

Convictions upheld in Dothan voter fraud case

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The state Court of Criminal Appeals recently upheld the two dozen voter fraud convictions for a Dothan woman related to a Dothan City Commission election.

According to a statement from the Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange, the state Court of Criminal Appeals upheld the voter fraud convictions for 67-year-old Olivia Reynolds. The statement said the Attorney General's Criminal Appeals Section handled the case during the appeals process, arguing for the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals to affirm the convictions.



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A jury found Reynolds guilty of 24 felony absentee ballot fraud charges in September 2015 in Houston County Circuit Court. Circuit Court Judge Michael Conaway later sentenced Reynolds to a five-year split sentence, with two years to serve in prison. Conaway allowed Reynolds to apply for probation, which was heard in November 2015. Conaway denied Reynolds probation, and instead ordered her to serve six months in the Houston County Community Corrections work release program.

But Conaway also granted Reynolds an appeal bond. She posted a \$24,000 bail, and has been released from custody since late last year.

It's unclear if Reynolds will now be required to turn herself in to authorities to serve out her six-month sentence in community corrections, a semi-confined facility.

Officials with the Houston County District Attorney's Office could not immediately be reached for comment. Reynolds' attorney, Chris Capps, could also not immediately be reached for comment.

A jury determined Reynolds fraudulently obtained absentee voter ballots during the 2013 city commission candidacy of District 2 Commissioner Amos Newsome. Reynolds was one of four people charged who worked on the 2013 campaign for Newsome.



Newsome won his seat in 2013 by 14 votes. He received 119 of the 124 absentee votes cast. Three others have been convicted and sentenced on voter fraud charges in connection with the 2013 District 2 race.

One of the other co-defendants also charged with Reynolds had some similar convictions upheld by the state Court of Criminal Appeals in March.

Records show 51-year-old Lesa Renee Coleman was convicted of seven felony counts of absentee ballot fraud. The court ordered Coleman to serve a three-year sentence split, with 180 days in the Houston County Jail. The court also ordered Coleman to serve three years probation after completing the 180 days in the county jail.

It appears Coleman has not served her sentence. She remains released from custody after Circuit Judge Butch Binford granted a \$5,000 appeal bond in the case until her conviction was heard by the Criminal Court of Appeals. Records show the court of criminal appeals upheld her convictions in March of this year.

A third person, Janice Hart, pleaded guilty to reduced misdemeanor absentee ballot fraud charges. Hart was sentenced to 12 months in the Houston County Jail, which was suspended for two years probation.

Three similar election fraud charges were filed against a fourth person, 39-year-old Daniel Webster Reynolds III. Records show Reynolds pleaded guilty to his charges earlier this year, received a 5-year sentence for each charge, which was suspended for two years probation for each charge.