

## Steven Payne Begins Florida Prison Intake After 25-Year Sentence in Minor Sexual Battery Case

**Former Sen. Steven Payne, who was expelled from the 34th Legislature following multiple sexual harassment allegations, is now in the custody intake process in Florida after being sentenced to 25 years for sexually assaulting Steffi Emilien when she was 17**

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**Mugshot of Former Senator Steven Payne Sr. By. FL DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS.**

Steven Payne, the former at-large senator who was expelled from the 34th Legislature of the Virgin Islands following multiple sexual harassment allegations, is now undergoing the intake process with the Florida Department of Corrections after receiving a [25-year sentence](#) last month for sexual battery on a minor.

The sentence was handed down in Florida's Fourth Judicial Circuit Court after a jury found Payne guilty of sexually assaulting Steffi Emilien when she was 17 years old. The conviction, secured last year, stemmed from conduct that took place between August 1, 2018, and February 27, 2019, at his sister's home in Jacksonville, Florida.

Ms. Emilien was one of two women whose allegations against Payne were reported by the Consortium after news emerged that the Senate was conducting an investigation into the sexual harassment of a female staffer.

In an exclusive interview with the Consortium, Ms. Emilien described being groomed as a vulnerable teenager by someone she believed to be a father figure before being moved to Florida and then assaulted.

Chezni Jones also spoke to Consortium journalists, saying her harassment by Payne took place decades earlier, in 2005, when he was a V.I. Police Department officer assigned to the high school where she worked.

After Payne was found guilty last October, Ms. Emilien spoke publicly about the outcome.

"It was really hard for us, and I just hope that whoever was on our side, I hope you're smiling right now," said Ms. Emilien. "I hope you're celebrating. This was a big win for us, and we can finally continue our healing process," she declared.

In addition to the 25-year prison term, Payne was designated a sex offender and will face 10 years of probation after completing his sentence.

While Payne enters the prison system, the case is also moving into the appeals stage. Florida's Fifth District Court of Appeals is preparing to hear the appeal filed against his conviction.

In that matter, Payne will be represented by Jonathan E. Jordan, a criminal defense attorney based in Miami, Florida.