

Hull man pleads guilty in voter fraud case in Madison County

By Wayne Ford

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A Hull man has pleaded guilty to the felony crimes of fraudulently altering voter registration cards during the 2012 election in Madison County.

Mohammad Shafiq, 45, of Hidden Falls Drive entered pleas on May 5 to two counts of voter identification fraud and three counts of tampering with evidence in Madison County Superior Court, according to Northern Circuit District Attorney Parks White.

The judge sentenced Shafiq to 10 years on probation and imposed a \$6,750 fine.

The district attorney and Shafiq's attorney negotiated the guilty plea with an agreement on the probation, but left the fine up the discretion of the judge.

Shafiq faced a fine of about \$300,000 and Parks said the defendant had "considerable resources" in which to pay a large fine, which he argued should be imposed.

The investigation in 2012 occurred after Madison County Probate Judge Cody Cross learned of possible altered voter registration application cards. Those fraudulent cards were later traced to Shafiq, who at the time owned the Kwik-Mart store on U.S. Highway 29 in Hull. Shafiq has since sold the store.

During the election, Shafiq surfaced as an issue in the race between Sheriff Kip Thomas, who was re-elected, and his opponent Clayton Lowe. Shafiq filed an harassment claim with the U.S. Justice Department alleging Lowe, a former sheriff who once arrested him for commercial gambling, had threatened him and that a former deputy insisted he remove campaign signs supporting Thomas that were placed at the store.

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