

U.S. indicts consumer advocate

Rep. Schakowsky's husband charged

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Robert Creamer, once head of Illinois' leading consumer advocacy organization and husband of U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), was charged in several elaborate check-kiting schemes

to pay bills for the cash-strapped not-for-profit group.

The indictment made public Thursday alleged that Creamer, while executive director of Illinois Public Action in the 1990s, shuffled numerous check and wire deposits between as many as five bank accounts at a time to hide shortfalls in balances of as much as \$2.6 million.

The charges also alleged that Creamer failed to collect and pay federal withholding taxes for the consumer group's employees and himself—yet then

filed joint tax returns with Schakowsky for four years in which he falsely showed taxes had been withheld, substantially reducing the taxes he owed.

Schakowsky wasn't charged with any wrongdoing.

Creamer's lawyers ripped the charges, noting the check-kiting accusations date as far back as 11 years ago and maintaining that none of the nine banks involved suffered an actual loss.

In a separate statement, Scha-

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