



FBI searches U.S. senator's home amid corruption probe

- Story Highlights
- Investigators arrived at Sen. Ted Stevens' home in Girdwood, Alaska
- Justice Department is looking into senator's ties to wealthy oil contractor
- Stevens, 83, reportedly is under a federal probe for a home renovation project
- In 2005, Stevens backed construction of a \$223 million "bridge to nowhere"

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- FBI and Internal Revenue Service agents searched the Alaska home of longtime Sen. Ted Stevens on Monday amid a corruption probe that already has snared two oil-company executives and a state lobbyist.

Dave Heller, an FBI spokesman in Anchorage, Alaska, confirmed that agents entered Stevens' home Monday afternoon, but he referred further comment to the Justice Department.

Neither the senator nor any family members were home at the time, Heller said.

[Stevens](#), 83, the Senate's senior Republican, has been under federal investigation for a 2000 renovation project more than doubling the size of his home in Girdwood, Alaska, near Anchorage, The Associated Press reported.

The project was overseen by Bill Allen, a contractor who has pleaded guilty to bribing [Alaska](#) state legislators.

Allen is founder of VECO Corp., an Alaska-based oil field services and engineering company that has reaped tens of millions of dollars in federal contracts.

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A law enforcement official familiar with the case confirmed the raid on Stevens' home was focused on records related to the ongoing VECO investigation, the AP said.

Stevens said his attorneys were told Monday morning that federal agents wanted to search his home. In a written statement, Stevens said: "I urge Alaskans not to form conclusions based upon incomplete and sometimes incorrect reports in the media. The legal process should be allowed to proceed so that all the facts can be established and the truth determined."

Stevens is up for re-election in 2008. The former chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee has represented Alaska in Washington since 1968 and is renowned for his prowess in steering federal funds to his vast, sparsely populated state.

In May, the Anchorage Daily News reported that federal agents were asking contractors who carried out an extensive renovation of Stevens' home to turn over their records from the job. One contractor told the newspaper he was asked to appear before a grand jury in December.

Monday's search comes two months after top executives of VECO admitted paying more than \$400,000 in bribes to Alaska public officials.

CEO Allen and Richard Smith, the company's vice president and top lobbyist, pleaded guilty to bribery and conspiracy charges in May, and VECO said it is cooperating with the federal probe.

Anchorage lobbyist William Bobrick also has pleaded guilty to federal corruption charges stemming from the probe, and three current and former state legislators face bribery and conspiracy charges in the probe.

FBI agents also raided the office of Stevens' son, then-state Senate President Ben Stevens, in September 2006, but he has not been charged in connection with the probe.

In 2005, legislation backed by Ted Stevens to build a so-called "bridge to nowhere" became a lightning rod for critics of pork-barrel politics. The proposal called for construction of a \$223 million bridge to connect Alaska's Gravina Island -- population 50 -- to the mainland.

The allocation was backed by Stevens and fellow Alaskan Rep. Don Young, then the powerful GOP chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Congress later rescinded the earmarked funding for the bridge.

CNN's Ted Barrett, Carol Cratty and Joe Johns contributed to this report.

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