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<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/02/15/289067/former-us-mayor-spent-1bn-on-gambling/>

Ex-mayor of San Diego gambled \$1bn, including \$2mn of charity fund

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Former mayor of a major US city has gambled away nearly a billion dollars, including millions from a charity fund set up by her late husband.

Maureen O'Connor, the first female mayor of the southern California city of San Diego, spent "countless hours seated in front of video-poker machines" gambling the huge amount over a nine-year period after she left the mayoral office, *The Los Angeles Times* reported Friday, quoting federal prosecutors.

The 66-year-old ex-mayor tearfully acknowledged in court on Thursday that she skimmed over USD2 million from a charity established by her deceased husband, Robert Peterson, who founded the famous American fast-food chain Jack in the Box.

O'Connor, according to the report, admitted in a plea bargain deal with federal prosecutors that she had a "gambling addiction" and is nearly bankrupt.

The 1-billion-dollar "gambling binge" began from 2000 and continued until 2009, according to court documents.

In 2008 and 2009, the report adds, when the fortune she had inherited was not enough, "she began taking from the R.P. [charity] Foundation to cover her losses."

"She was considered such a high roller that Las Vegas casinos would send a private jet to pick her up in San Diego," according to the report.

O'Connor's attorney suggested that a brain tumor may have impaired her reasoning by offering reporters copies of her brain scan from a 2011 surgery following the court hearing.

Her deteriorating medical condition "renders it highly improbable - if not impossible - that she could be brought to trial," according to court documents filed by federal prosecutors.

Prosecutors, according to the report, agreed to postpone her prosecution for two years. "If O'Connor violates no further laws and makes restitution, the charge of making illegal financial transactions may be dismissed."