

Vote leaves felon facing election fraud charge

Written by BILL SCHANEN IV
Wednesday, 08 May 2013 17:26

Port woman accused of casting ballot weeks after losing rights in drug case

Voting is usually considered a civic responsibility, but for a 20-year-old Port Washington woman who cast a ballot in the November 2012 election, it was a crime, according to a criminal complaint filed in Ozaukee County Circuit Court last week.

Ariana S. Wiedenhoeft, who is charged with one felony count of election fraud-voting by a disqualified person, voted less than a month after pleading guilty to a felony drug charge, the complaint states.

Felons in Wisconsin cannot vote until they have served their sentences and had their civil rights restored.

The ballot cast by Wiedenhoeft was discovered by City of Port Washington Deputy Clerk Susan Westerbeke when she compared voting records to a list of ineligible voters compiled by state officials.

When confronted by police, Wiedenhoeft admitted voting, something she was warned not to do when she pleaded guilty in the drug case, according to the complaint.

The transcript of the Oct. 16, 2012, hearing shows that when Wiedenhoeft pleaded guilty to one felony count of possessing narcotic drugs, Judge Paul Malloy informed her she would not be able to vote until her civil rights were restored, the complaint states.

On Dec. 18, just more than a month after she voted, Wiedenhoeft was sentenced in the drug case. Malloy withheld a prison sentence, placed her on probation for two years and ordered her to serve 60 days in the county jail.

The judge agreed to expunge the conviction from Wiedenhoeft's record if she completes probation.

Wiedenhoeft was initially charged on Jan. 10, 2012, with being part of a mother-daughter drug dealing operation, but a charge of delivery of narcotics was eventually amended to a lesser charge of possessing narcotics.

According to the criminal complaint, Wiedenhoeft's mother, Tania Wiedenhoeft, made arrangements to sell oxycodone to an undercover sheriff's deputy posing as a buyer.

