

**US Senate Committee on Indian Affairs – Oversight Hearing
June 22, 2005**

Opening Statement of Gail Halpern

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, and Members of the Committee.

My name is Gail Halpern. I am a part-time accountant. I am a Certified Public Accountant and a Personal Financial Planner.

Mr. and Mrs. Abramoff were my clients from early 1997 until September 2004. I knew Mrs. Abramoff on a social basis, and she asked me sometime in early 1997 to be her and Mr. Abramoff's accountant and prepare their personal income tax returns. The following is a general description of the services I performed for the Abramoffs:

1. I prepared Mr. and Mrs. Abramoff's personal income tax returns from the 1996 tax year until the 2002 tax year, inclusive. I prepared gift tax returns for Mr. and Mrs. Abramoff when required during this time as well. I prepared their children's income tax returns, and I prepared trust income tax returns for the Jack and Pamela Abramoff family up to and including the 2003 tax year as required.
2. I prepared personal and trust tax returns based on information provided by Mr. and Mrs. Abramoff, or by those authorized to provide such information on their behalf, namely Mr. Abramoff's office at Preston Gates, or later at Greenberg Traurig, or Mr. Abramoff's business office.
3. I did not prepare any corporate, partnership, or tax-exempt entity returns, as I am not an expert in those areas of the tax law. Those returns were prepared by other competent accountants.
4. Upon their request, I provided some tax planning advice to Mr. and Mrs. Abramoff within my limited areas of expertise. I also provided some estate planning advice, and some financial planning advice to Mr. and Mrs. Abramoff as requested by them. I also answered general accounting and tax questions from the Abramoffs or from other authorized people in Mr. Abramoff's offices, as mentioned earlier. Any questions that I was not able to answer, such as questions that were specific to a certain area of accounting or law, I referred to attorneys or accountants who practiced in that area of accounting or law. Mr. or Mrs. Abramoff made all of the decisions.
5. For Mr. Abramoff's daily checking account and for some of his business entities, I worked with Mr. Abramoff's business office to help implement a bookkeeping software package that required them to input all the information required for me or for others to prepare tax returns.

6. I did not keep the books or prepare the books for Mr. Abramoff's daily checking account, business entities, or for any of the non-profit entities that he started. Rather, my role was to answer questions, or refer him to specialists who could answer questions, when such questions were posed by Mr. Abramoff or by the bookkeeping personnel or staff. The day-to-day bookkeeping work was done by others. I was not an employee, officer, director, or member of any of Mr. Abramoff's entities. Instead, I am an independent accountant, and I service other clients besides the Abramoffs.
7. The tax returns that I prepared, and any tax, estate, and financial planning services that I rendered, were based on information provided to me by Mr. or Mrs. Abramoff or by personnel in Mr. Abramoff's offices mentioned earlier. To the best of my knowledge, and based upon the information that they provided to me, all income received by the Abramoffs or their children or their family trusts for which I prepared income tax returns, was reported and included in the relevant tax returns.

Thank you.