

Committeeman spared jail time in election fraud

By **OLIVER MACKSON**

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Dominick Forte, 62, was sentenced by Orange County Court Judge Nicholas DeRosa to a conditional discharge. Prosecutors made no sentencing recommendation, and the county probation department recommended the conditional discharge.

Forte pleaded guilty Nov. 2 to second-degree forgery, a felony. He admitted signing fake signatures on Conservative Party nominating petitions in the race for a seat representing the county Legislature's 12th District, which includes Cornwall and Woodbury.

Forte apologized in court and again outside the courtroom, saying, "I apologize to my family, my friends and my community — and to the candidates. I consider them both to be my friends."

He has since resigned from the Conservative Party's committees in Cornwall and Orange County. He said he will continue to be a volunteer in community organizations.

The race for the Legislature seat was won by Republican Kevin Hines, who denounced Forte's actions and removed his name from consideration for the Conservative ballot line. Hines defeated Democrat Richard Randazzo, who also shunned the Conservative ballot line.

Forte was the first person to be prosecuted for election fraud in Orange County since 2004.

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