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Felon gets two years in prison for voting twice, once for a Republican, once for a Democrat

BY GEORGE PAWLACZYK

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The last time Jesse Johnson served time in an Illinois maximum security prison was nearly 30 years ago after his convictions on weapons and drug counts.

But two weeks ago, Johnson, 53, who was caught by the St. Clair County Public Corruption Task Force, was sentenced to two years in state prison for voting twice in the 2016 primary election, once for a Republican and once for a Democrat. People who vote twice are usually suspected of being paid for their vote. Johnson was not convicted of selling his vote.

"Under Illinois state law violations of the election code are eligible for probation but this is the second case in a year where we have been able to obtain a prison sentence because of the criminal history of the defendant," St. Clair County State's Attorney Brendan Kelly said in a written statement.

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Kelly said Johnson's conviction was the ninth felony election code conviction in the county since 2010. It was the fourth in a year.

Election authorities tipped the corruption task force to the possibility that Johnson had violated the election law and the unit investigated.

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"The task force has been diligent about putting these cases together," Kelly said.

This story was originally published March 13, 2018 12:13 PM.

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