



OAG Home

OAG Services from A - Z

Servicios en Español

OAG Contact

News Release

OAG Home

Gurbir S. Grewal
Attorney General



Contact OAG	About OAG
OAG News	OAG FAQs
OAG Library	Employment
OAG Grants	Proposed Rules
OAG History	Services A-Z

Agencies / Programs / Units

Other News Pages

Governor's Office
Otras Noticias en Español (OAG)
Civil Rights (Division of)
Consumer Affairs (Division of)
Criminal Justice (Division of)
Election Law Enforcement Comm.
Gaming Enforcement (Div. of)
Highway Traffic Safety (Division of)
Insurance Fraud Prosecutor (Office of)
Juvenile Justice Commission
State Police (Division of NJ)
Law (Division of)

For Immediate Release:

March 20, 2014

Office of The Attorney General

- John J. Hoffman, *Acting Attorney General*

Division of Criminal Justice

- Elie Honig, *Director*

For Further Information:

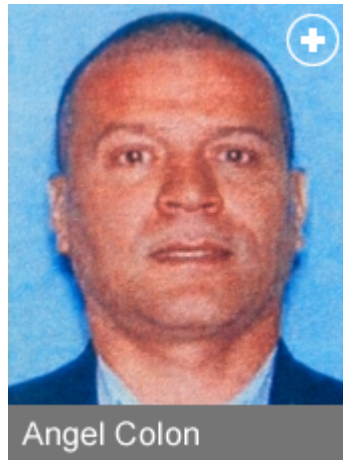
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Former Campaign Worker in Essex County Sentenced to Prison for Ballot Fraud in 2007 Races in 29th Legislative District



Angel Colon

TRENTON – Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman announced that a Newark man was sentenced to prison today for submitting fraudulent absentee ballots while working for the 2007 campaign of Teresa Ruiz for the New Jersey Senate.

Angel Colon, 51, of Newark, was sentenced today to three years in state prison by Superior Court Judge Thomas W. Summers Jr. Colon pleaded guilty on July 29, 2011 to a charge of second-degree election fraud in a case filed by the Division of Criminal Justice Corruption Bureau. Colon admitted that he fraudulently submitted absentee “messenger” ballots on behalf of voters who never received the ballots or had an opportunity to cast their votes.

Second-degree crimes carry a presumption of a state prison sentence, but Colon was initially sentenced by Judge Summers on Jan. 19, 2012 to five years of probation, over the state’s objection. Deputy Attorney General Vincent J. Militello had requested a sentence of three years in prison, consistent with the plea agreement. The Division of Criminal Justice appealed the sentence, and the Appellate Division ruled in the state’s favor, declaring that the record did not support the judge’s finding that imprisoning the defendant would result in “serious injustice.”

“Justice demanded that Colon serve a state prison sentence, in accordance with his guilty plea,” said Acting Attorney General Hoffman. “To safeguard fair and honest elections,

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we need to deliver a clear deterrent message that election tampering is a serious crime. This sentence accomplishes that.”

“We will not tolerate any conduct that corrupts the election process and undermines the fundamental right of citizens to vote,” said Director Elie Honig of the Division of Criminal Justice. “We will continue to aggressively prosecute election fraud.”

Deputy Attorneys General Victor R. Salgado and Mallory Shanahan represented the state at the sentencing. Deputy Attorney General Vincent J. Militello prosecuted Colon, who was charged in 2009 along with other defendants in an investigation by the Division of Criminal Justice Corruption Bureau and the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office Corruption Unit.

The defendants were charged in multiple indictments related to absentee ballots they collected and submitted as workers for Ruiz’s 2007 campaign for the New Jersey Senate. They were charged with tampering with documentation for messenger ballots and fraudulently submitting such ballots as votes in the Nov. 6, 2007 general election. Ballots were fraudulently submitted on behalf of residents who never received them or had an opportunity to cast their votes.

The investigation was led for the Division of Criminal Justice Corruption Bureau by Deputy Attorney General Militello, Sgt. James Scott and Lt. Lisa Shea. It was conducted for the Essex County Prosecutor’s Corruption Unit by former Assistant Prosecutor Brandon Minde, Lt. David Sanabria and Detective Elizabeth Bazan. Valuable assistance was provided by Analyst Kathleen Ratliff and all of the detectives in the Division of Criminal Justice Corruption Bureau North. Deputy Attorney General Ashlea D. Thomas handled the appeal for the Appellate Bureau of the Division of Criminal Justice.

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[News Index Page | top](#)

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Departmental: [OAG Home](#) | [Contact OAG](#) | [About OAG](#) | [OAG News](#) | [OAG FAQs](#)

Statewide: [NJ Home](#) | [Services A to Z](#) | [Departments/Agencies](#) | [FAQs](#)

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