

## State Rep. Hudson Hallum pleads wth 3 others in absentee vote fraud case; resigns from legislature

BY **Max Brantley** ON September 5, 2012 5:15 pm

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HUDSON HALLUM: News coming in probe of absentee votes in his race.



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- HUDSON HALLUM: Pleads guilty in election fraud; resigns from office.

UPDATE: The U.S. attorney's office has announced that four men, including Democratic **state Rep. Hudson Hallum** of Marion, pleaded guilty today to felony conspiracy to commit election fraud in Hallum's special election victory last year. The case charges paying for bundled absentee ballots.

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All four appeared today in federal court and were released on their own recognizance. The others were Hallum's father, **Kent Hallum**, a car dealer; West Memphis police officer **Sam Malone** and West Memphis City Councilman **Phillip Carter**.

[Here's the indictment.](#)

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PHILLIP CARTER: W.

Memphis councilman organized absentee vote scheme, indictment says.

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It says Carter had used the same absentee ballot fraud strategy in other elections at the state and federal level. Carter organized others, including Malone, a Quorum Court member, School Board member and police officer, to participate. They identified people likely to vote absentee, based on past elections, and arranged to have absentee ballots mailed. They tracked the progress of mailing and completing the ballots and paid voters in cash and other ways for Hallum votes, as well as

checking to see how they voted. In one case, \$20 was provided for a "family meal" for eight. Ballots for opponent Kim Felker were destroyed. They also conspired to evade the law that limits the number of absentee ballots a bearer may possess. Hallum, who won the runoff by 8 votes, got 394 of his 880 votes by absentee vote. Hallum himself mailed bundles of the absentee votes his group had collected. The group also purchased half pints of vodka to distribute on election day. When questions were raised about the absentee votes, the Hallum group paid \$25 each to absentee voters to affirm their votes for Hallum at an Election Commission hearing. The voters came from District 54, which includes West Memphis, Marion, Earle, and Turrell, Arkansas, as well as other rural areas of Crittenden County.

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Said the indictment:

On or about May 22, 2011, PHILLIP WAYNE CARTER discussed the HALLUM campaign's absentee ballot strategy with an individual known to the Attorney for the United States and stated, "Folk gonna vote for whoever pay them."

[Here's the news release on the case.](#) Jane Duke led the investigation and was quoted:

"The most fundamental rights we enjoy as American citizens include the ability to vote and, if we so choose, to run for elected office. In a nation in which every person's vote matters, protecting the integrity of the electoral process from those who seek to win office by cheating the system is critical. Voter fraud schemes such as that carried out in the 2011 District 54 race have the devastating effect of eroding public confidence in elected officials and disenfranchising voters," said Duke.

Members of the House Democratic caucus received this e-mail from Hallum's address before the announcement:

Hello everyone,

It is with deep regret that I am sending this message out to each of you today. This afternoon I am going to plead guilty to federal charges stemming from an investigation into my special election. I took some bad advice that led to some bad decisions on my part. I am going to stand up and accept full responsibility for my actions. I am truly sorry because I know this news will have an effect on everyone's upcoming race. I would give anything to be able to change what happened but unfortunately I can not undo the past. Please accept my apologies and if any needs to contact me my number is 9013015650. It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve with each of you and our state is a better place for what you have done

Sincerely,

Hudson

Hudson Hallum

Chief Paramedic, Crittenden EMS

State Representative (D-Marion)

Sent from my iPhone

A Democratic Party spokesman confirmed to me that Hallum resigned from office today. Candace Martin issued this statement:

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We are disappointed by the actions taken by Rep. Hallum. The sanctity of our elections and the rights of voters to see that every vote is counted fairly and responsibly are some of the basic, fundamental liberties of our democracy. No threat to those liberties can or should be endured. Hudson Hallum is taking responsibility for his actions and we hope that will help resolve things in a way to see that such activities will never be tolerated.

Sentencing will come later after pre-sentence reports. The maximum statutory penalty for the conspiracy charge is 5 years imprisonment plus a potential fine of \$250,000. The statements so far make no mention of inducements in sentencing for the guilty pleas.

The news release said special state prosecutor H.G. Foster will continue to investigate other potential fraud in the special election.

**Max Brantley**

Editor of the Times since it became a weekly in May 1992.

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