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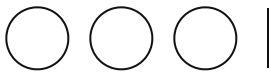
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**NEWS**

# Former Port Lavaca official gets prison for voter fraud

June 24, 2007



A former Port Lavaca city councilwoman was sentenced to five years in prison Monday for helping noncitizens register to vote in the March 2006 primary.

Debra Briseno, 51, was convicted by a Jackson County jury on Friday. The trial had been moved from Calhoun County at her lawyer's request.

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Briseno, who ran unsuccessfully for Calhoun County justice of the peace in 2006 as a Democrat, was also convicted of tampering with government documents.

Investigators said Briseno helped the noncitizen residents register to vote, telling them they only needed a driver's license to do so.

*My*Plainview

Under Texas law, noncitizens can obtain a driver's license but are not eligible to vote. Briseno then filled out the portion of the registration application inquiring about citizenship and falsely claimed that the individuals were citizens.

Tom Kelly, spokesman for state Attorney General Greg Abbott, said at least two of them tried to vote.

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"Texans will not tolerate illegal schemes that undermine the integrity of the electoral process," Abbott said in a released statement.

Both Briseno's confessions to lying to the jury and tampering with a government record were taken into consideration by Jackson County District Judge Joseph P. Kelly when he accepted the sentencing agreement.

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