

## Former State House Speaker Jim Black to be sentenced

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A federal judge is considering a hefty sentence for former state House speaker Jim Black.

U.S. District Judge James Denver III said he is considering an "upward departure" from whatever sentence is recommended by prosecutors, according to court documents. Black, from Mecklenburg, admitted in February to taking money from three chiropractors to support their agenda in the House. He pleaded guilty to one federal count of accepting things of value in connection with the business of state government. Black will also be sentenced in state court for offering a bribe and obstructing justice in a scheme to help him keep his General Assembly leadership position.

Last week, former state Representative Michael Decker was given four years in prison, double the sentence recommended by prosecutors thanks to Denver.