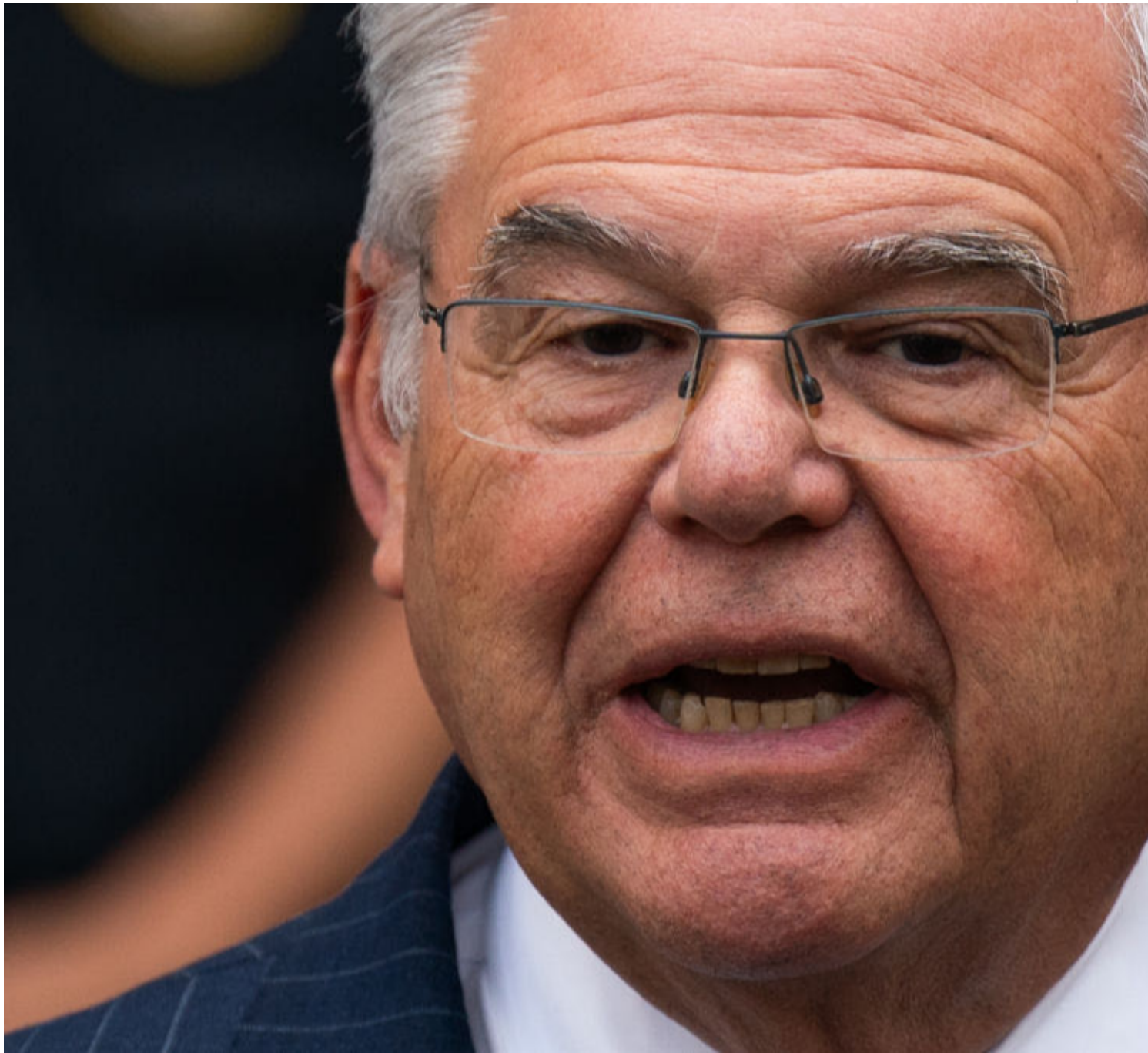


*Former U.S. Senator Bob
Menendez given 11-year prison
sentence for bribery*



Washington, January 30 (RHC)-- Robert Menendez, a former United States senator representing New Jersey, has been handed an 11-year prison sentence for bribery schemes that included receiving gold bars in exchange for favours on behalf of Egypt.

On Wednesday, in sorrowful testimony, Menendez told a Manhattan federal court that he had lost everything he loved as a result of the corruption charges, except for the support of his wife.

"For someone who spent his entire life in public service, every day I'm awake is a punishment," Menendez, a Democrat, said. Menendez was once a powerful figure in U.S. politics, chairing the Senate

Foreign Relations Committee.

He also garnered a reputation as an outspoken supporter of hawkish foreign policies: For example, he broke with Democratic ranks to oppose a 2015 deal that would limit Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief.

But in July 2024, a court found him guilty of acting as a foreign agent on behalf of the Egyptian government and trading influence for cash, gold and even a Mercedes-Benz car.

"You were successful, powerful. You stood at the apex of our political system," U.S. District Judge Sidney Stein said at Wednesday's sentencing hearing. "Somewhere along the way – and I don't know when it was – you lost your way, and working for the public good became working for your good."

Menendez, for his part, appealed to the court for mercy, citing his record in public service. "You really don't know the man you are about to sentence," Menendez tearfully told Stein in the courtroom.

The judge did not appear moved, stating at one point that Menendez had become a "corrupt politician."

The 71-year-old Menendez had served 18 years in the Senate – and, before that, 13 years in the House of Representatives – before his political career came to an abrupt stop in 2024.

In August, amid the scandal of his corruption case, he resigned. The decision came a month after he was found guilty on 16 felony corruption charges.

"Menendez, who swore an oath to represent the United States and the State of New Jersey, instead put his high office up for sale in exchange for this hoard of bribes," prosecutors wrote in a January 9 court filing. They had requested a 15-year prison sentence.

Earlier on Wednesday, Menendez's two co-defendants, New Jersey businessmen Fred Daibes and Wael Hana, were sentenced respectively to seven and more than eight years in prison. A corruption trial for Menendez's wife, Nadine, is scheduled to begin on March 18th.

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