



December 10, 2018

ACRU Election Integrity Bulletin

LEAD STORY

National Review: Yes, Voter Fraud Is Real

Democrats, who the day before yesterday were insisting that voter fraud didn't exist, now believe that it was used to steal a North Carolina congressional seat from them—and they may well be right. Republican Mark Harris has a 905-vote lead over Democrat Dan McCready in the state's 9th Congressional District, a slender victory that the State Board of Elections has refused to certify given credible allegations of cheating. A consulting firm working for Harris contracted with an operative named Leslie McCrae Dowless based on his get-out-the-vote work, mostly involving his strange prowess with absentee ballots. Working from a storefront, he employed a crew to go door to door urging people to request absentee ballots. When they did, his team returned to collect the ballots, purportedly to deliver them to election officials but apparently to hand them over to Dowless first. This is itself against the law in North Carolina, and rightly so. It destroys any chain of custody and creates the opportunity for more abuse and corruption. There was almost certainly illegality in a very close election. North Carolina law sets a standard for a revote that doesn't require a finding that cheating changed the outcome. The election board can order a new election if improprieties occurred that "taint the result" and "cast doubt on its fairness." The larger lesson here is that people will exploit vulnerabilities in the election system, and it should be as secure as possible. Absentee voting is a particular

soft spot. It occurs outside the watch of election officials, and it's impossible to determine what happens to the ballot in between the time it leaves and returns.

<https://bit.ly/2PxIcdz>

FEDERAL

Breitbart: Democrats Call Ballot Harvesting 'Fraud' in North Carolina, 'Democracy' in California

Democrats are crying foul over alleged voter fraud in North Carolina's 9th congressional district, where Republican operative Leslie McCrae Dowless is accused of using "ballot harvesting" to help Mark Harris defeat Democrat Dan McCready. Dowless and his staff gathered absentee ballots from voters and offered to mail them in on the voters' behalf. Only near relatives are allowed to do that under North Carolina law. But in California, third parties may submit an unlimited number of mail-in ballots, thanks to a new law signed by Gov. Jerry Brown in 2016. The practice of "ballot harvesting" is now thought to have had a major impact on the 2018 midterm elections in California, where several incumbent Republicans in competitive districts had healthy leads on Election Night, only to discover—weeks later, in some cases—they had lost, thanks to mail-in ballots.

<https://bit.ly/2C2Es08>

(more)

Daily Signal: Election Fraud Doesn't Exist Until Liberals Want It to Exist

Something amazing is happening: Liberals have suddenly begun to believe in voter fraud. Almost overnight, years of constant denial and disbelief have melted away amid allegations that a congressional election in North Carolina may have been tainted by absentee ballot fraud. When this or any type of election fraud occurs, it shakes the confidence of all voters, both liberals and conservatives. That makes guaranteeing election integrity a solemn, nonpartisan task. According to the left, voter fraud does not exist and any effort to address it is really about voter suppression and racially-motivated disenfranchisement. It is ironic that North Carolina is one of the states where the left has vehemently opposed voter ID, which is just one of many reforms that are needed to secure elections. That makes liberals' overnight conversion all the more shocking. The left seems eager to talk about election fraud these days, but only when it means energizing their base or when it benefits the Democratic Party. Otherwise, they claim it "doesn't exist." Election integrity must be about more than that. The same is true for the right. It is incumbent on conservatives and Republicans to resist the urge to circle the wagons or reflexively support the outcome in North Carolina as it stands today merely because of who won. Securing the ballot box is, after all, about preserving public trust in our republican institutions—a task that supersedes politics.

<https://dailysign.al/2ROtNvr>

NPR: Voting by Mail Is on The Rise, but Could Alleged N.C. Election Fraud Change That?

"The consensus, among people who study fraud carefully, is that voting by mail is a much more fertile area for fraud than voting in person," said Charles Stewart, who studies election technology and administration at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Still, voting by mail is on the rise. The numbers aren't finalized for 2018 yet, but in the 2016 presidential election, the percentage of people who voted by mail had more than doubled compared to two decades prior.

