



DEBRA BOWEN

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE NEWS RELEASE

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Secretary of State Debra Bowen Announces Felony Conviction in Orange County Voter Registration Fraud Case

SACRAMENTO – An Anaheim signature gatherer has been convicted of felony voter registration fraud for using deceptive means to re-register Orange County voters, Secretary of State Debra Bowen announced today.

Donahue Farrow pleaded guilty Tuesday in Orange County Superior Court, where he was sentenced to 46 days in jail and three years of probation. While on probation, Farrow is forbidden from participating in any voter registration or signature-gathering activities.

The Orange County Registrar of Voters and the Orange County Democratic Party alerted the Secretary of State's office in March 2006 of complaints from voters that signature gatherers were tricking them into re-registering to vote or were changing their party affiliation without their consent.

The Secretary of State's Election Fraud Investigation Unit's probe revealed that Farrow and other signature gatherers, motivated by a \$10 bounty for each new registered voter, deceived voters into re-registering. For example, Farrow would falsely tell voters that state law required them to register again before they could sign initiative petitions. In connection with the probe, Orange County District Attorney Tony Rackauckas charged 12 people with multiple counts of felony voter registration fraud. Farrow was the eighth to plead guilty.

"Lying to voters and forcing them to re-register in order to pocket a few bucks is unacceptable," said Secretary Bowen, California's chief elections officer. As a state Senator, Secretary Bowen attempted to ban the practice of paying initiative circulators per-signature bounties because such payment can encourage fraud. "Congratulations to Orange County Registrar of Voters Neal Kelley and his staff for alerting my office to this fraud, and to Orange County District Attorney Tony Rackauckas for diligently pursuing these cases."

The Secretary of State's Election Fraud Investigation Unit helps maintain the integrity of the electoral process by investigating allegations of election and voter fraud in California. Potential Elections Code violations brought to the unit's attention are thoroughly investigated and referred to law enforcement officials for prosecution when there is sufficient evidence of wrongdoing. The Secretary of State's office does not disclose information about the status of ongoing criminal

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investigations, but the information from a case that results in a criminal complaint filed by a county or state prosecutor is a public record.

Anyone who has witnessed a violation of the California Elections Code is encouraged to contact the Secretary of State's Election Fraud Investigation Unit at 1-800-345-VOTE or http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_fraud.htm.

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