



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2023

Starr County Elections Office Raided in Illegal Voting Investigation

State law enforcement officials seize rejected ballots from Nov. 2022 election as evidence

AUSTIN, TX – A [search warrant](#) signed by 381st District Court Presiding Judge Jose Luis Garza on May 24th was executed in a raid of the Starr County Elections Office last Friday as part of an ongoing investigation into illegal voting and ballot harvesting operations allegedly perpetrated by three named defendants.

The [search and seizure record](#) indicates at least 180 mail ballots were seized in the raid along with the voter registration application of one of the defendants, Modesta Vela of Roma, Texas.

Vela is the subject of a [complaint](#) filed by #ProjectRedTX in October 2022 with the Texas Secretary of State and presumably referred to the Office of Attorney General for investigation and prosecution.

The complaint asserted that Vela, who told people she was working on behalf of Starr County Judge Eloy Vera's reelection campaign, entered a voter's home, filled out the person's mail ballot, and left the home in possession of the ballot. Photographic evidence shows Vela leaving the property, an on-camera interview with the voter describes what happened, and in a recorded phone call with Vela after leaving the home, she admits to taking the ballot with her.

Multiple laws within the Texas Election Code were allegedly violated in this instance, including influencing the independent exercise of the vote of another in the presence of the ballot (Sec. 276.013), illegal possession of a mail ballot or carrier envelope as part of a vote harvesting operation (Sec. 276.015), and illegal compensation for carrier envelope action (Sec. 86.0052).

Ballot harvesting is a felony offense under Texas law.

###

Pol. Ad Paid for by #ProjectRedTX