

NEWS

Man gets 30 days in jail for voter fraud

Karen Madden USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin

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WISCONSIN RAPIDS - A Dexter man pleaded guilty Tuesday to voting twice in the spring election and received 30-day jail sentence.

Troy A. Schiller, 43, said in court he got wrapped up in too much talk radio and made a stupid decision.

"I would like to say I'm sorry," Schiller said. "I'm sorry I made a careless decision."

Schiller said his actions had set a poor example for his children. It embarrassed and put a strain on his children and his whole family, Schiller told Wood County Circuit Judge Nicholas Brazeau Jr. during a plea hearing and sentencing Tuesday afternoon.

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According to court documents, Schiller told a Wood County investigator he voted once in Pittsville and once in Dexter during the spring election.

The election wasn't just a presidential primary, Wood County District Attorney Craig Lambert said Tuesday. It also was a local election. Our representative form of democracy only works if it's done honestly, Lambert said.

Lambert asked Brazeau to sentence Schiller to 90 days in jail.

"(Schiller's) vote counted two times more than any other," Lambert said. "People inclined to do this need to know there are serious consequences and respect the integrity of our elections."

Schiller's attorney, Gregory Jerabek, said there is no shortage of good things to say about Schiller. Schiller has been married for 23 years and has never had a criminal charge, Jerabek

said. Jerabek had letters from Schiller's family, friends and employers stating what a good person he is.

Schiller will be branded as a felon and that will follow him forever, Jerabek said. Carrying the felon label is punishment enough for someone like Schiller, Jerabek said. Jail is unnecessary, he said. Schilling will not be allowed to vote until he meets all the conditions of his sentence.

It doesn't make sense to put Schiller under supervision because Schiller doesn't have any of the normal problems supervision would address, like alcoholism or addiction, Brazeau said.

"You're a good guy," Brazeau said.

A few years ago, Wood County had a couple of races that were decided by one vote, Brazeau said. A vote can decide an election, and voting twice goes against the process, Brazeau said.

Nobody in the courtroom would want to spend even one night in jail, but there has to be a deterrent for voter fraud, Brazeau said. He sentenced Schiller to 30 days in jail and fined him \$500.

*You can contact reporter Karen Madden at 715-424-7308,
karen.madden@gannettwisconsin.com or follow her on Twitter@KMadden715.*