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VIRGINIA POLITICS

Former Scott Taylor political consultant indicted on several counts of false statements, election fraud

by: Andy Fox, Nathan Crawford
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VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (WAVY) — A former political consultant for Scott Taylor, a Navy SEAL who previously represented Virginia's 2nd Congressional District, has been indicted in Virginia Beach on election-related charges.

Rob Catron has been indicted on 10 counts of false statements and election fraud, according to court documents. He's accused of being involved with, or aware of, forged signatures on election petitions in 2018.

Catron, who was previously a political consultant to Taylor, told WAVY 10's Andy Fox on Saturday afternoon that "I have no idea what the evidence is, I never signed anything, and nothing new has been learned in nearly three years."

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The indictment follows guilty pleas from several of Taylor's former staff members. Three of them: Heather Guillot, Roberta Marciano and Lauren Creekmore Peabody were originally charged with felony election fraud and making false statements.

10 On Your Side was the only news organization at the Virginia Beach Magistrate's Office when Catron turned himself in after he was indicted. Court documents allege the offenses occurred between May 31 and June 12, 2018.

The court paperwork claims Catron was a principal in the first or second degree, and that — at the very least — he knew the forging of signatures was going on and did nothing to stop it.

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Catron reiterated on Monday what he told 10 On Your Side over the phone Saturday.

"I never signed any public documents. I was never investigated by investigators or anyone, and so I don't know how I can possibly make a false statement if those things are both true. I have never been contacted by investigators or anything like that. I have never spoken to them and never signed any false affidavits," he said.

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“The record is clear: Scott Taylor acted swiftly to oust who he thought were rogue employees,” they said.

Taylor has always maintained he knew they were gathering signatures, but not forging signatures.

Catron left the courthouse and said he’s been released on his own recognizance and was not asked any questions.

We reached out to the special prosecutor who is an assistant commonwealth’s attorney in Roanoke. He had no comment on the 10-count indictment.

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As far as the other court cases relating to Taylor’s campaign, Guillot, Marciano and Creekmore Peabody all received the same sentence for their roles in the matter: no active jail time, one year in jail suspended, and a net fine of $1,000 after an additional $1,500 was suspended by Judge Margaret Spencer.

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Guillot has since pleaded guilty to one count of misdemeanor willful neglect of election duties.

“Mistakes were made,” her attorney Richard Doummar said earlier this year. “A lot was going on at the time of the election with entrusted people and it was a mistake that was made, and it happens sometimes in elections.”

Marciano also previously pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of misdemeanor willful neglect.

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“Ms. Marciano never forged anyone’s signatures or fabricated any voter profiles,” said attorney Eric Plumlee. “Rather, Ms. Marciano’s misstep was to sign several petitions that were placed in front of her.”

Meanwhile, prosecutors say Peabody signed affidavits for 14 separate petitions, swearing she “witnessed the signatures of each person who signed this [petition].”

Her attorney said in March of 2020 John Fletcher that “her plea today to a misdemeanor which does not involve fraud, dishonesty or corrupt conduct is a fair resolution to this matter.”

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