lessen special interests' influence on policy decisions, which has come under intense public scrutiny since revelations of an FBI corruption probe into City Hall.

After a majority of the council debated the issue for hours – over the course of two city council meetings this month – council members deadlocked 3-3 late Tuesday night over an ordinance that would've required a 72-hour reporting window for all campaign contributions of \$250 or more, along with mandatory recusal periods.

The deadlock comes after residents have been continuously [calling for council members](#) to limit the influence special interest groups – the Anaheim Chamber of Commerce, the LA Angels and Disney-funded political action committees – have on City Hall.

Many of those same interest groups heavily funded a majority of the city council members' election campaigns.

Council members Steve Faessel, Jose Moreno and Avelino Valencia voted in favor of the ordinance.

Their colleagues Jose Diaz, Gloria Ma'ae and Trevor O'Neil voted against the reform.

Faessel rescheduled the reform proposal for another discussion at an unknown date.

The campaign finance reform, spearheaded by Moreno, would also create a 12-month blackout window on council members from voting on an item – like a contract or permit – that would benefit a campaign contributor.

“We’ve heard from a lot of different folks who are supportive of this effort — I guess as it was named out on the streets — as a way to clean up our election process and put more trust into it,” Moreno said at Tuesday’s meeting. “Its goal is to mitigate the undue influence of money in our decision making in the city.”

It also would bar council members from fundraising from people for six months who’ve had business voted on favorably, beginning with the date of the final council decision.

Moreno has been calling out the influence of Disneyland resort interests and trying to propose campaign finance reform in the city for years.

It wasn’t until former Mayor Harry Sidhu resigned in May after public disclosure of an FBI affidavit all but announcing an ongoing corruption probe in the city that Moreno was able to schedule a discussion and propose an ordinance on the issue.

[FBI affidavits](#) also allege that Sidhu tried to score at least \$1 million in campaign contributions from the Angels while pushing through the now-dead Angel Stadium land sale and giving the ball team confidential information during negotiations.

Sidhu, through his defense attorney Paul Meyer, defended his actions Tuesday afternoon.

“We continue to expect the results of the federal investigation to show that Harry did not disclose any closed session or secret information. He never leaked anything in the hopes of a later political campaign contribution. He worked as a member of the City’s negotiating group to help reach a mutually beneficial agreement between Anaheim and the Angels. The Superior Court has ruled that the group did not violate the Brown Act,” reads the statement emailed to reporters.

During Tuesday’s meeting, Valencia said the proposed campaign finance ordinance would have prevented the Angel Stadium deal.

“One thing is certain, it has been stated from this dais, if something like this had been implemented during the early portion of Harry Sidhu’s mayoral service, then the Angels deal would not have manifested in the way it did,” he said.

Meanwhile, Diaz, who wasn’t at the last meeting earlier this month, argued the campaign finance reform proposal would’ve prevented him from running his campaign in 2020 by limiting his ability to fundraise.

“How else am I going to advertise to 65,000 residents in District 1 what I want to do? How else am I going to tell people I’m going to bring housing, I want to fix Beach Boulevard, I want to address poverty,” Diaz said during Tuesday’s meeting. “I got contributions for that.”

“If we enforce this today, we approve this today, all we’re going to do is prohibit people like me from running. The money coming to the campaign is still going to be coming ... it’ll be coming from outside city interests.”

Diaz also said the city should wait for the FBI corruption probe to wrap up and an expected city-commissioned investigation to finish before his colleagues think about reforming campaign finance in the city.

Faessel defended Morneo’s campaign reform proposal – a rarity in Anaheim politics.

“If you look at what is proposed and you look how you financed your recent campaign, I think you’ll see your recent campaign can fall well within the limitations here,” Faessel responded to Diaz. “It’s not preventing you from accepting contributions from unions or anybody else for that matter. There are limitations of how we might be able to vote and there are new reporting requirements.”

Moreno echoed what some of Faessel said.

