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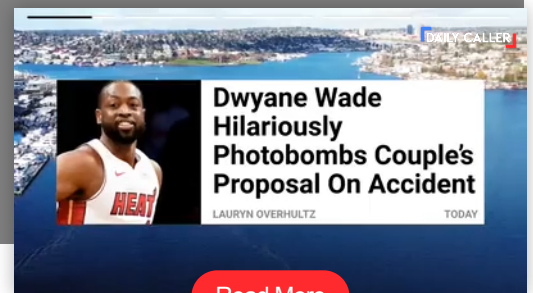
Mississippi NAACP leader sent to prison for 10 counts of voter fraud

Voting Station**MATTHEW VADUM**

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While NAACP President Benjamin Jealous lashed out at new state laws requiring photo ID for voting, an NAACP executive sits in prison, sentenced for carrying out a massive voter fraud scheme.

In a story ignored by the national media, in April a Tunica County, Miss., jury convicted NAACP official Lessadolla Sowers on 10 counts of fraudulently casting absentee ballots. Sowers is identified on an NAACP website as a member of the Tunica County NAACP Executive Committee.

Sowers received a five-year prison term for each of the 10 counts, but Circuit Court Judge Charles Webster permitted Sowers to serve those terms concurrently, according to the Tunica Times, the only media outlet to cover the sentencing.

“This crime cuts against the fabric of our free society,” Judge Webster said.

Sowers was found guilty of voting in the names of Carrie Collins, Walter Howard, Sheena Shelton, Alberta Pickett, Draper Cotton and Eddie Davis. She was also convicted of voting in the names of four dead persons: James L. Young, Dora Price, Dorothy Harris, and David Ross.

In the trial, forensic scientist Bo Scales testified that Sowers’s DNA was found on the inner seals of five envelopes containing absentee ballots.

This wasn’t Sowers’s first run-in with the law. Sowers previously had her probation revoked for disturbing the peace at a junior high school library, the Commercial Appeal of Memphis reported in 1990. During a hearing at that time, Sowers played the race card. She claimed to be the victim of “an attempt by powerful whites to silence” her, the newspaper reported. It didn’t work. She was ordered back to prison to complete the remaining two years of a three-year sentence she received for check forgery.



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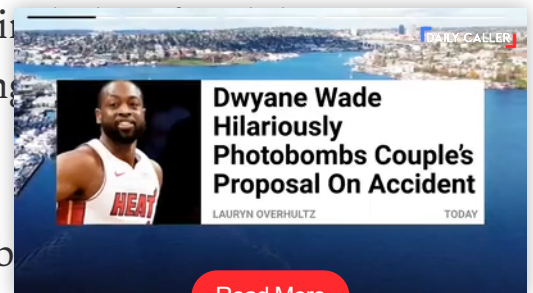


The NAACP has had other problems with voter fraud. The NAACP National Voter Fund registered a dead man to vote in Lake County, Ohio, in 2004. That same year, out of 325 voter registration cards filed by the NAACP in Cleveland, 48 were flagged as fraudulent.

But the NAACP's voter fraud record doesn't approach that of ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now. At least 54 individuals employed by or associated with ACORN have been convicted of voter fraud.

Voter fraud, sometimes called electoral fraud, is a blanket term used by lawyers that encompasses a host of election-related improprieties including voter registration fraud, perjury, forgery, counterfeiting, intimidation, and identity fraud.

And ACORN, which filed for bankruptcy last November, was convicted of voter fraud in Nevada in April. Sentencing is scheduled for Aug. 10 in Las Vegas. ACORN was also banished from Ohio in 2010 when it settled a state racketeering case filed against it by the 1851 Center for Constitutional Law, a project of the Buckeye



Institute. Under the settlement ACORN, which is now reorganizing its state chapters under different names, agreed never to return to the state.

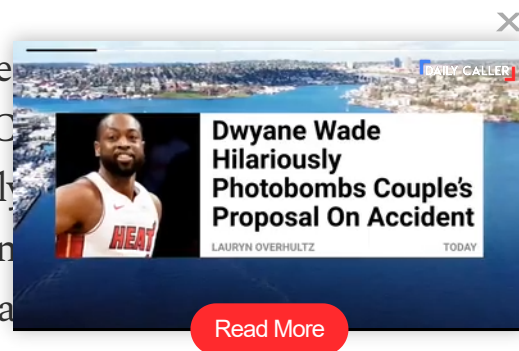
Election experts say voter fraud is fairly common, but progressive activists typically insist that the crime is virtually nonexistent. Republicans, they say, routinely exaggerate claims of voter fraud in order to whip their political base into a frenzy and push for voter ID laws. Liberals say such laws are unfair, and claim that they discourage minorities and the poor from voting.

The NAACP's Jealous said Monday at the group's 102nd annual convention in Los Angeles that photo ID laws are part of an attempt to disenfranchise minorities through some "of the last existing legal pillars of Jim Crow." Such laws stem from "the worst and most racist elements" in conservative Tea Party groups, he said.

Stephen Colbert, the liberal comedian who portrays an overbearing conservative Republican on his cable TV show "The Colbert Report," broadcast a segment this week ridiculing Republicans for treating voter fraud as a serious problem.

Some Democrats, however, aren't laughing. The office of District Attorney Brenda F. Mitchell, a registered Democrat who serves Mississippi's 11th Circuit Court District, successfully prosecuted Sowers. Mitchell was appointed to the post by Republican Gov. Haley Barbour in January 2010 after the previous DA resigned. She's now seeking the Democratic nomination for the office in a primary election scheduled for Aug. 2.

Mitchell doesn't appear to be a conservative. She serves far-left, New York-based public interest law firm the Center for Constitutional Rights. That firm represented ACORN in an ultimately unsuccessful lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of a federal law defunding ACORN. Mitchell didn't return calls seeking comment for this article.



U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, Minnesota Democrat, is also no conservative. But she won a conviction against Joshua Reed for voter registration fraud in 2004 when she was

the Hennepin County, Minn. Prosecutor.

“It was very important for the public integrity of our electoral system that somebody, if they do something like this, gets charged, gets convicted and gets consequences,” Klobuchar said at the time.

Democrats, including Nevada Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto, Pittsburgh District Attorney Stephen A. Zappala Jr., and Miami, Fla., State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle, have all vigorously prosecuted voter fraud cases.

Matthew Vadum is a senior editor at Capital Research Center, a Washington, D.C. think tank. Vadum’s book, *Subversion Inc.*, was published in 2011.

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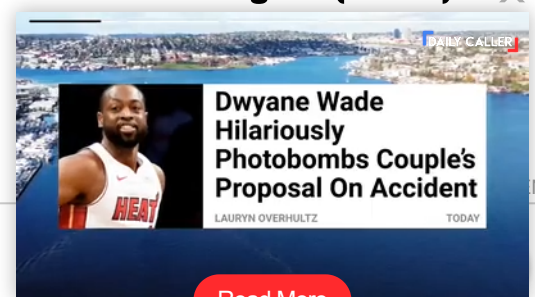
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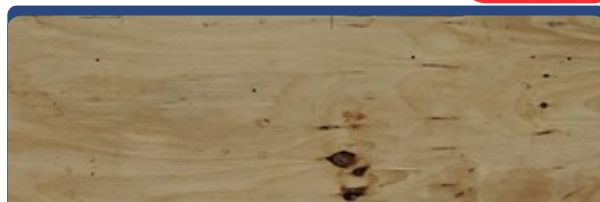
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