



CRIME

Milwaukee man gets jail time for voting twice in presidential election

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By [Bruce Vielmetti](#) of the *Journal Sentinel*

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Chad Gigowski said he was not part of any organized election fraud effort, just high on alcohol and drugs when he voted twice in November's presidential election.

But he told a judge Thursday that it wasn't an excuse, that he was "truly sorry" and hoped to learn from his mistake and take whatever consequence comes.

For Gigowski, 28, of Milwaukee, who had no prior criminal record, the immediate consequence was a felony conviction. Starting Monday, he'll serve six months in jail, with work-release privileges. After that, he'll be on probation for 2 1/2 years. If he violates conditions of the probation, he'll go to prison for 15 months.

In return for Gigowski's guilty plea last month to voting twice, prosecutors dropped two related counts — fraudulent registration and registering in more than one place. Both sides agreed to the sentence, except for the jail time. Assistant District Attorney Bruce



"The court will agree this is the most serious of all election fraud" offenses, Landgraf told Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Timothy Witkowiak. "Someone is seeking to dilute the vote of others.... It goes against the fundamental principle of one person, one vote."

Landgraf said Gigowski's offense was deliberate. He used an old driver's license to vote early on election day in Greenfield and signed a form stating he was a Greenfield resident. Later that day, he used a Department of Workforce Development letter, addressed to him at a Milwaukee address, to register and vote in the city, and also signed a form that he hadn't previously voted in the election.

Landgraf said that because it's "not difficult to in fact steal someone's vote or vote twice," the system "invests quite a bit of trust in the individual voter," and that Gigowski abused that trust. He said the public needs to know such a violation will result in incarceration.

Dries argued that for his client, who has no prior record and admitted his guilt fairly promptly, the burden of a felony record is punishment enough and should deter others from multiple voting. He said Gigowski has worked as a machine operator for six years with the same employer.

Witkowiak agreed that a felony conviction is itself a serious consequence, but said that voting violations are serious.

"Incidents like this get raised by the Legislature (as reason to) make it more difficult for others to vote," he said. "That's what makes it difficult."

Witkowiak did allow Gigowski to report to the House of Correction after work on Monday and said he must maintain absolute sobriety during his three years of probation.



than once in the same election. The other, Leonard K. Brown, [plans to defend the charge at trial.](#)

In 2011, [a jury acquitted a Milwaukee couple](#) of voting twice in the 2010 presidential election. Herbert and Suzanne Gunka had each sent in absentee ballots before voting again at their polling place on election day. They contend they did so only because they feared their absentee ballots had not been counted.



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Bruce Vielmetti writes about legal affairs.

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