



The City of New York
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FORMER BOARD OF ELECTIONS EMPLOYEE AND BRONX DISTRICT LEADER PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL EXTORTION AND MAIL FRAUD CHARGES

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), issued a statement today on the guilty plea of a former Board of Elections ("BOE") employee and elected district leader in the Bronx, for illegally demanding payments from Bronx residents to herself and a local organization ("Bronx Organization") in exchange for selecting those individuals as poll workers, and for falsifying records to collect salaries of no-show poll workers. In total, the defendant personally received at least approximately \$28,000 in illegal payments and at least approximately \$36,000 in fraud proceeds. DOI conducted this investigation with the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") and the Office of the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, which prosecuted the case.

NICOLE TORRES, 44, of Bronx, N.Y., pled guilty before U.S. District Judge Mary Kay Vyskocil to one count of Conspiracy to Commit Extortion Under Color of Official Right and one count of Conspiracy to Commit Mail Fraud, which each carry a 20-year maximum term of imprisonment. She is scheduled to be sentenced on July 8, 2025. As part of her plea agreement, she is required to forfeit \$40,970 and pay restitution of \$149,845.59.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "This former City Board of Elections employee and elected district leader exploited her position of public trust for her own financial gain. Rather than hiring poll workers based on merit or qualifications, she solicited payments in exchange for appointments, requiring poll workers to 'pay-to-play.' She also agreed to collect the salaries of no-show poll workers by falsifying records. I thank the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and the FBI for their partnership on this important investigation and continued commitment to protect public dollars."

According to the indictment, TORRES has served as a district leader for New York's 81st Assembly District in the Bronx since 2019. In addition, from 2016 through 2024, TORRES was an employee of the BOE. While working at the BOE, TORRES, at times, was responsible for ensuring that poll workers were paid for their work during early voting periods and election day. From 2019 to about August 2024, TORRES required Bronx residents to pay a sum of money, usually \$150, either to her or to a Bronx Organization, in exchange for TORRES selecting those individuals as poll workers for upcoming elections. Both the Bronx Organization and TORRES profited from the scheme. TORRES personally obtained at least approximately \$28,000 in illegal payments which she received through mobile payment applications, money orders, and checks. In certain instances, TORRES received money orders or checks that were written out to the Bronx Organization, and TORRES altered the payee line on those money orders or checks to say "Nicole Torres" so that she could deposit that money into her personal bank account.

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Additionally, from at least 2018 until about August 2024, TORRES agreed to falsify the Forms Booklet — which is a BOE record in which poll workers record their attendance at a particular poll site — to make it appear that certain individuals (“No-Show Poll Workers”) worked as poll workers during early voting and election day when those individuals in fact did not work on those dates. TORRES often worked with coordinators who oversaw the Forms Booklets at specific poll sites. These coordinators signed in No-Show Poll Workers in the Forms Booklets, frequently at TORRES’s direction. TORRES and her co-conspirators then received the salaries for the No-Show Poll Workers, sometimes through the mail, and shared the fraudulently obtained salaries. While working at the BOE, at relevant times, TORRES was responsible for ensuring that poll workers, including the No-Show Poll Workers, were paid. In furtherance of the scheme, TORRES communicated with her co-conspirators in person, on phone calls, and through text messages. Through these communications, TORRES and her co-conspirators, among other things, shared the personal identifying information of the No-Show Poll Workers, discussed which co-conspirator should falsely sign the No-Show Poll Workers’ names in the Forms Booklets, and discussed how to split the fraudulently-obtained salaries of the No-Show Poll Workers. Based on her participation in the No-Show Poll Workers scheme, TORRES personally obtained at least approximately \$36,000 in fraud proceeds, and her co-conspirators personally obtained money as well.

TORRES was first employed by the BOE in February 2016. She was suspended without pay due to this investigation in August 2024 and was dismissed due to the criminal charges in October 2024. At that time, she received an annual salary of \$56,945. She currently remains an elected district leader in the Bronx.

Commissioner Strauber thanked Matthew Podolsky, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York for the Office’s partnership on this investigation, which was handled by the Public Corruption Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Benjamin M. Burkett and Rebecca T. Dell are in charge of the prosecution.

Commissioner Strauber also thanked the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their work on the investigation.

At DOI, the investigation was conducted by DOI’s Office of the Inspector General for the BOE, specifically Assistant Inspector General Gina Nicole Diaz, under the supervision of Deputy Inspector General Trenton Sweeney, Senior Inspector General Eleonora Rivkin, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City’s corruption watchdog. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City. DOI’s strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.

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