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Galligan aide indicted for voter fraud

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Mike Marshall, the man in charge of soliciting absentee ballots in the re-election campaign of Jeffersonville Mayor Tom Galligan, resigned Friday after being indicted on vote fraud, perjury and forgery charges.

A Jennings County Grand Jury issued 66 indictments on Marshall, his son Christopher Marshall and a third Jennings resident, John Cook on Friday. The charges follow an investigation by the Indiana State Police, according to a press release from special prosecutor Aaron Negangard. The investigation stemmed from voter fraud issues regarding absentee ballots and applications submitted in Jennings County in 2010.

Galligan and other local Democrats all said they had no knowledge that Marshall faced the Jennings County charges when he was hired.

In a short interview on Friday, the mayor acknowledged that he'd been working with Marshall for the last eight months. He said he knew his family and that he had campaign experience working in the re-election campaign of Rep. Terry Goodin, a Democrat, and one of Southern Indiana's state house representatives.

Marshall was one of several people that Galligan personally thanked during his victory speech on primary night in May. According to the latest campaign finance reports, filed Friday, Galligan's campaign paid Marshall's business, North Vernon-based At Your Service Co., more than \$52,710.23 through the year — almost a third of the campaign's total expenditures.

“He was in charge of getting out the vote,” Galligan said. When asked to elaborate on what those duties entailed, he referred questions to campaign manager Phil McCauley.

McCauley said Marshall supervised a staff of about five people who would solicit eligible voters to vote by absentee ballot. Marshall and staff also made phone calls on Galligan’s behalf, McCauley said.

McCauley said he had not heard about the indictment until a reporter called him about Friday afternoon.

“It’s a stunner,” he said.

He called Marshall and read him media coverage of the indictments over the phone.

“He offered me his resignation on the spot,” McCauley said.

“The reason we got Mike Marshall involved was because we thought he was squeaky clean. We wanted everything 100 percent clean,” McCauley said.

WHAT HAPPENED

McCauley questioned why there were so many counts listed on the indictment considering early media reports that the allegations came from only one absentee ballot last year.

Negangard said that one ballot brought the activity to light but multiple discrepancies were brought forth after police investigated.

Republicans in Jennings County challenged several absentee ballots that were submitted in 2010, according to Negangard. Democrats subsequently ran an advertisement in the North Vernon Plain Dealer accusing the Republicans of trying to deny those absentee voters their constitutional rights. One of those voters identified in the ad was a Marine named Ben Cook, who later signed a sworn affidavit stating he’d never cast a ballot. That initiated the larger investigation.

Negangard said none of Marshall’s charges were related to the Ben Cook matter, but actually to later findings.

Marshall faces 12 counts of forgery, a class C felony that could carry a maximum of eight years in prison; 20 counts of voter fraud and 13 counts of perjury – both of which are class D felonies, punishable by up to three years in prison each. Negangard said arrest warrants would be issued Monday if they haven't already. Once those indicted are arrested, an initial hearing date will be set and the case would move through the legal system like any other.

Attempts to reach Marshall Friday were unsuccessful.

REACTION

By Friday afternoon, it was unclear whether Galligan's was the only local campaign on which Marshall was working. McCauley said he didn't know. Democratic Party Chairman Rod Pate said he wasn't aware of Marshall working on any other campaigns in the county.

The News and Tribune was told that Clarksville Town Councilman David Fisher had hired Marshall. His campaign finance report did not reflect such, however. A reporter attempted to contact Fisher to confirm it directly but the call was disconnected as soon as the question was asked. Fisher did not return a subsequent call.

Pate said he believed the indictment was political in nature.

"People make accusations all the time," he said. "It's like farting in an elevator and blaming it on the guy next to you," he said.

Galligan faces Republican Mike Moore and Libertarian Bob Isgrigg in his re-election campaign. Election Day is Nov. 8.

Conversation

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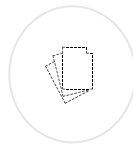


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