

# Former Milwaukee County Supervisor Peggy West pleads guilty to election fraud

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MILWAUKEE -- Former Milwaukee County Supervisor Peggy West has reached a plea deal after prosecutors say she falsified information on her nomination papers.

West, 47, on Wednesday, Aug. 8 pleaded guilty to election fraud. Sentencing was set for Aug. 28.

West served on the county board for the past 14 years -- representing the county's south side.

A review of West's papers show numerous discrepancies, a criminal complaint alleges. Among them: five people whose signatures appear say they never signed, and a property manager says one woman whose signature appears moved to Florida four years ago.

Another 16 people said they did sign, but West was not the one who circulated the papers. That is an issue because West signed the pages as the circulator, the criminal complaint indicates.

"Peggy has worked really hard for her constituents over the last 14 years," said Michael Maistelman, West's attorney, after charges were filed.

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"She's supporting her family. She's, like I said, proudly served her constituents for so many years and she's keeping her head up and doing the best she can," Maistelman said.

West's political opponent who won the election brought her doubts about the validity of the signatures on West's nomination papers to the attention of the Election Commission.

"I was very shocked that Mrs. West is being accused of making up names. It saddens me that happened," said Sylvia Ortiz-Velez.

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"I think it's important because our elections are important and the integrity of the elections are important. Whether it's now or later, the integrity of our elections are important," said Ortiz-Velez.

Ortiz-Velez said the signatures that seemed sketchy to her at the time were gathered inside of a locked senior citizen center. She said that made it difficult for her to investigate and challenge at the time.

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