



# OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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## **NEVADA ATTORNEY GENERAL AND SECRETARY OF STATE CHARGE ACORN WITH VOTER REGISTRATION VIOLATIONS**

**Las Vegas, NV:** Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto and Secretary of State Ross Miller today announced the filing of criminal charges against the Association of Community Organization for Reform Now Inc. (ACORN) and two of its employees for compensating their employees to register voters based upon a corporate mandated quote system.

The complaint includes 26 counts of Compensation for Registration of Voters, a Category E felony in violation of NRS 293.805 and 13 counts of Principle to the Crime of Compensation for Registration of Voters, also a Category E felony, in violation of NRS 293.805 and NRS 195.020.

“By structuring employment and compensation around a quota system, ACORN facilitated voter registration fraud in this state,” said Attorney General Masto. “Nevada will not tolerate violations of the law by individuals nor will it allow corporations to hide behind or place blame on their employees when its training manuals clearly detail, condone and, indeed, require, illegal acts in performing the job for the corporation.”

“It’s important to keep in mind that this was a case of registration fraud, not voter fraud,” said Nevada Secretary of State Ross Miller. “The investigation and subsequent charges that have now been filed demonstrate the effectiveness of the safeguards in our system designed to prevent voter fraud. I’ve been clear from the outset of my administration that we would be aggressive in our pursuit and prosecution of any fraudulent activity that might threaten the integrity of our electoral process. This investigation is the direct result of our aggressive response to those safeguards.”

Throughout 2008, ACORN employed canvassers to register people to vote in Nevada. ACORN paid the canvassers a rate of between \$8.00 and \$9.00 per hour, but made continued employment, and therefore continued compensation, contingent upon the canvasser registering 20 voters per shift. Canvassers who failed to obtain 20 voter registration forms per shift were terminated. This policy was clearly outlined in the training materials the organization used to train new employees and confirmed by former employees of ACORN.

From July 27, 2008 through October 2, 2008, ACORN also provided additional compensation, in the form of a bonus program called “Blackjack” or “21+” that was based upon the total number of voters a person registered. Specifically, a canvasser who brought in 21 or more completed voter registration forms per shift would be paid a bonus of \$5.00.

The Blackjack bonus program was created by employee Christopher Edwards, the Field Director for the Las Vegas office. ACORN timesheets indicate that corporate officers of ACORN were aware of the “Blackjack” bonus program and failed to take immediate action to terminate it. Amy Busefink was ACORN’s Deputy Regional Director who was aware of the “Blackjack” program and aided and abetted the scheme by approving Edwards’ bonus program.

The investigation into the scheme stemmed from a complaint filed with the Secretary of State’s office by Clark County Registrar of Voters, Harvard “Larry” Lomax. Lomax’ office had received a significant number of Voter Registration Application (VRA) forms that appeared to be fraudulent. These forms were identified by serial numbers on the applications as those issued to ACORN for the purpose of registering new voters.

Criminal charges were filed in Justice Court, Las Vegas Township, Clark County, Nevada.