<https://n.pr/2zN0QJe>

STATES

Florida: Broward Recount Hampered by Too Few Workers, Judges Say

The Broward elections office didn't have enough workers to recount votes in the November election, according to a self-evaluation sent to the state. The report has two parts, one signed by two judges and now-suspended Supervisor of Elections Brenda Snipes and the other signed only by judges. The version with Snipes' signature says staffing shortages did not contribute to vote-counting delays. But the judges' version says the office didn't have enough staff to run a 24-hour operation, which they say was necessary to meet the counting deadlines. The elections office "had insufficient staff to run more than one shift of operators" of its high-speed vote-counting machines during the machine recount, wrote Judges Betsy Benson and Deborah Carpenter-Toye in the report obtained from the Florida Department of State. The judges and Snipes comprised the county's Canvassing Board.

<https://bit.ly/2QInO10>

Georgia: A Brewing January Fight Could Pit Ballot Access Against Voter Security

In his victory declaration, Secretary of State-elect Brad Raffensperger vowed to defend the broad voter registration purges and strict requirements for absentee balloting, which were implemented by his Republican predecessor and fueled Democratic accusations of disenfranchisement in fall campaigns. Raffensperger's decision to continue the policies of Brian Kemp, now the governor-elect, virtually guarantees a January fight among state lawmakers that will pit voting security, as demanded by Republicans, against ballot access, now a front-and-center cause among Democrats.

<https://bit.ly/2E9ZhYG>

(more)

Maine: GOP Calls for Investigation of Election Irregularities in 2nd District

The Maine Republican Party called on Maine Secretary of State Matt Dunlap to launch an investigation into election irregularities it has uncovered in the controversial 2nd congressional district election held on November 6. The party released evidence of those irregularities on Thursday: 17 sworn affidavits from voters who are residents of four towns in southern Maine that are part of the 1st Congressional District, who say that on election day, they were given ballots for the November 6 election in the 2nd Congressional District between Democrat Jared Golden and Rep. Bruce Poliquin (R-ME-02).

<https://bit.ly/2rsrP8s>

Mississippi: Another Arrest in Election Fraud Investigation

Prosecutors in Mississippi say a former fire chief promised beer and money to influence votes as officials have arrested a seventh person in an election fraud case. Madison County Assistant District Attorney Bryan Buckley told the *Clarion Ledger* that Cary Johnson was arrested Friday. Six people were arrested Thursday on allegations of voting-related crimes in the central Mississippi town of Canton. The allegations stem from a 2017 election. They face accusations that they bribed voters, improperly helped people fill out absentee ballots, voted despite being convicted of disqualifying felonies and voted even though they lived outside the city or voting district. Johnson's indictment posted on the newspaper's website shows he's accused of trying to influence a voter by promising beer. He's also accused of offering money to two others to sway their votes.

<https://www.wtok.com/content/news/Another-arrest-in-Mississippi-election-fraud-502197221.html>

Mississippi: Court Records Say Former Canton Fire Chief Promised Beer for a Vote

Madison County Assistant District Attorney Bryan Buckley confirmed Cary Johnson was arrested as the seventh person accused of voter fraud stemming from

the 2018 Canton municipal elections. Court records say the former Canton fire chief promised beer for a vote. The former Canton fire chief is the latest official to be arrested in a voter fraud sweep in Madison County. Johnson was indicted on three counts of voter fraud for allegedly buying votes in exchange for money and beer. Canton Alderwoman and former Police Chief Vickie McNeil and five others were indicted on charges of voter fraud.

<https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/local/2018/12/07/former-canton-fire-chief-now-wrapped-up-voter-fraud-sweep/2239504002/>

New York: Suffolk Board of Elections Workers, Party Leaders, Face Forgery Charges

Two employees of the Suffolk County Board of Elections, as well as an East Hampton Independence Party leader, were charged with forging signatures on nominating petitions, in some cases with the names of dead people, District Attorney Timothy Sini said. The former chairman of the East Hampton Town Republican Party is expected to face similar charges in court. Board of Elections employee William Mann, 60, of Cutchogue, faces charges of second-degree criminal possession of a forged instrument, first-degree offering a false instrument for filing and two counts of official misconduct. Another employee, Gregory Dickerson, 55, of Mattituck, was charged with two counts of second-degree criminal possession of a forged instrument and two counts of first-degree offering a false instrument for filing. An affidavit from Robert Maloney, an investigator with Sini's office, said Mann and Dickerson submitted Green Party nominating petitions to the Board of Elections in July that contained forged signatures, including, in one case, the signature of a person who died in 2014. Mann and Dickerson hoped to get Republican candidates listed under the Green Party on the Nov. 6 ballot to boost GOP chances of victory in last month's election, Sini said.

