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Final Defendant Pleads Guilty in Monroe County, Kentucky Vote-Buying Scheme

Six Tompkinsville, Kentucky Residents Admit Paying for Votes in the 2006 General Election

U.S. Attorney's Office

December 08, 2011

Western District of Kentucky

(502) 582-5911

LOUISVILLE, KY—A Tompkinsville, Kentucky woman is the last of six defendants to plead guilty to charges of conspiring to buy votes in the 2006 General Election in Monroe County, Kentucky, announced David J. Hale, United States Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky and Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

Martha Hughes, age 49, averted a trial scheduled for next week and pled guilty, before U.S. Magistrate Judge E. Robert Goebel in Bowling Green, Kentucky on December 7, 2011 to conspiring to knowingly and willfully pay and offering to pay voters for voting in the general election.

"Attempts to corrupt the election process will simply not be tolerated," stated David J. Hale, United States Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky. "Vote buying is a serious crime. It undermines our democratic process and weakens public confidence in the election system. My office, in partnership with the FBI, will continue to pursue those who would attempt to subvert free and fair elections in Kentucky."

The Indictment alleges that beginning in October, 2006, and continuing to the date of the general election on November 7, 2006, Tony Gumm, Martha J. Hughes, Jeffrey Todd Newport, William H. Proffitt, Corey Page, and Michael Page, conspired to pay voters to cast walk-in absentee ballots. The object of the conspiracy was to secure the election for Gumm and other candidates. At the time, Gumm was a write-in candidate for Monroe County Magistrate.

All six defendants have admitted to participating in this scheme in which voters were instructed to lie about their intended whereabouts on Election Day, and to falsely state they were blind, disabled or unable to read English and thus in need of assistance to vote. Members of the conspiracy would then accompany the voters into the booth to cast the voters' ballot. The indictment specifies 17 voters who were paid \$25 to \$80 for voting in the election.

Tony A. Gumm pled guilty and was sentenced to serve three years' probation, with eight months home detention and pay a \$4,000 fine on July 21, 2011 in U.S. District Court, Bowling Green, Kentucky by Chief Judge Joseph H. McKinley, Jr.

On June 9, 2011, William H. Proffitt entered a guilty plea in United States District Court and is scheduled to be sentenced on December 22, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. before Chief Judge McKinley. Michael Page, age 52, and his nephew Corey Page, age 31, pled guilty on Monday, December 5, 2011 before U.S. Magistrate Judge Goebel in Owensboro, Kentucky. Todd Newport, age 28, pled guilty as well before Magistrate Judge Goebel Friday, December 2, 2011 in Bowling Green, Kentucky. The maximum potential penalties for Proffitt, Newport, Michael Page and Corey Page are five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and supervised release for a period of three years. Michael and Corey Page are scheduled for sentencing on March 2, 2012 in U.S. District Court in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Martha Hughes remains on bond, and is scheduled to be sentenced on March 2, 2012, at 9 a.m., CST, before Chief Judge McKinley. The maximum potential penalty for Hughes is five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and supervised release for a period of three years.

In a separate federal indictment, the former Monroe County Judge-Executive, Wilbur Graves, and three Tompkinsville residents were charged with conspiracy to buy votes during the same 2006 Monroe County, Kentucky general election. After a three day trial, Graves was convicted of conspiring with others to buy votes in order to guarantee his re-election. Gary Bartley pled guilty while Ronald Muse and Wanda Moore entered plea agreements with the United States Attorney's Office and testified against Graves at trial.

Both cases were prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Thomas W. Dyke, Assistant United States Attorney Randy Ream, Chief of the Criminal Division for the United States Attorney's Office, Teddy Kang and Edward Sullivan, Trial Attorneys with the Department of Justice Public Integrity Section. This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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