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Politics

Woman Pleads Guilty to Election Fraud Charge

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By Ed Walsh

A 41-year-old woman has pleaded guilty to making a false statement in connection with a 2006 ballot measure, part of a promised crackdown against fraud in Oregon's initiative system, Attorney General John Kroger and Secretary of State Kate Brown announced Wednesday.

The woman, Diana Clagett, pleaded guilty to one felony count and was placed on probation. Kroger and Brown said that in 2005, Clagett turned in three signature sheets that contained 27 "questionable signatures" that either belonged to unregistered voters or did not match the signatures on voter registration cards.

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The signatures were in support of an initiative that ultimately became Measure 42 on the 2006 ballot. The initiative, which was sponsored by initiative activist Bill Sizemore, would have prohibited insurance companies from using credit scores to set premiums.

It was soundly rejected by voters.

A Multnomah County grand jury indicted Claggett on two counts of making false statements in December and she was arrested in January.

"The initiative is one of Oregon's most important democratic tools," Brown said in a statement. "Anyone who abuses the system will be prosecuted."

"I have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to elections fraud," Kroger added.

-- *Edward Walsh*; edwardwalsh@news.oregonian.com

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