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## Three face felonies for ballot delivery

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**By Charles Sercombe**

The Attorney General's Office said it would act

quickly in its investigation into various allegations of illegal election activity in the August Primary Election.

A week after the AG took up its investigation, the first round of charges were announced on Wednesday.

Three Hamtramck men face felony charges of delivering absentee ballots to the city clerk's office from people not related to them or members of their household.

State law says that those who vote by absentee ballot can deliver the ballots themselves, through the mail or by a member of their immediate family or a household member.

Anyone else delivering the ballots is unauthorized by law.

The investigation had originally been handled by the Hamtramck Police Department after Deputy City Clerk August Gitschlag reported three men illegally dropped off a total of 48 absentee ballots.

The result of the investigation went to the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, which turned it over to the AG's office. In the meantime, those ballots were counted in the primary election.

One of the men, Armani Asad, 33, was an unsuccessful candidate for city council.

The other men charged are Mohammed Russell, 32, and Salim Ahmed, 50.

Asad is charged with 14 counts of improper return of ballots, while Russell is charged with six counts and Ahmed is charged with 21 counts of the same charge.

If convicted, they face a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$1,000 fine.

Arraignment was scheduled for Thursday, the day The Review went to press. According to the AG's office, the men will have to come up with 10 percent of \$10,000 for bail in order to stay out of jail while further legal proceedings take place.

Speaking about the charges, Attorney General Bill Schuette said in a press release:

“Preserving the integrity of the voting process is vital to maintaining the foundation of our free democracy. On election day, voters cast their ballot to make sure their voice is heard. We will not tolerate election law violations.”

An investigation into allegations of fraud and ballot tampering continues.

At last week's Board of Canvassers meeting in Hamtramck, which was held to confirm a ballot recount of the mayoral election and the race for the two-year term on city council, the two candidates who requested the recount said they were offered money in exchange for votes.

Cathie Gordon, a city councilmember who ran for mayor, also said that because there was a much higher than usual number of absentee votes, there was a likelihood of voter fraud.

Usually a primary election will have about 300 voters voting absentee. In the primary election last month, over 700 absentee ballots were cast. However, there is an explanation for the increase. Some have said that because the primary election was held during Ramadan, many voters decided to vote absentee.

Hamtramck has a large Muslim voting bloc, and during Ramadan Muslims fast during the day, and many sleep through the day or restrict their movements to avoid becoming thirsty.

### **3 Responses to *Three face felonies for ballot delivery***

**Steve**

*September 23, 2013 at 6:00 am*

Hassan had a meeting yesterday on Conant. I heard they were talking sh\*t about Anam Miah and Cathie Gordon. Hassan is trying to confuse the community n trying to make it about Anam and avoid the real problem. Hassan is bad for not just bangladeshi community. He is bad for everyone in hamtramck.

***state***

*October 10, 2013 at 2:33 pm*

This is disappointing. And trying to put the attention on council members that are doing their job? Shameful. The bangladeshi community need to really evaluate who they want representing them.

***Just Another Hamtramckan***

*October 20, 2013 at 12:23 am*

Honestly speaking, as a Bangladeshi-American myself, I do not support most of these Bangladeshi candidates. We as kids learned how the government works, from federal to state and maybe municipal. We learned about the branches, checks and balances, and all of that. We took a semester with political science in college. We watched the government in popular culture. But a lot of these men do not even know what the three branches of the federal government are nor have they ever taken a class about political science, civics or American government. This is their game right here: "Hey, I'm Bangladeshi. You're Bangladeshi. That's why you should vote for me. I can help you guys".

Now, Im not speaking for all the candidates. I have my confidence in Anam Miah as I have seen him working. I dont know him personally nor do I communicate with him often, so I am not being biased.

Yeah, it's nice to have a multicultural city council. Especially a person to represent to represent their own culture so that they can approach that part of the community easily. But we need educated and smart people doing it.

Working in City Hall is hell! Like the newspaper states before, it's toxic! Bickering and debating to death until they vote while giving evil looks at each other. Have you attended a city hall meeting? Screw watching a live play, there is so much drama happening at the meeting. And if there is no drama, there is plenty of dirty looks or arguing, making it a lot interesting.