

Texas: Four Women Arrested in Alleged Vote Harvesting Scheme to Steal Votes, Funded by Former Democratic Party Leader

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Fort Worth, Texas: Four women are alleged to be members of an organized fraud ring, funded by Democratic Party leader Stuart Clegg, who allegedly paid them in a vote harvesting scheme to either intercept ballots mailed out by the election offices, or to “assist” elderly voters in voting their ballots to ensure that the votes are cast for the candidates of the harvesters’ choice.

A Fort Worth woman recently indicted on voter fraud charges paid others involved in the scheme with funds provided by a former Tarrant County Democratic Party leader, court documents filed this week say.

After learning about a state investigation, Leticia Sanchez – one of four women arrested and indicted on voter fraud charges – allegedly directed her daughter to send a text message to others in the scheme, urging them not to cooperate with investigators, state officials say.

The allegations are made in the state’s notice of intent to introduce evidence in Sanchez’s criminal case, where state officials say she was among those who collaborated to vote for certain down-ballot candidates with a number of north side residents’ mail-in ballots.

The notice, filed Tuesday, states that Sanchez engaged in organized criminal activity in collaboration with her three co-defendants; Stuart Clegg, a former executive director for the Tarrant County Democratic Party; and others.

Leticia Sanchez
Tarrant County Sheriff’s Office

It also includes allegations that Sanchez faxed applications for mail-in ballots – many obtained fraudulently – using a fax machine belonging to former Fort Worth councilman Sal Espino. The notice does not implicate Espino as being part of the scheme.

This is the latest development in a case the Texas attorney general's office describes as an "organized voter fraud ring" in Fort Worth.

Local Democrats say canvassing voters occurs every election cycle. Attorneys for Sanchez say they believe this case is politically motivated and they expect it to eventually be dismissed.

Earlier this month, four women were arrested – Sanchez, her daughter, Leticia Sanchez Tepichin, and Rosa Solis and Laura Parra – after being indicted on more than two dozen felony counts of voter fraud.

Officials allege the women were paid to target older voters on the city's north side "in a scheme to generate a large number of mail ballots and then harvest those ballots for specific candidates in 2016."

The notice did not specify which candidates the suspects were allegedly paid to support, but it noted that Sanchez and others marked down-ballot candidates "without the voter's knowledge or consent."

AG officials have said these charges "are in connection with the 2016 Democratic primary, but the case has connections with the 2015 city council election."

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