

## Four indicted on voter fraud


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Four Duval County residents were charged Thursday with illegally handling ballot applications and mail-in ballots that belonged to other voters during the 2006 primary election.


The four San Diego residents indicted Thursday by a Brooks County grand jury were: Lydia Molina, 70; Maria "Kena" Soriano, 71; Elva Lazo, 62; and Maria Trigo, 55.

According to a news release from Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott's office, the four were taken into custody Thursday in Duval County. A shift supervisor for the Duval County jail refused to give The Associated Press any information Thursday on whether they were still in custody, insisting that a request be filed in writing. A Freedom of Information request faxed to the jail on Thursday night was not immediately answered.

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The defendants are accused of delivering mail-in ballot applications to Duval County residents who were ineligible to vote by mail, according to the news release. Only those who are disabled, 65 or older, or expect to be out of the county during an election are eligible to vote by mail.

The news release says that once the ballots were sent to the residents and completed, the defendants allegedly retrieved them and mailed them to the registrar to be counted without identifying themselves on the carrier envelope.

Texas law requires that those who provide assistance identify themselves on carrier envelopes used to transmit mail-in ballots.

The charge of possessing and handling the ballot of another person is a Class B misdemeanor, a violation of the Texas Election Code. A Class B misdemeanor violation of the Election Code can result in up to 180 days jail, a maximum \$2,000 fine, or both.