

Mexican national who took cousin's identity to vote illegally to be deported



Laura Janeth Garza's conviction Thursday comes more than a year after Republican Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton's office helped prosecute another Mexican national also facing deportation for illegal voting. (Associated Press) more >

By Paul J. Weber - Associated Press - Thursday, September 13, 2018

AUGUSTINE Torres (AD) — A Mexican national whose attorney said she used a

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Laura Janeth Garza's conviction Thursday comes more than a year after Republican Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton's office helped prosecute another Mexican national also facing deportation for illegal voting. But the circumstances of the cases differ and Garza's attorney, John Cardenas, said she knew this was always a possibility.

The 38-year-old Houston woman entered the country as a young girl. She was about 12 years old, Cardenas said, when Garza's mother and uncle told her assume the identity of a cousin who was a U.S. citizen but had moved to Mexico. Cardenas didn't know how Garza voted, but said she offered to return to Mexico if the charges were dropped.

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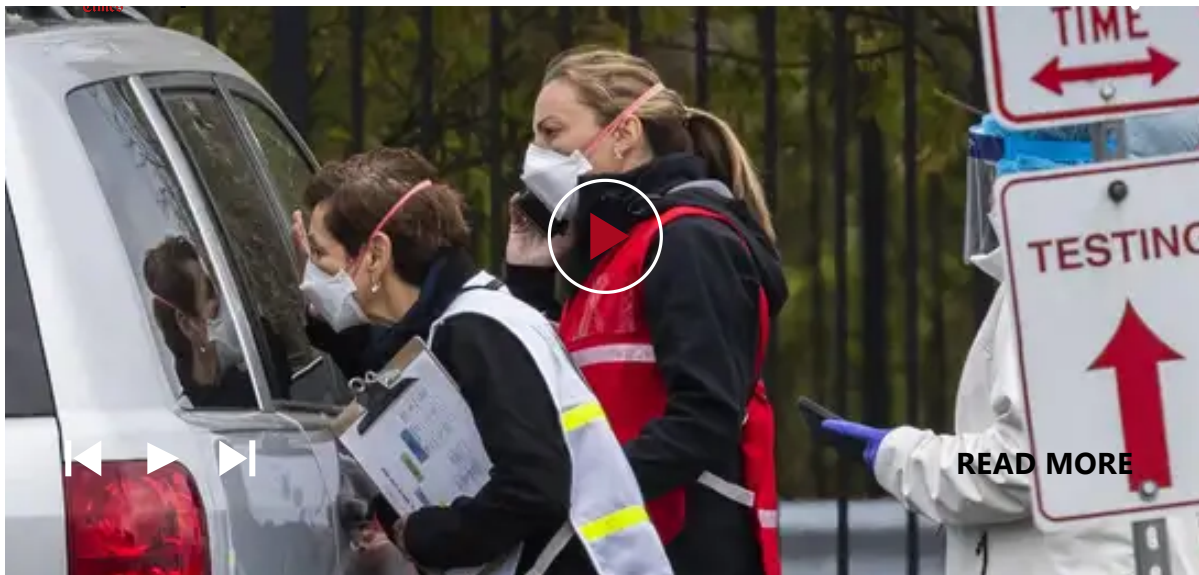
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"That wasn't on the table for the state," he said. "She's resigned. She understands that this was something that may have come up along the way."

Last year, a jury in Fort Worth sentenced Mexican national Rosa Maria Ortega to eight years in prison for illegal voting in a case that drew widespread attention because of the severity of the punishment, since voting fraud convictions many times result in probation.

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Ortega, who was accused of improperly casting a ballot five times between 2005 and 2014, was a permanent U.S. resident whose attorney said mistakenly thought she was eligible to vote. Ortega, who has four teenage children, is likely to face deportation upon leaving prison.

Cardenas said Garza will also face deportation when she finishes serving a 180-day jail sentence in a few weeks. He said he had no problem with how Paxton's office handled the case and commended prosecutors for not insisting she serve prison time. Although Garza was given 10 years in prison for illegal voting, a second-degree felony, her sentence was probated as part of the plea agreement.

Cardenas said Garza worked for the Houston Independent School District, helping assess students with their language skills. A district spokeswoman

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Paxton has defended Texas' voter ID law, which is among the toughest in the U.S., and has made voting safeguards a top issue of his nearly four years in office. He said Garza's conviction demonstrates "our commitment to ensuring that Texas elections remain free and fair."

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MiguelitoMeegra

13 September, 2018



Bummer. Might be an inconvenience. No worries, she'll be back tomorrow. Deportation = meaningless.

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BlueElephant > MiguelitoMeegra

13 September, 2018



Don't worry that Wall will keep em all out - once Mexico pays for it lol

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Green8Ball

14 September, 2018



10 years in jail and deportation, no plea deal, she's been living here 20 years she could have became legal. I want her cousin charged and convicted a aiding and abetting a criminal for providing her I.D.

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