<https://www.newsday.com/long-island/sini-election-fraud-arrests-1.24231657>

(more)

North Carolina: GOP Candidate: ‘I Would Wholeheartedly Support’ New Election if Fraud Is Found

Republican Mark Harris announced that he would support a new election for North Carolina’s 9th congressional district if it is determined that election fraud swung the race in his favor. Harris announced in a web video that he would back a potential new race amid rising evidence of fraud in the contest, in which he leads Democratic rival Dan McCready by 905 votes. Questions surround an independent contractor that worked on Harris’ campaign as the state’s board of elections investigates absentee ballot irregularities.

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/congress/nc-gop-candidate-i-would-wholeheartedly-support-new-election-if-fraud-is-found>

Texas: Officials Request Two New Voter Fraud Investigations

In a year fraught with numerous allegations and, in some cases, prosecutions over irregularities at the Texas ballot box, two new voter fraud investigations appear to loom in the Lone Star State. Director of Elections Keith Ingram for the Texas Secretary of State requested the Office of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton investigate a complaint that accused a South Texas councilman of committing voter fraud during the November 2018 midterm election in a school board race. In a letter sent on November 19 to David Maxwell, director of law enforcement for the AG’s office, Ingram wrote: The complainant alleges that on October 24, 2018, Hidalgo City Councilman Rodolfo “Rudy” Franz unlawfully assisted a voter by suggesting and instructing the voter on who to vote for while assisting them with their ballot. The complainant further alleges that Mr. Franz was asked multiple times by election workers to stop making suggestions and instructions to the voter, but that he continued to offer unlawful assistance despite their requests.

<https://bit.ly/2RPrmc3>

REDISTRICTING

Courthouse News: Citizenship Census Question Spat Likely Headed for Trial in California

Citing facts still in dispute about the decision to add a citizenship question to the 2020 U.S. Census, a federal judge suggested Friday that another trial over the controversial Trump administration policy will likely start early next year.

<https://bit.ly/2Bhj7hV>

Lawmaker Aims to Get Citizenship Question Removed from U.S. Census

The likely incoming Democratic chairman of the congressional panel overseeing the U.S. census said on Tuesday he aims to pressure the Trump administration into removing a question about citizenship from the 2020 census questionnaire. Representative Gerald Connolly said that when Democrats assume leadership of the House of Representatives in January, they plan to call Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross to testify about the citizenship question, which has spurred criticism and lawsuits.

<https://bit.ly/2COSXRY>

(more)

Politico: Democrats Fighting Their Own Base on Redistricting

It's only been a month since the election, when enthusiasm from the liberal wing of the Democratic Party helped flip four of New Jersey's five GOP-held house seats. But now many of the activists who were instrumental in flipping those House seats are fighting with their own party's state legislators over the redistricting amendment. The liberals who call for redistricting reform have a lot of problems with the amendment. The New Jersey Working Families Alliance, which helped make the case for a similar amendment a few years ago but dropped its support, is helping organize the resistance.

<https://politi.co/2rwxFWa>

Virginia: Expert Reveals Proposal to Redraw House Map after Court Rejects GOP Attempt to Block It

An expert appointed to redraw the Virginia House of Delegates map released his proposal Friday after a federal court rejected a Republican effort to stop it. Bernard Grofman, a political science professor at the University of California-Irvine, filed his 131-page report outlining his suggestions for how Virginia could fix 11 House districts found to be racially gerrymandered. In a long-running redistricting lawsuit, the court ruled earlier this year that 11 House districts were unconstitutional because state lawmakers used improper racial targets to draw African-American voters into majority-minority districts. The General Assembly then met to try to work out a bipartisan fix in response to the court's ruling. When those talks failed, the court appointed Grofman to draw a map the court could enact on its own. House Speaker Kirk Cox, R-Colonial Heights, had asked the court to stop pursuing its own map until the U.S. Supreme Court takes up a GOP appeal next year. Cox had also asked for next year's June House primaries to be rescheduled for September to give the courts more time to resolve the matter. A panel of three federal judges denied both motions, clearing the way for the release of Grofman's proposal.

<https://bit.ly/2zPjn2E>