

DEBRA BOWEN

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE NEWS RELEASE

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Secretary of State Debra Bowen Announces Voter Fraud Case Arraignment and Applauds Sacramento County ROV

SACRAMENTO – Two Sacramento County residents were arraigned on felony charges today following findings by Secretary of State Debra Bowen’s Election Fraud Investigation Unit that the pair cast illegal votes in a recent election.

In March, Sacramento County Registrar of Voters Jill LaVine alerted Secretary Bowen’s office that five people supposedly living in a single apartment in the Folsom Cordova Unified School District (FCUSD) had filed voter registration forms shortly before a March 27, 2007 special election. Just 231 voters were registered in FCUSD, where a \$750 million dollar bond measure was narrowly defeated in November 2006. The measure was on the ballot again in a special election four months later. Secretary Bowen’s Election Fraud Investigation Unit found that two of the five registrants, David Martin and Tarah Meyer-Martin of Fair Oaks, claimed the Rancho Cordova apartment as their address though they had never moved from their Fair Oaks home. Martin and Meyer-Martin each voted an absentee ballot in the March 27 election and – as all absentee voters are required to do – signed their ballot envelopes declaring under penalty of perjury that they were residents of the precinct from which they were voting. The ballots cast by Martin and Meyer-Martin were set aside pending the Secretary’s investigation, and later disqualified by the county when the allegations were substantiated.

“Hats off to Jill LaVine and her staff, who started asking questions and got my investigations team involved early on when she noticed suspicious registrations just before a controversial bond measure was set to appear on the ballot,” said Secretary Bowen. “Voter fraud should never be taken lightly. This is a great example of county and state elections officials working together to prevent people from fraudulently registering to vote in an attempt to get their measure approved at the ballot box.”

The Sacramento County District Attorney has charged Martin and Meyer-Martin with two felonies each: one count of perjury and one count felony fraudulent voting (Elections Code 18560(a)). Their next court appearance is scheduled for August 15.

“I don’t think many people realize the consequences for making false statements on voter registration forms. The risk of being caught and the penalty far outweighs the advantage,” LaVine added.

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The Secretary of State's Election Fraud Investigation Unit helps maintain the integrity of the democratic process by investigating allegations of election and voter fraud in California. Potential Elections Code violations brought to the unit's attention are thoroughly investigated and referred to law enforcement officials for prosecution when there is sufficient evidence of wrongdoing. While the Secretary of State's office does not disclose information about the status of ongoing criminal investigations, the information from a case that culminates in a criminal complaint filed by a county or state prosecutor is a public record.

Anyone who has witnessed a violation of the California Elections Code is encouraged to contact the Secretary of State's Election Fraud Investigation Unit at 1-800-345-VOTE or www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_fraud.htm.

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