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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

WSJ.com

NY POLITICS | September 24, 2013, 9:14 p.m. ET

Corruption Case Plea Called Off

Assemblyman William Boyland Jr. Decides Against Pleading Guilty

By SEAN GARDINER

State Assemblyman William Boyland Jr. backed out Tuesday of an expected guilty plea on a number of political corruption charges and instead will attempt to prevail, again, at a federal trial.

Mr. Boyland, who has represented the 55th District in Brooklyn since 2003, appeared in U.S. Magistrate Justice Marilyn Go's courtroom in Brooklyn ready to enter a guilty plea, his lawyer and prosecutors said.

A spokesman for Brooklyn U.S. Attorney Loretta Lynch's office told the press that she was prepared to comment on the case should the plea agreement go through.



Kevin Hagen for The Wall Street Journal

State Assemblyman William Boyland Jr. on Tuesday arrives for a court appearance in Brooklyn, where he decided against pleading guilty.

A law-enforcement official said the 42-year-old Mr. Boyland—who faces a maximum sentence of 30 years on a string of charges including mail-fraud conspiracy and extortion—would have received about nine years in prison under the deal in addition to making restitution.

Instead, the lawyers for Mr. Boyland—who appeared in court with his father, William Boyland Sr., who represented the same Assembly district for two decades, and other family members—informed prosecutors that the deal was off. An hour later, the group moved to the courtroom of Judge Sandra Towne, who is presiding over the case and set a preliminary trial date of Dec. 2.

Outside the courtroom, the politician declined to comment. His attorney, Peter Quijano, confirmed that "there had been ongoing plea negotiations" but said "there was no agreement between the parties."

"William Boyland Jr. stands by his plea of not guilty and looks forward to being exonerated by a jury in this court," Mr. Quijano said.

The charges date back to an indictment returned in December 2011, less than a month after Mr. Boyland was acquitted during a federal trial in Manhattan on charges he accepted \$175,000 in bribes. Mr. Boyland was charged then for soliciting \$250,000 in bribes from a carnival promoter

and his two partners, who turned out to be undercover federal agents.

This March, prosecutors added mailfraud charges to the indictment, alleging Mr. Boyland also submitted fabricated travel vouchers worth tens of thousands of dollars for trips between Albany and Brooklyn that he never made.

In May, the indictment was again expanded to include charges that he steered \$200,000 in public funds to a health-care facility for the elderly and then directed that a cut of the funds be used to pay for community events and "Team Boyland" T-shirts.

Mr. Boyland has pleaded not guilty to all the charges.

Last week, while testifying before Gov. Andrew Cuomo's anticorruption Moreland Commission, Ms. Lynch and Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara vowed to attempt to stop convicted politicians from receiving their taxpayer-funded pension payments.

Mr. Quijano said there is no mention in the indictment of making Mr. Boyland forfeit his pension.

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A version of this article appeared September 25, 2013, on page A22 in the U.S. edition of The Wall Street Journal, with the headline: Corruption Case Plea Called Off.

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