

# **NEWS RELEASE**

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For Immediate Release

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## **FORMER PARAMOUNT THEATER OWNER FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST CITY *Claims Of Racketeering and Constitutional Violations Filed In Federal Court***

SPRINGFIELD – Steven C. Stein, former owner of the historic Paramount Theater on Main Street in Springfield, today filed a federal civil lawsuit against mayor, Domenic Sarno, Peter Sygnator, chairman of the city’s Liquor License Commission and assistant tax collector, Heriberto Flores and the New England Farm Workers Council, Inc. along with a variety of business owners and other individuals and entities for the fraudulent manner in which the historic Paramount Theater was purchased by the New England Farm Workers Council in 2011.

The thirty-seven page, eight count lawsuit alleges that Sarno and Sygnator conspired with Flores and his chief financial officer John Motto to allow the New England Farm Workers Council to purchase, at far below fair market value, one of the largest entertainment venues in the area which will be vital to casino gaming development in Springfield. Prior to the fraudulent purchase, Sarno and the city had given Flores and the New England Farm Workers Council a \$300,000.00 Community Block Grant for the purchase of the Paramount.

“Mr. Flores knew that the historic Paramount Theater would be central to any casino development in Springfield and enlisted the mayor and Mr. Sygnator to conspire to have the New England Farm Workers Council purchase the building and adjacent parking lot at far below fair market value,” Stein said in a written statement. “These defendants along with *The Republican*, Peter A. Picknelly, Penn National Gaming, Inc. and the city of Springfield all had something to gain by Flores acquiring the historic Paramount Theater,” according to Stein.

The lawsuit alleges that the defendants, who also include Paul Picknelly, Frank Cataldo and the appraisal firm of Richard Kane & Associates and two of its appraisers, were engaged in various illegal acts and racketeering activity to force the plaintiffs to sell the historic Paramount Theater and adjacent parking lot at far below fair market value. The suit also alleges these actions were intended to inflict significant economic harm and financial damage to the plaintiffs.

In addition to racketeering, the lawsuit seeks damages for breach of contract, breach of covenant of good faith and fair dealing, constitutional due process violations, First Amendment retaliation by Sarno and Sygnator, interference with contractual relations, civil conspiracy and unfair and deceptive acts pursuant to M.G.L. c. 93A.

The lawsuit was filed in the Western Section of the U.S. District Court of Massachusetts in Springfield, MA. Mr. Stein’s public statement is attached. The complaint can be viewed at [www.massrico.com](http://www.massrico.com).

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