“It’s simply asking you to wait six months ... before you can vote on that,” Moreno said.

He also recounted the recent revelations of the FBI corruption probe into city hall, saying such a campaign finance reform “protects us, insulates us” from the perception of suspect votes.

“The goal here is just to build trust in the decision making, to shield us from those contributors,” Moreno said.

Ma’ae, who voted against the campaign finance reform, didn’t give her thoughts on the issue Tuesday night. At the June 7 meeting, she said the ordinance would unfairly target certain groups.

O’Neil, who’s mayor pro tem and has been running the meetings since Sidhu resigned, reiterated his stance against such reforms – saying it’s a transparency issue and not a contribution influence issue.

“My point was made then that this is not as much about campaign finance and contribution limits and recusals as it is transparency. And I don’t think the way we’re addressing it with the motion on the floor is the best way to handle it. I think it could be best handled by tweaking reporting requirements on our lobbyist registry or on our contractors,” he said.

Meanwhile, every resident who spoke on the proposed campaign finance reforms voiced support for the ordinance.

“Five of you accepted money from the same criminal organizations that Harry did,” Jeanine Robbins said during public comment.

Diaz, Faessel, O’Neil and Valencia were all heavily supported by resort-industry interests in their respective city council campaigns.

Ma’ae, who was appointed, used to be part of the advisory committee for Disney’s political spending vehicle, Support Our Anaheim Resort.

Those same interests also spent money against Moreno in his election campaign and supported his opponents.

Resident Fred Sigala criticized Ma’ae’s June 7 comments about campaign finance reform, who said expecting the proposed ordinance to remove “all opportunity for pay for play is unrealistic.”

“Are you seriously implying that the solution to preventing attempted robberies like that which almost happened to Angel stadium is to do nothing?” Sigala said during Tuesday’s public comment period.

Resident Victoria Vidrio said council members and City Hall need to be cleaned up.

“We have to use Fabuloso here to clean up – gosh we need chlorine too, because Fabuloso won’t do it. You stink.”

**[Former Florida gubernatorial candidate Andrew Gillum indicted on federal charges](#)** (Florida)

Former gubernatorial challenger and rising Democratic star Andrew Gillum is facing a 21-count [federal indictment](#) alleging that he illegally solicited campaign contributions between 2016 and 2019 and promised political favors in return for the financial support.

The period of time he's alleged to have broken the law includes his failed 2018 bid against Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis.

The 26-page indictment unsealed Wednesday outlines a series of interactions with two undercover FBI agents, who are not identified in court documents and who posed as developers for a company called Southern Pines Development, which at the time was interested in contracts through the City of Tallahassee, where Gillum was mayor before running for governor.

Gillum, among other things, solicited contributions from the undercover agents after promising something "very significant in return," according to the indictment. Gillum's adviser, Sharon Lettman-Hicks, also faces 19 counts, including allegations that some of those contributions were funneled to a separate company she operates, P&P Communications, rather than going to help Gillum's run for governor.

Marc Elias, a well-known Democratic attorney representing Gillum, pushed back on the allegations in a statement he released before the federal charges were made public.

"The government got it wrong today," Elias said. "The evidence in this case is clear and will show Mr. Gillum is innocent of all charges."

In his own statement issued through Elias, Gillum, who was taken into custody on Wednesday morning, said he is the subject of political persecution.

"Every campaign I've run has been done with integrity," Gillum said. "Make no mistake that this case is not legal, it is political."

Gillum and Lettman-Hicks each pleaded not guilty on Wednesday to all charges in Tallahassee federal court.

Gillum wore a blue business suit and was escorted by two U.S. Marshals while wearing handcuffs and a large metallic chain around his waist. Lettman-Hicks used a wheelchair to enter and exit the courtroom and wore a patterned dress. Both declined to discuss the charges during the hearing, only answering briefly to procedural pre-trial questions asked by U.S. Magistrate Charles A. Stampelos, who set a trial for Aug. 16.

