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## Racine man fined \$2,500 for recall forgeries

Associated Press

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RACINE, Wis. (AP) — A Racine man convicted of forging at least seven names on petitions to recall a Republican state senator in 2011 and 2012 has been fined \$2,500.

Mark S. Demet, 60, told the judge Friday he let his emotions “run wild” during the “toxic political environment in the state of Wisconsin,” The Journal Times of Racine reported (<http://bit.ly/17KF9ay>).

“Sometimes hatred blinds you to what’s right or wrong. I knew what I did was wrong, but I was so filled with hatred I did it anyway,” Demet said during his sentencing. “But I learned a valuable lesson, that hatred really doesn’t benefit anybody. It certainly didn’t benefit me in any way, and I truly apologize for my actions.”



Circuit Judge Charles Constantine wasn't swayed. He told Demet his reasoning was “almost teenager-ish. You're an adult.”

Demet pleaded guilty to two counts of election fraud in March. The charges carried a maximum penalty of 3 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine. In exchange for his plea, Racine County prosecutors agreed to drop seven charges of identity fraud.

Constantine gave Demet three months to pay the first \$1,500 and another three months to pay the rest. If he fails to pay on time he could be jailed for as long as four months.

Prosecutors in Kenosha County agreed not to charge Demet with similar offenses there. However, Constantine was able to consider allegations in that county in determining Demet's sentence.

Demet had been circulating papers to recall then-state Sen. Van Wanggaard. He acknowledged to a Racine County sheriff's investigator that he signed other people's names. The criminal complaint said he forged the names of six people, and one of those people claimed the name of her dead husband had also been signed.

Wanggaard ended up facing a recall election, which he lost to Democrat John Lehman by more than 800 votes.

