

Whittemore to start prison term in Aug.

By Scott Sonner, AP

RENO — Former Nevada developer and political power broker Harvey Whittemore has been ordered to begin serving a two-year prison sentence for making illegal campaign contributions to Sen. Harry Reid after a judge decided the ex-lobbyist's conviction is unlikely to be overturned on appeal.

U.S. District Judge Larry Hicks granted prosecutors' request in Reno on Thursday to order Whittemore to turn himself in Aug. 6 to a federal prison in Herlong, Calif., about 60 miles north of Reno.

Whittemore was convicted a year ago of violating campaign-spending laws by using family and employees of his billion-dollar real estate company to funnel more than \$130,000 to the Senate majority leader's re-election committee in 2007.

Hicks agreed to delay the start of his sentence originally set to begin Jan. 31 because the U.S. Supreme Court was considering a case with some of the same First Amendment claims Whittemore argues in his appeal to the 9th Circuit. But the judge says the high court's ruling in April undermines Whittemore's case.