



CHAIRWOMAN OF THE ROCKLAND COUNTY INDEPENDENCE PARTY INDICTED FOR PERJURY AND FALSIFYING PETITIONS

Westchester County District Attorney Janet DiFiore announced that **Debra Ortutay** (DOB 08/13/54 of 15 Forest Glen Road, Valley Cottage, New York, was arraigned in New City, New York today, after the unsealing of a seventeen count indictment charging her with:

- one count of Perjury in the First Degree, a class **D** Felony,
- ten counts of Criminal Possession of a Forged Instrument in the Second Degree, class **D** Felonies,
- two counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, class **E** Felonies,
- two counts of Making a Punishable False Written Statement, class **A** Misdemeanors,
- one count of Misdemeanors at, or in Connection with, Primary Elections, Caucuses, Enrollment in Political Parties, Committees, and Conventions, in violation of New York State Election Law, a class **A** Misdemeanor,
- one count of Misconduct in Relation to Petitions, in violation of New York State Election Law, a class **A** Misdemeanor.

A Rockland County Grand Jury voted the indictment on June 22nd, 2011.

The Rockland County District Attorney submitted an application to the Administrative Judge for the Ninth Judicial District, which covers both Rockland and Westchester Counties, to disqualify him as the investigator and prosecutor in this case. The Court then appointed the Westchester County District Attorney as a Special Prosecutor to handle this matter.

In November 2010, the defendant was elected as a State Committee Member of the Rockland County Independence Party and in December of 2010 was elected the Chairwoman of the Rockland County Independence Party.

As Chairwoman, the defendant is the highest Independence Party office holder in Rockland County and is responsible for among other things, coordinating the party's activities in the County including screening candidates for office and determining which candidates will receive the party's endorsement.

Between July 20th, 2010 and August 6th, 2010, the defendant attested to the validity of signatures on Opportunity to Ballot petitions from the 94th Assembly District in Rockland County.

Subsequently, the defendant, knowing that she had not witnessed those signatures, then testified in a civil proceeding that challenged the validity of those same signatures before New York State Supreme Court Justice William Giacomo in August 2010, where she lied about her actions.

"Our electoral process does not work unless voters have absolute trust in the integrity of the system," said Westchester County District Attorney Janet DiFiore said after the defendant was arraigned. "The allegations contained in the indictment, that the defendant tampered with the most basic aspect of the electoral process, the collection of petition signatures, disenfranchised the voters of Rockland County. And then, by lying about her actions in a court proceeding challenging those signatures, only served to further erode that public trust."

The defendant was released on her own recognizance.

Her next court appearance will be on July 19th, 2011 in Rockland County Court.

The defendant faces a maximum of two and one half to seven years in state prison on the top count of the indictment.

Assistant District Attorney Brian Conway, Deputy Chief of the Public Integrity Bureau, is prosecuting the case.



Debra Ortutay

In compliance with Disciplinary Rule 7-107A of the Code of Professional Responsibility, you are advised that a charge is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.