



# The Quanta of Corruption

June 18, 2025

The first initiative petition drive I ever ran was the Tax Accountability Amendment in Illinois in 1990. I remember canvassing Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives Michael Madigan's district.

He was a problem way back then. It was as if everything he worked for I worked against! The Democrat really knew how to wield power: going on to become the longest-serving leader of any state or federal legislative body in the history of the United States, holding the position for all but two years from 1983 to 2021.

Well, he's in the news again—and not for receiving a laurel of appreciation from a grateful state.

"Longest-serving legislative leader in US history given 7 1/2 years in federal corruption case," [reads](#) the Associated Press headline.

In addition to the prison sentence following his February conviction for "trading legislation for the enrichment of his friends and allies," Mike Madigan has also been fined \$2.5 million.

The "Velvet Hammer," as Madigan was called, was, in the end, hammered, found guilty "on 10 of 23 counts in a remarkable corruption trial that lasted four months. The case churned through 60 witnesses and mountains of documents, photographs and taped conversations."

At sentencing, U.S. District Judge John Robert Blakey demonstrated anger over Madigan's perjury on the stand. "You lied. You did not have to. You had a right to sit there and exercise your right to silence," the judge told the convict at sentencing. "But you took the stand and you took the law into your own hands."

Just as the corrupt career politician did as Speaker for four miserable decades.

Justice may have taken too long, but I applaud it.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

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