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PUBLIC SAFETY

Portland man tried to sell his 2020 presidential ballot; gets probation, stern admonition from judge

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Josiah Samuel Bridges, 23, pleaded guilty Friday in Multnomah County Circuit Court in a rare prosecution for felony voter fraud.



By [Savannah Eadens](#) | [The Oregonian/OregonLive](#)

A 23-year-old Portland man got probation and a stern talking-to from a judge after pleading guilty Friday to trying to sell his 2020 presidential election ballot.

Josiah Samuel Bridges said little during the rare prosecution for felony voter fraud in Multnomah County Circuit Court.

Bridges had listed the ballot for sale that fall along with a pair of tennis shoes on the mobile marketplace OfferUp.

He later told investigators he did it to pay his rent and because he didn't like either candidate up for election, former President Donald Trump and winner Joe Biden, court documents show.

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He didn't think anyone would actually take him up on it, said Amy Seely, a special prosecutor for the Oregon Department of Justice.

But several concerned Oregonians reported the ballot offer to a tip line through the state Justice Department, so agents set up a sting and caught Bridges at a Fred Meyer in St. Johns, the court records show.

Bridges initially tried to sell the signed ballot for \$200, but an undercover agent negotiated it down to \$125 and completed the transaction as other agents watched from nearby.

Bridges said he didn't know it was illegal to sell a ballot.

He pleaded guilty to one count of illegal sale of election material, in addition to fourth-degree assault in a separate case.

He was sentenced to three years of probation and 120 hours of community service.

Defense attorney Gayle Kvernland said Bridges has a steady job, a desire to get his GED and hopes to become a hair stylist. He has no prior criminal convictions.

Senior Judge Kathleen Dailey waived fines and fees for Bridges and made him eligible to return to court if he successfully completes the probation to potentially lower the felony conviction to a misdemeanor.

Dailey asked Bridges if he understood the implications of ballot fraud given the political climate in the country, and referenced the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

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"Not only was it poor judgment that you exercised, but from my point of view ... your trying to sell a ballot was a step towards undermining our democracy," Dailey said.

"Maybe you saw it as something different or didn't understand the seriousness or import of what you were doing. But you are a U.S. citizen and it is a privilege to be able to vote."

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Dailey continued: "Be faithful to your obligation as a citizen, try and make it matter to you, because it does. I think you are a person who has talent, skill and if you direct it properly you're going to be successful. I think being on probation will give you an

opportunity to (accomplish your goals) and it's a pity that you find yourself here based on what happened."

"Yes, ma'am," Bridges replied.

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