



Reasoning with Ethics

MARCH 7, 2017

A Project of The School for Ethical Education | www.ethicsed.org

“Ethics in action creates character.”

Use this blog to:

1. Lead class discussions in social studies, civics, ethics or advisory classes.
2. Teach students skills to analyze cases with core values.
3. Recognize skills in support of the four components of ethical functioning.

[Visit the online Ethics Blog.](#)

Power Corrupts

Past Attorney General in New Jersey and Chairman of the NY-NJ Port Authority, David Samson was sentenced yesterday for corruption charges where he plead guilty last fall. Samson, cited in the media as a former mentor to Governor Chris Christie, admitted to using the power of his public office to pressure United Airlines into



opening a money-losing flight route from Newark, NJ to Columbia, SC. His goal was to save himself a 2-hr drive from the closest airport that was serving his weekend retreat home in South Carolina. Samson was holding up approval of a new United Airlines maintenance hangar in Newark through his position with the Port Authority. He resigned from his Port Authority position during the “bridgegate scandal”. More from a CBS story is [linked here](#).

The 77 year old Samson, friend to so many in power faced a two-year jail sentence and large fine. For their part in this case, United Airlines has already paid a fine of over \$2 million dollars in acknowledgment of relenting to Samson’s demands and not pursuing recourse in legal compliance.

In one of its statements an FBI spokesman noted, “The FBI’s stance on public corruption is that of zero tolerance and therefore one of our highest priorities,” Special Agent in Charge Gallagher said. “We in the FBI believe that public corruption is among the most serious of criminal violations. It is a betrayal of the public’s sacred trust. If allowed to grow, public corruption permeates all aspects of society and affects all other criminal priorities. And if allowed to spread unchecked, public corruption can threaten the very foundation of democracy. These charges reflect the FBI’s commitment to fighting public corruption...”

Students are requested to place themselves in the role of the sentencing judge in this case. Samson’s defense attorneys are requesting no jail time, but a fine and community service. The prosecution is seeking jail time due to the meaningful violation of public trust. SEE welcomes students to respond with their decision and specifically cite what core values would guide them.

After student discussion and decisions are announced, you can compare their options to the actual judgment-- <http://bit.ly/Samson-Judgment>

Regarding the questions in this case, SEE welcomes students to post their response on our website at http://bit.ly/Ethics_Case where more information is available in support of *Reasoning with Ethics*.

Contact information

The School for Ethical Education is a not for profit teaching agency in Milford, CT with the mission to advance strategies of placing ethics in action to create character. As a non-sectarian 501(C)3, SEE is supported by fees for service, grants and donations. For more information visit our website at www.ethicsed.org
Please reply with “unsubscribe” in the subject heading if you want to be removed from this Reasoning with Ethics Blog.