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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Western District of Virginia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Harrisonburg Man Pleads Guilty to Submitting Fraudulent Voter Registration Forms**

**Andrew J. Spieles Caused 18 False and Fraudulent Voter Registration Forms to be submitted to the Harrisonburg Registrar's Office in Connection with the November 2016 National Election**

HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA – Acting United States Attorney Rick A. Mountcastle announced today that a former staffer with Harrisonburg Votes, a political organization affiliated with the Democratic Party, who was paid to register area voters during the weeks leading up to the 2016 National Election, admitted in federal court that he caused 18 fraudulent Virginia Voter Registration Forms to be submitted to the local registrar's office.

Andrew J. Spieles, 21, Harrisonburg, pled guilty today in the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia in Harrisonburg to a one-count Information charging him with knowingly transferring false Virginia Voter Registration Forms. As part of the plea agreement, Spieles agreed to a prison sentence of 100 to 120 days.

According to evidence presented at today's guilty plea hearing by Assistant United States Attorney Jeb Terrien, in July 2016 Spieles' job was to register as many voters as possible and reported to Democratic Campaign headquarters in Harrisonburg.

In August 2016, Spieles was directed to combine his registration numbers with those of another individual because their respective territories overlapped. After filling out a registration form for a voter, Spieles entered the information into a computer system used by the Virginia Democratic Party to track information such as name, age, address and political affiliation. Every Thursday an employee/volunteer hand-delivered the paper copies of the registration forms to the Registrar's Office in Harrisonburg.

On August 15, 2016, an employee of the Registrar's Office contacted law enforcement after another employee in the office recognized a registration form submitted in the name of the deceased father of a Rockingham County Judge. The Registrar's Office discovered multiple instances of similarly falsified forms when it reviewed additional registrations. Some were in the names of deceased individuals while others bore incorrect middle names, birth dates, and social security numbers. The Registrar's Office learned that the

individuals named in these forms had not in fact submitted the new voter registrations. The assistant registrar's personal knowledge of the names of some of the individuals named in the falsified documents facilitated the detection of the crime.

Spieles admitted that he prepared the false voter registration forms by obtaining the name, age, and address of individuals from "walk sheets" provided to him by the Virginia Democratic Party, fabricating a birth date based on the ages listed in the walk sheet, and fabricating the social security numbers. Spieles admitted that he created all 18 fraudulent forms himself and that no one else participated in the crime.

The investigation of the case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Harrisonburg Police Department. The Rockingham County Commonwealth's Attorney's office also assisted in the investigation. Assistant United States Attorney Jeb Terrien prosecuted the case for the United States.

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**Component(s):**

USAO - Virginia, Western

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