

# Judge bars indicted official, Tina Peters, from overseeing 2022 elections in Colorado

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A Mesa County judge granted a request on Tuesday to remove indicted Clerk Tina Peters as the county's designated election official (DEO) during the 2022 election.

The court also granted Secretary of State Jena Griswold's request to install Brandi Bantz as the DEO for the county. Bantz has served as a Colorado election official for more than two decades, including four years as the senior elections' specialist in El Paso County.

"The Court's decision today bars Peters from further threatening the integrity of Mesa's elections and ensures Mesa County residents have the secure and accessible elections they deserve," Griswold said in a statement.

Peters, who is running for the GOP nomination for secretary of state in Colorado, had already been prohibited by a judge from overseeing last year's local elections.

Peters was indicted in March and is facing multiple investigations, and 10 felony and misdemeanor counts from a grand jury indictment, stemming from allegations of election equipment security breach and campaign finance violations. Deputy Clerk Belinda Knisley was also indicted by the grand jury and suspended from her county position last year.

"Based on the circumstances of this case ... the Court determines that the Petitioners have met the burden of showing that Peters and Knisley have committed a neglect of duty and are unable to perform the duties of the Mesa County Designated Election Official," Robison wrote in her ruling.

"Clerk Peters' actions compromised Mesa County's voting equipment and election security constituting one of the nation's first insider threats where an election official, risked the integrity of the election system in an effort to prove unfounded conspiracy theories," Griswold continued, adding, "Clerk Peters subsequently refused to affirm that she would comply with Colorado election rules and laws as the Mesa County DEO."