



# TIM GRIFFIN

## ATTORNEY GENERAL OF ARKANSAS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 25, 2026

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## **Attorney General Griffin Announces 8 Arrests in Phillips County Related to 2024 Election Crimes in Justice of the Peace Runoff**

*Griffin: 'Keeping Arkansas's elections the most secure in the country requires vigilance and perseverance, and I am pleased to see these individuals held accountable for their actions'*

**LITTLE ROCK** – Attorney General Tim Griffin issued the following statement announcing the arrest of eight individuals in Phillips County, all of whom engaged in illegal efforts to influence the outcome of the 2024 primary election runoff for Justice of the Peace District 9:

“Eight people in Phillips County recently turned themselves in after agents in my Special Investigations Division obtained warrants for their arrest on felony charges related to a runoff election for the Phillips County Justice of the Peace seat for District 9. Lita Moore Johnson, 62, a teacher at Marvell School District who won the runoff election for the Justice of the Peace seat, was one of the individuals arrested after evidence was submitted that she told multiple voters to illegally change the address on their voter registration so that they could vote for her in the runoff. Johnson was charged with two counts of solicitation to commit perjury, a class D felony.

“Seven other individuals were charged with perjury, a class C felony, for fraudulently changing their address on an Arkansas Voter Registration Application. Each of them voted in the precinct corresponding with the District 9 Justice of the Peace runoff despite their actual address dictating that they vote elsewhere. They are:

- Mearion Armstrong, 68, retired
- Cordelia Foster, 60, an elementary teacher at KIPP Public School in Helena
- Shirley Hicks, 56, a custodian at Barton School District
- Jasean Smith, 30, a teacher at Central High School in Helena and the pastor of Galilee Church
- Adam Swopes, 26, a lieutenant with the Arkansas Department of Corrections
- Rachel Gamble Sykes, 56, Arkansas Crime Information Center coordinator for the Phillips County Sheriff's Office
- Jocelyn Washington, 39, who works at the Phillips County Development Center

“Keeping Arkansas’s elections the most secure in the country requires vigilance and perseverance, and I am pleased to see these individuals held accountable for their actions. I am grateful for the outstanding work done on these cases by my Special Investigations Division and Special Prosecutions Division.”

### **About Attorney General Tim Griffin**

Tim Griffin was sworn in as the 57th Attorney General of Arkansas on January 10, 2023, having previously served as the state’s 20th Lieutenant Governor from 2015-2023. From 2011-2015, Griffin served as the 24th representative of Arkansas’s Second Congressional District, where he served on the House Committee on Ways and Means, House Armed Services Committee, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, House Committee on Ethics and House Committee on the Judiciary while also serving as a Deputy Whip for the Majority.

Griffin is currently an officer in the Arkansas Army National Guard and holds the rank of colonel. Griffin served as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve Judge Advocate General’s (JAG) Corps for more than 28 years. In 2005, Griffin was mobilized to active duty as an Army prosecutor at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and served with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in Mosul, Iraq.

His previous assignments include serving as the Commander of the 2d Legal Operations Detachment in New Orleans, Louisiana; the Commander of the 134th Legal Operations Detachment at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and as a Senior Legislative Advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness at the Pentagon. Griffin earned a master’s degree in strategic studies as a Distinguished Honor Graduate from the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

Griffin also served as U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, and Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Political Affairs for President George W. Bush; Special Assistant to Assistant Attorney General Michael Chertoff, Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice; Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Arkansas; Senior Investigative Counsel, Government Reform and Oversight Committee, U.S. House of Representatives; and Associate Independent Counsel, Office of Independent Counsel David M. Barrett, In re: HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros.

Griffin is a graduate of Magnolia High School, Hendrix College in Conway, and Tulane Law School in New Orleans. He attended graduate school at Oxford University. He is admitted to practice law in Arkansas (active) and Louisiana (inactive). Griffin lives in Little Rock with his wife, Elizabeth, a Camden native, and their three children.

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