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Press Release

FOR RELEASE:
June 24, 2010

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City of Chicago Employee Convicted of Vote Fraud

Charged in 2008 following a joint investigation with the city of Chicago Office of the Inspector General

A superintendent in the city's Bureau of Streets and Sanitation was convicted today of multiple counts of vote fraud for attempting to persuade voters in the 50th Ward to vote by absentee ballot in two elections in 2007, according to the office of Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez.

Anish Eapen, 39, was convicted of 9 counts of vote fraud including attempted absentee ballot fraud and attempted mutilation of election materials for attempting to lure voters to use absentee ballots during Chicago elections in February and April 2007, violating the Illinois Election Code. Co-defendant Armando Ramos, 36 was found to have assisted Eapen's unlawful efforts to mislead voters and was convicted of 20 counts of vote fraud, including attempted absentee ballot fraud, and attempted mutilation of election materials. Cook County Judge Marcus Salone convicted Eapen and Ramos following a bench trial. Both defendants face probation up to 364 days in jail when sentenced.

According to prosecutors, a joint investigation with the Chicago Inspector General's office revealed that during the several weeks preceding both the February 27 election and April 17 aldermanic runoff election in 2007, Eapen and Ramos visited the homes of numerous registered voters in the 50th Ward and solicited them to apply for an absentee ballot to vote in either or both elections.

Under Illinois law, voters must meet specific qualifications in order to cast an absentee ballot. Both Eapen and Ramos falsely told voters that they could obtain an absentee ballot and vote this way based on reasons such as cold weather, or simply because it was easier than voting in person. As a ward superintendent, Eapen did not have the authority to advise or inform residents how to vote.

"The right to vote should not be taken lightly", said Alvarez. "It is not only dishonorable to abuse this right, but also illegal. Today's verdicts are especially important because they send a clear message that Cook County will prosecute government employees who violate the law".

Eapen and Ramos will both appear before Judge Salone on August 4, 2010 for sentencing.

Alvarez thanked the City of Chicago Office of the Inspector General for its assistance in the investigation and successful prosecution. Alvarez also thanked Assistant State's Attorney Lynn McCarthy of the Special Prosecutions Bureau for handling the prosecution of this case.

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