

[https://www.dailyindependent.com/opinion/editorials/elected-indicted-11-13-06/article\\_e9762a4a-f051-5a06-aca1-62cd98b4d9c2.html](https://www.dailyindependent.com/opinion/editorials/elected-indicted-11-13-06/article_e9762a4a-f051-5a06-aca1-62cd98b4d9c2.html)

## Elected, indicted — 11/13/06

Nov 10, 2006



A day after the Nov. 8 General Election, the May 16 primary made headlines in Bath County with yet another politician indicted in connection with what federal prosecutors say was wide-spread voter fraud in that election.

A day after Walter Bascom Shrout was re-elected Bath County judge-executive, federal prosecutors unsealed an indictment charging Shrout with conspiracy to buy votes, making false statements to a federal agent and obstruction of justice,

Shrout defeated fellow Democrat Danny Michael Swartz, who was indicted on similar charges in July. In fact, Shrout's indictment brings to 10 the number of Bath County residents charged with vote fraud as part of the ongoing federal investigation that began when Bath County Clerk Glen Thomas alerted federal and state officials of suspicious activities in the primary.

Prosecutors claim Shrout gave cash to at least five people with instructions to use the money to buy votes in the primary race for Bath County judge-executive. The obstruction of justice charge stems from Shrout allegedly trying to persuade the people who received the money not to talk to investigators.

Also indicted in connection with the investigation is Donald "Champ" Maze of Owingsville, who defeated incumbent Bath County Attorney Kim Price in the Democratic primary. Maze had no opposition Tuesday and is in line to become in county's chief prosecutor of misdemeanor criminal cases.

What raised Thomas' suspicions was the number of absentee ballots cast in the primary. In the last two weeks before the primary, 525 voters cast absentee ballots in Bath County. In 2002 — the last year county races were on the ballot — only a total of 239 absentee ballots were cast in the Bath

County primary. Dishonest politicians have a long history in Kentucky of using absentee ballots in an attempt to rig elections. In 2002, for example, more absentee ballots were cast in some small, rural counties than in urban counties like Jefferson and Fayette.

It never seems to fail that whenever there are county races are on the ballot in Kentucky, charges of vote buying and other shenanigans arise. However, there is a bright side to this: In both 1998 and 2002 federal charges of voter fraud led to some well publicized convictions, a change from the days when juries in some counties refused to convict those charged with rigging elections despite a mountain of evidence against them.

All the indictments coming out of the May primary in Bath County is bound to have shaken the confidence of voters in the election process. True democracy demands fair elections.

There are at least two things that are disturbing about vote buying. One is that politicians think they have to buy votes to win. The other is that some people think so little of having the privilege to choose their leaders that they are willing to sell their vote to the highest bidder.

## Daily Independent Events

 [See All Events](#)  [Add your event](#)

Thu, Oct 01

Sun, Oct 04

Wed, Oct 07

Wed, Oct 07

Wed



### Fall Revival

Kellogg Church of God



THU  
1

FRI  
2

SAT  
3

SUN  
4

MON  
5

TUE  
6

WED  
7

THU  
8

FRI  
9

SAT  
10

SUN  
11

MON  
12

TUE  
13

### Weekly services

Sybene Missionary Baptist...

### Callihan's Acoustic Jam Session

Callihan's American Pub &...

### Story Time Fun

Highlands Museum &...

### Mei

Par...

