

# The Columbus Dispatch

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## Pair fined in cases of voter fraud

Posted Dec 3, 2009 at 12:01 AM

Updated Dec 14, 2009 at 12:09 PM

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Terry Belli, 63, of Gahanna, and Michele S. Finney, 49, of Columbus, were fined \$1,000 and given 180 days in jail. But Judge Charles A. Schneider of Franklin County Common Pleas Court said he will suspend the jail time if the fines are paid by March 1.

Belli voted in both Fairfield and Franklin counties. Finney voted and also signed her son's absentee ballot, according to Schneider. Finney could not be reached Tuesday, and Belli declined to comment.

Franklin County Prosecutor Ron O'Brien confirmed the plea deals, which involved a misdemeanor charge in each case, but he did not elaborate.

O'Brien has said he continues to pursue a handful of voter-fraud cases from the 2008 election after prosecuting six people in voting-related cases last year. O'Brien said his office investigated 55 people referred by the Franklin County Board of Elections based on media reports or other sources.

The cases involved allegations of voting more than once, not being U.S. citizens, and improperly registering and voting -- especially campaign workers and others who were not Ohio residents but came to the battleground state to help swing the presidential election.

O'Brien said he has drafted a protocol for investigating allegations of voter fraud in the future to speed up the process. He also has suggested that the state law outlining residency for voting purposes needs to be clarified.

Dispatch reporter Bruce Cadwallader contributed to this story.

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