

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* TEXAS

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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 6, 2022

## **La Joya ISD trustee convicted in bribery conspiracy**

McALLEN, Texas – A 42-year-old Penitas resident and La Joya Independent School District (ISD) trustee has admitted to receiving more than \$234,000 in bribes, announced U.S. Attorney Jennifer B. Lowery.

Armin Garza admitted he participated in a conspiracy to steer lucrative energy savings contracts at various political subdivisions in Hidalgo County, including La Joya ISD.

In exchange, Garza and other co-conspirators received bribes and kickbacks from subcontractors selected to work on the energy savings contracts. As part of his plea, Garza admitted to using his influence over LJISD employees who were elected officials at other political subdivisions in Hidalgo County. The employees subsequently received promotions or pay raises. They also voted to award or attempted to award the same company energy savings contracts at three other political subdivisions in Hidalgo County.

Garza admitted to receiving at least \$234,500 in bribes and agreed to forfeit such amounts as part of his plea.

U.S. District Judge Ricardo H. Hinojosa set sentencing for March 18. Garza was permitted to remain on bond pending that hearing.

The FBI conducted the investigation with the assistance of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Department of Agriculture-Office of Inspector General, Texas Department of Insurance and McAllen Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Roberto Lopez Jr. is prosecuting the case.

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**Topic(s):**

Public Corruption

**Component(s):**

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