

Ex-Sunland Park official pleads guilty to false voting

By Rene Romo / Journal South Reporter

Published: Thursday, March 14th, 2013 at 12:05am
Updated: Wednesday, March 13th, 2013 at 9:59pm

Subscribe now for as low as **\$8.99**

LAS CRUCES – The former Sunland Park senior center director was given a stiff fine and sentenced to three years of probation Wednesday after pleading guilty to three counts of false voting in the city’s controversial 2012 municipal election.

Under a plea agreement, Silvia Gomez, 53, pleaded guilty to three charges while the office of District Attorney Mark D’Antonio agreed to dismiss six counts of conspiracy to commit false voting and three counts of false voting. Gomez faced up to 18 months in prison and a \$5,000 fine on each of the felony counts.

District Court Judge Fernando Macias fined Gomez \$4,500, or \$1,500 for each count, according to defense attorney Steve Sage.

The sentence, Sage said after court proceedings, “was honestly more harsh than we had hoped, given that she has no criminal history.”

Before Macias accepted the defendant’s guilty plea, Gomez, a former Sunland Park city councilor, made several statements indicating she had not realized that registering out-of-state residents to vote in New Mexico was “wrong” but that, given the facts of the case, she understood she could be convicted for criminal conduct.

“In reality, I did not know if I was doing something right or wrong,” Gomez said through a court interpreter.

When the judge pressed Gomez on whether she truly wanted to plead guilty, Gomez replied, “It’s fine, your honor.”

Gomez is the first of 21 defendants ensnared last year in a wide-ranging investigation of government corruption in Sunland Park to have her case resolved in court.

In various cases, former City Councilor Daniel Salinas, the most high-profile of the defendants, is accused of bribing a police officer, accepting kickbacks from city contractors, and trying to derail a competitor’s campaign by arranging for the rival to be videotaped while getting a lap dance from a topless woman.

Gomez, a Salinas supporter, was accused of registering Texas residents to vote using her own address.

Sage told Macias that Gomez had received no instruction from the state in registering voters.

An incredulous Macias said: “Even if you (Gomez) were never trained, wouldn’t a basic understanding of right and wrong suggest that registering someone to vote at the wrong address or from out of state is wrong?”

Gomez responded: “I did not think what I was doing was wrong, and I am very, very remorseful.”

At D’Antonio’s request, the office of Attorney General Gary King is pondering whether to handle the prosecution of the remaining cases. D’Antonio made the request after an El Paso television news suggested the DA has a conflict of interest because he received campaign donations in 2012 from several defense attorneys representing Sunland Park defendants.

— This article appeared on page C2 of the Albuquerque Journal

AP-Sportlight-Week Ahead

Oct. 14, 2020 12:57 PM EDT

Oct. 18 1924 – Harold “Red” Grange accounts for six touchdowns in Illinois’ 39-14 win over Michigan. Grange returns the opening kickoff 95 yards for a touchdown. He follows with touchdown runs of 66, 55 and 40 yards in the first

ADVERTISEMENT

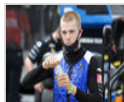
AUTO RACING GLANCE: Elliott in hunt as NASCAR goes to Kansas

Oct. 14, 2020 10:23 AM EDT



Askew released after concussion-interrupted rookie season

Oct. 12, 2020 08:15 PM EDT



List of sports events affected by the coronavirus pandemic

Oct. 12, 2020 05:23 PM EDT

Ricciardo leaves mark on Renault F1 boss after winning bet

Oct. 11, 2020 12:25 PM EDT



Turn Off Your Ad Blacker To Proceed

AlbuquerqueJournal

Unlimited Digital Access

\$14/mo

- Access to the Albuquerque eJournal Print Replica
- Unlimited desktop + mobile access to ABQJournal.com
- Includes EzPay

[Subscribe](#)

[Other Offers](#)

[Already a subscriber? Sign In](#)