

**Judge sentences last EC vote fraud convict**

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**C**ROWN POINT | A Lake Criminal Court judge declined Wednesday to **Judge sentences last EC vote fraud convict** SHARE THIS  
imprison an East Chicago city employee who pleaded guilty to vote fraud, but also proclaimed his innocence in court.

"I'm sorry for the crime I done, but I never stole votes. I never changed any ballot," Terrance Lay, the 30-year-old security manager for the East Chicago Utilities Department, told Judge Salvador Vasquez Tuesday morning.

The judge placed Lay on one year probation and ordered him to do 120 hours community service, but suspended a one-year jail term he also imposed on Lay's guilty plea to a misdemeanor charge.

Lay admitted he procured and handled an absentee ballot for his brother-in-law during the 2003 Democratic primary election in violation of state law that forbids anyone but the voter or a close family member from handling absentee ballots.

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Defense lawyer John Cantrell, representing Lay, said, "If the ballot had been for Lay's sister it wouldn't have been a violation. Lay told the judge, "It was a technical error. I made a mistake." Lay was an unsuccessful candidate for city council in that election.

Vasquez said Lay was one of 46 people convicted of vote fraud in that election, "I can't take these matters lightly. As (Deputy Prosecutor Angela Brown) said, it was the theft of an election.

"But I will assess this case only on what you did, not what everyone else did. Should you be locked up, certainly not," the Judge said.

Lay was the last person to be convicted by the Joint Vote Fraud Task Force, **Judge sentences last EC vote fraud convict** SHARE THIS formed in the wake of the 2003 primary where eight-term Mayor Robert Pastrick won the 2003 contest by a thin margin, only to have the Indiana Supreme Court overturn the results because of systematic vote fraud involving absentee ballots cast from empty lots or vacant homes, by people living outside the city or who received improper assistance from campaign workers.

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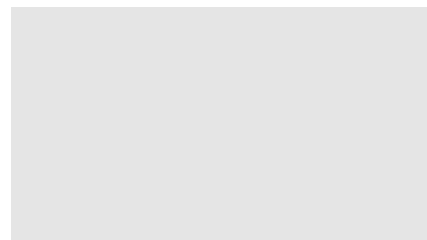
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