

PRESS RELEASE

Political Organizer and Former President of City Council of Atlantic City Charged with Submitting Fraudulent Mail-In Ballots

Thursday, February 1, 2024

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of New Jersey

CAMDEN, N.J. – An Atlantic County, New Jersey, man was arrested today for his role in procuring, casting, and tabulating fraudulent mail-in ballots submitted in the Nov. 8, 2022, general election, U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger announced.

Craig Callaway, 64, a former member and president of the City Council of Atlantic City and a political organizer who assisted campaigns for elected offices in New Jersey, is charged in a criminal complaint unsealed today with one count of depriving, defrauding, and attempting to deprive and defraud the residents of the state of New Jersey of a fair and impartially conducted election process by the fraudulent procurement, casting, and tabulation of ballots. Callaway is scheduled to make his initial appearance today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Matthew J. Skahill in Camden federal court.

“Holding free and fair elections is a bedrock principle of our democracy. As alleged in the complaint, the defendant attempted to deprive New Jersey residents of a fair election by fraudulently procuring and casting ballots. Today’s charges reflect our office’s commitment to hold to account those who try to undermine the electoral process.”

U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger

"Voter fraud at any level chips away at the faith people have in our system," FBI – Newark Special Agent in Charge James E. Dennehy said. "We're unable as American citizens to hold our government accountable if our votes are compromised. The FBI and our law enforcement partners understand the gravity of protecting the process and will bring those criminals who break the law to justice."

According to the documents filed in this case:

Approximately one month before the Nov. 8, 2022, general election, Callaway and others working at Callaway's direction approached numerous individuals in Atlantic City promising to pay them \$30 to \$50 to act as purported authorized messengers for voters who supposedly wished to vote by mail.

After receiving Vote-By-Mail Applications from Callaway or his subordinates, these purported messengers entered the Atlantic County clerk's office carrying anywhere from one to four completed Vote-By-Mail Applications. As instructed by Callaway or his subordinates, these individuals provided county clerk's office personnel proof of identification and signed the Vote-By-Mail Applications in the authorized messenger portion before handing those signed applications to office personnel. The purported messengers waited while office personnel processed the applications and, if the applications were approved, provided to the purported messengers mail-in ballots for the voters listed on the applications.

Under New Jersey law, a messenger is required to deliver any mail-in ballot they received directly to the voter who requested the ballots, and certify that they would do so. However, after receiving mail-in ballots, these purported messengers left the county clerk's office and instead handed the ballots to Callaway or his subordinates.

Many of the mail-in ballots collected by Callaway or his subordinates were ultimately cast in the names of people who have confirmed that they did not vote in the 2022 General Election – either in person or by submitting a mail-in ballot – and that they did not authorize Callaway, his subordinates, or anyone else, to cast ballots for them. Many of these mail-in ballots were counted towards in the election.

The charge of the procuring, casting, and tabulating fraudulent ballots carries a maximum potential penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, or twice the gain or loss from the offense, whichever is greatest.

U.S. Attorney Sellinger credited special agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Dennehy; the FBI's Atlantic City Resident Agency's Public Corruption Task Force, including the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of

Prosecutor William Reynolds; the Atlantic City Police Department, under the direction of Officer in Charge Chief James A. Sarkos; and the New Jersey State Police, under the direction of Superintendent Col. Patrick J. Callahan; as well as special agents of the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, Northeast Region, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Jonathan Mellone; the Department of Agriculture – Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Bethanne M. Dinkins; and postal inspectors of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Philadelphia Division, under the direction of Inspector in Charge Christopher A. Nielsen, with the investigation leading to the charge.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Eric A. Boden, Attorney in Charge of the Trenton Branch Office, and Assistant U.S. Attorney James H. Graham of the Organized Crime and Gangs Unit, under the supervision of the Special Prosecutions Division.

The charge and allegations contained in the complaint are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

[callaway.complaint.pdf](#)

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Topic

VOTING AND ELECTIONS

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