

## JUSTICE NEWS

### Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, September 26, 2014

## Two Campaign Workers Admit to Buying Votes in Hidalgo County, Texas, Elections

Two campaign workers pleaded guilty this week in the Southern District of Texas for paying voters to vote in two 2012 elections in Hidalgo County, Texas, announced Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Kenneth Magidson of the Southern District of Texas.

Veronica Saldivar, 42, of Donna, Texas, pleaded guilty today to one count of vote-buying before U.S. District Judge Randy Crane of the Southern District of Texas and is scheduled for sentencing on Dec. 8, 2014. Belinda Solis, 39, also of Donna, pleaded guilty on Sept. 25, 2014, to one count of vote-buying before U.S. District Judge Micaela Alvarez of the Southern District of Texas and is scheduled for sentencing on Dec. 11, 2014.

According to Saldivar's plea agreement, a primary election was held on May 29, 2012, in Donna for the presidential election, and various state, county, and local offices, including the office of a county commissioner for Hidalgo County. Saldivar assisted in the campaign to elect a candidate to the office of county commissioner. In the course of that work, she paid voters with cash and cocaine for voting in this primary election and for voting for a specific candidate for a county commissioner position.

According to Solis's plea agreement, a general election was held on Nov. 6, 2012, in Donna, for the presidential election and various state, county, and local offices, including the Donna School Board. Solis assisted in the campaign to elect a slate of four candidates to the Donna School Board. In the course of that work, she paid voters cash for voting in the election and for voting for specific Donna School Board candidates.

This case was investigated by the FBI and is being prosecuted by Trial Attorneys Monique Abrishami and Jennifer Blackwell of the Criminal Division's Public Integrity Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Leo J. Leo of the Southern District of Texas.

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**Component(s):**

Criminal Division

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