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## 2 ballots cost woman \$1,000 plus probation

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Cathy E. LaMaster, 48, of 4154 Helenrose Lane, registered in Franklin County and also submitted a registration for her daughter in Guernsey County. She then voted twice using absentee ballots, the charges say.

"I don't remember doing it. But it was possible" that she voted under her daughter's name, LaMaster said last night. "If it's true, I won't continue to try to take care of my daughter's business anymore."

LaMaster's daughter, a student at Muskingum College, had properly registered and voted using a Franklin County absentee ballot. She was not aware of her mother's actions and was not charged, authorities said.

LaMaster was given a suspended six-month jail sentence, a year's probation and a \$1,000 fine. She also was ordered to pay court costs.

According to voter registration records, LaMaster has voted in Republican primaries. She declined to say how she voted in November.

She was charged in Franklin County because she both filed her registrations and submitted her absentee ballots within the county.

The double registration was discovered by the Franklin and Guernsey county boards of election during reviews of duplicate voter registrations, part of federally required procedures.

“Although vote fraud is historically rare in Franklin County, this conviction should serve as a strong warning to anyone tempted to register or vote illegally that safeguards and procedures are in place to address it whenever it occurs,” said Michael Stinziano, director of the Franklin County elections board.

About 40 names of people suspected of improper voting have been referred to Franklin County prosecutors, said Matthew Damschroder, deputy director of the elections board.

The last voter-fraud conviction in Franklin County happened after the November 2007 election, when a Reynoldsburg resident cast ballots in both Franklin and Licking counties.

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