

County official pleads guilty to misdemeanor election fraud

By Associated Press

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LONGVIEW, Texas — An East Texas county commissioner and his wife have pleaded guilty to misdemeanor election fraud after reaching a plea deal that allows him to remain in office.

Gregg County Commissioner Shannon Brown and his wife Marlene Jackson entered their pleas Thursday before a state district judge in Longview. Both were sentenced to one year’s probation and fined \$2,000 each. District Attorney Tom Watson said he expected charges against two other co-defendants to be resolved similarly.

All four were charged in a [September 2020 indictment](#) containing 134 counts accusing them of vote harvesting during Brown’s 2018 Democratic primary campaign against former Longview City Council member Kasha Williams.

“Today, I have entered a plea to a misdemeanor for campaigning at a voter’s house and asking her to consider voting for me while she had possession of her mail-in ballot,” Brown said in a statement. “I did not realize at the time that doing so was a misdemeanor.”

State Sen. Bryan Hughes, an East Texas Republican, used Brown’s case as an example for the need for tighter election restrictions he pushed the Texas Legislature to pass last year. At Republican Gov. Greg Abbott’s signing ceremony for the bill, Hughes referred to an unnamed county commissioner under a mail ballot fraud indictment.

“Anybody who tells you there’s no voter fraud in Texas is telling you a very big lie,” he said.



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