Supporters who turned out for Gillum included some of his closest allies, including Tallahassee lawyer Daryl Parks, who declined comment after the hearing.

An hour after the hearing ended, Gillum walked out of the front doors of courthouse. He declined to take questions as he walked to a waiting white Chevrolet Tahoe.

Gillum was once seen as a rising star in Florida Democratic politics, but was hammered with corruption-related attacks during the campaign and lost to DeSantis by roughly 40,000 votes after a recount.

The case was investigated by the FBI, and the indictment, which was [first reported by NBC News](#), was announced by Jason Coody, the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Florida and an appointee of President Joe Biden.

In one example outlined in the indictment, a Gillum associate identified as “Individual B” met in January 2017 with two undercover FBI agents in Nashville. The individual asked one undercover agent for \$25,000 “in relation to three projects Individual B had proposed” in the City of Tallahassee, and asked the second agent for \$75,000 related to “three different projects,” according to the indictment, which does not specify who “Individual B” is or what work was being considered.

One month later, the total \$100,000 campaign contribution request was agreed to by an undercover agent and Gillum during a meeting in Jacksonville, and would be paid in two separate installments of \$50,000 each. During that meeting, Gillum directly told one of the undercover FBI agents that he should “separate in his mind the campaign contributions and the Tallahassee projects.”

During a meeting that summer with FBI agents, which took place months after Gillum had already announced his gubernatorial bid, Gillum allegedly promised city contracts in return for political contributions.

“During the conversation, Gillum falsely represented that Southern Pines representatives never offered Gillum anything or gave to Gillum anything, and that Gillum stopped having communications with Southern Pines representatives about the campaign contributions following their attempt to link the campaign contributions to support for potential projects in Tallahassee,” read the indictment.

A federal grand jury has been impaneled since at least November and has interviewed several former Gillum campaign aides, a former aide who was interviewed by the FBI told POLITICO on Wednesday. Among the things federal investigators asked that person about was money contributed by Donald Sussman, a founder and chief investment officer of a Connecticut-based hedge fund and major national Democratic donor.

The person, who was granted anonymity to discuss the matter, did not believe Sussman was being investigated for any wrongdoing — rather, it was to show how a contribution from him to Gillum was the focus of the scrutiny. A Sussman adviser did not return a POLITICO request seeking comment.

Gillum has been the subject of intense scrutiny and political scandal for years, including being forced to remove himself from politics and public life in March 2020 after police found him in a Miami Beach hotel room too inebriated to talk with a male who is suspected to have overdosed. Police found three bags of suspected crystal meth, but Gillum said he'd had too much alcohol to drink but did not do any drugs. Pictures later emerged showing Gillum laying on the floor in his own vomit.

In a national TV interview he did with his wife six months following the incident, Gillum, who has three children, said he was bisexual and expressed remorse.

The city he once led has been under federal investigation since at least 2015, a probe that snared the activities outlined in the unsealed indictment.

Central to that investigation was Gillum's acceptance of unreported gifts from lobbyists, including a 2016 New York trip referenced in the indictment. During the trip, the undercover FBI agents posing as developers paid for his stay at the Millennium hotel as well as food, drinks, a boat ride around New York Harbor and tickets to the musical "Hamilton."

Gillum previously faced no criminal charges but agreed to pay a \$5,000 fine brought by the Florida Commission on Ethics tied to the improper acceptance of gifts.

Details of the relationship between Gillum and Lettman-Hicks were brought up during Wednesday's first court appearance. The indictment alleges that Gillum worked for a public relations company owned by Lettman-Hicks, and he continued receiving a salary from the company even though he told state elections officials that he had resigned in order to steer clear of impropriety. Gillum's campaign headquarters was also first opened at Lettman-Hicks' office in Tallahassee.

Lettman-Hicks was represented by a public defender, attorney Elizabeth Vallejo, who said on behalf of Lettman-Hicks that she and Gillum were employed by a foundation which she did not identify in court.