



BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Michael Stinziano, Director Matthew M. Damschroder, Deputy Director

**For Immediate Release
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Franklin County Resident Guilty of Voter Registration Fraud

(Columbus) A Franklin County resident pleaded guilty to the charge of voter registration fraud this morning stemming from the November 2008 general election.

Cathy E. LaMaster, 44, of 4154 Helen Rose Lane, Gahanna, admitted to submitting two voter registrations; one under her own name and a second under her daughter's name. She requested and voted absentee ballots using her registration and the fraudulent registration she had filed in her daughter's name. LaMaster's daughter, a student at Muskingum College, registered and voted by absentee ballot in Guernsey County.

The double registration was discovered by the Franklin and Guernsey County boards of elections during their regular reviews of duplicate voter registration between Ohio counties using the federally mandated statewide voter registration system.

LaMaster will serve a six month suspended jail sentence, one year's probation, pay a \$1,000 fine and court costs. The daughter did not participate in the fraud and was not charged.

"Although vote fraud is historically rare in Franklin County, this conviction should serve as a strong warning to anyone tempted to register or vote illegally that safeguards and procedures are in place to address it whenever it occurs," said Franklin County Board of Elections Director Michael Stinziano. "The board takes very seriously all actionable allegations."

"We were able to discover this crime by working closely with our colleagues at the Guernsey County Board of Elections," added deputy director Matt Damschroder "The case was forwarded to the Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney Ron O'Brien's office for further investigation, including handwriting analysis, and ended with today's conviction."

The case is one of many from the November 2008 general election referred to the Franklin County Prosecutor's office for further investigation and is the first conviction of registration or voter fraud in Franklin County since a Reynoldsburg resident was convicted of registering and voting in Franklin and Licking counties in the November 2007 general election.

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