

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Puerto Rico

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, February 10, 2023

**Former Puerto Rico Senator and Former Mayor of Yauco
Sentenced to 18 Months of Imprisonment for
Misappropriation of Municipal Funds to Finance His 2016
Senatorial Campaign**

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – Today, Abel Nazario-Quiñones, former Puerto Rico senator and former mayor of the municipality of Yauco, Puerto Rico, was sentenced by United States District Court Senior Judge Francisco A. Besosa to serve 18 months in prison, announced United States Attorney W. Stephen Muldrow. The FBI conducted the investigation with the collaboration of the Puerto Rico Comptroller's Office, and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Inspector General (OIG).

According to court documents, in August 2016, during a routine audit of the municipality's records, the PR Comptroller's Office discovered that there were irregular employees paid by the municipality of Yauco who either never showed up for work or showed up sporadically. The subsequent investigation by the FBI resulted in the indictment of Nazario-Quiñones. On September 30, 2022, he pleaded guilty to conspiring with others to misappropriate municipal funds.

Nazario-Quiñones admitted that from 2014 through 2016, he conspired and agreed with co-defendants [2] Edwin Torres-Gutierrez and [3] Claribel Rodríguez-Canchani that co-defendants [4] Humberto Pagán-Sánchez, [5] Kelvin Ortiz-Vegarra, [6] Ramón Martes-Negrón, [7] Juan Rosario-Núñez, and [8] Eric Rondón-Rodríguez would be hired, on paper, as employees of the municipality and paid from municipal funds knowing that they would not actually work for the municipality but would, instead, work on Nazario-Quiñones' 2016 senatorial campaign. In total, \$50,426.00 in municipal funds were paid for the benefit of Nazario-Quiñones' campaign.

United States Attorney W. Stephen Muldrow of the District of Puerto Rico; FBI Special Agent in Charge Joseph González; and Michael C. Mikulka, Special Agent in Charge, New York Region, U.S. Department of Labor Office of Inspector General made the announcement.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott Anderson prosecuted the case.

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