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Man given suspended sentence for '08 election fraud

From staff reports

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A Mineral man who voted improperly in the 2008 presidential election was given a suspended sentence Monday.

Bernard L. Pace, 55, was sentenced in Louisa County Circuit Court to five years behind bars, but all of the time was suspended, according to court records.

Pace pleaded guilty to election fraud and forgery under a plea agreement, said Rusty McGuire, deputy commonwealth's attorney. According to court records, charges of illegal voting and uttering were not prosecuted.

Pace and Bonnie L. Nicholson were indicted last year in connection with suspected illegal voting. Tom Garrett, commonwealth's attorney, has said Virginia State Police are investigating reports of organizations soliciting felons ineligible to vote to sign up again in time for the 2008 election.

Nicholson pleaded guilty last month to similar charges and received a similar suspended prison sentence along with a year of probation, court records show. McGuire has said Nicholson was a felon who was not permitted to vote.