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[Home](#) • [Louisville](#) • [Press Releases](#) • 2012 • [Three Jackson Individuals Sentenced for Vote Buying Conspiracy](#)

Three Jackson Individuals Sentenced for Vote Buying Conspiracy

U.S. Attorney's Office
July 26, 2012

Eastern District of Kentucky
(859) 233-2661

LEXINGTON—Three Jackson, Kentucky individuals were sentenced for their roles in a vote buying conspiracy in the May 2010 primary election in Breathitt County.

U.S. District Judge Karen Caldwell sentenced 61-year-old Naomi Johnson and 44-year-old Earl Young Thursday to four months in prison for conspiring to buy votes and vote buying. Judge Caldwell sentenced 62-year-old Jackie Jennings to two months for vote buying and conspiracy.

Judge Caldwell ordered each of three defendants to serve 120 hours of community service and recommended they spend those hours educating the public about the dangers of vote buying.

Evidence at the defendants' trial in April proved that all three conspired to buy votes for Michael Salyers, a candidate for county magistrate.

Testimony revealed that Salyers was provided hundreds of dollars to pay individuals to cast their votes for him by absentee ballot. Evidence showed that the defendants traveled with voters to the courthouse. Young and Jennings verified that the voters voted. Voters were paid after informing Salyers they voted for him.

Johnson and Young were found guilty at the April trial while Jennings pleaded guilty the first day of the same trial. Salyers was sentenced to 60 days in jail in May. He pleaded guilty to the vote buying conspiracy in February. A total of 11 people have either pleaded guilty or been convicted of charges related to buying votes in Breathitt County's May 2010 primary election.

Jennings, Johnson, and Young will have to serve at least 85 percent of their prison sentences.

Kerry B. Harvey, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; Perrye Turner, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI; Jack Conway, Kentucky Attorney General; and Jack Smith, Chief of the Public Integrity Section at the Department of Justice, jointly made the announcement today.

The investigation was conducted by the Kentucky Attorney General's Office and the FBI. The U.S. Attorney's Office was represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ken Taylor and Richard B. Evans with the Public Integrity Section.

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