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ACRU Election Integrity Bulletin

LEAD STORY

WSJ: U.S. Sees No Foreign Compromise of Election Systems in 2018 Midterms

The top U.S. intelligence official said Friday there had been no sign that American election systems had been compromised by hackers during the 2018 midterm elections, but that Russia and other foreign adversaries continued to conduct influence operations aimed at the U.S. The review by Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats aligned with what federal and state officials and cybersecurity firms had concluded shortly after November's contests: that Russia's trolls and hackers appeared to mostly sit on the sidelines in 2018. "At this time, the Intelligence Community does not have intelligence reporting that indicates any compromise of our nation's election infrastructure that would have prevented voting, changed vote counts, or disrupted the ability to tally votes," Mr. Coats said. But Mr. Coats acknowledged that foreign-backed efforts to use social media and other means to covertly influence U.S. politics remained an area of concern for intelligence agencies.

<https://on.wsj.com/2R36Gko>

FEDERAL

The Hill: Election Agency Prepares to Tackle Foreign Interference

Lawmakers on Capitol Hill are eying a once-struggling agency to take the lead on ensuring U.S. elections are secure. The Election Assistance

Commission (EAC), first created in 2002 in response to the controversial 2000 presidential election, has been given new life as officials across the federal government try to figure out the best way to combat foreign election interference. The agency has been unable to tackle major policy actions since March when one of the commissioner's terms expired. And that came on the heels of criticism for not initially taking election interference seriously in 2016. These days the commissioners say they're largely focused on making sure voters feel secure in turning in their ballots, and aren't driven away by fears that their vote could be compromised.

<https://thehill.com/policy/cybersecurity/422563-election-agency-prepares-to-tackle-foreign-interference?jwsourc=twi>

Washington Examiner: LinkedIn Co-Founder Apologizes for Funding Group Linked to Disinformation Efforts in Alabama Special Election

LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman said he is embarrassed for funding a group that reportedly spread disinformation during the 2017 Alabama Senate special election. American Engagement Technologies, an organization Hoffman gave \$750,000, allegedly used Facebook and Twitter to help eventual victor Democrat Doug Jones at the expense of Republican Roy Moore, who has been accused of sexual misconduct. "I find the tactics that have been recently reported highly disturbing," Hoffman said, according to the *Washington Post* Wednesday. "For that reason, I am embarrassed by my failure to track AET—the organization I did support—more diligently as it made its own decisions to perhaps fund projects that I would reject."

<https://washex.am/2BR0uzO>

STATES**Florida: Federal Judge Sets Hearing for Suspended Broward Elections Supervisor Brenda Snipes**

Chief U.S. District Judge Mark Walker will hold a hearing in Tallahassee about a preliminary injunction sought by Snipes, according to a court docket. Snipes filed the lawsuit Monday against Gov. Rick Scott and Senate President Bill Galvano, arguing that her due-process rights had been violated. After a turbulent election in Broward County, Snipes announced on Nov. 18 that she would resign from the supervisor's post effective Jan. 4. Scott on Nov. 30 issued an executive order to suspend Snipes, but she decided to rescind the resignation and fight the suspension. The Senate has the constitutional authority to remove from office or reinstate suspended elected officials, but Galvano, R-Bradenton, said last week the Senate would not take up the Snipes matter because of a lack of time to conduct a "full investigation into the serious assertions" in Scott's executive order. The lawsuit seeks an injunction to block Scott and Galvano from enforcing parts of state law and a Senate rule dealing with suspensions. It also seeks a judgment that those parts of state law and the Senate rule are "null and void" because they deprive Snipes of due process.

<https://www.orlandoweekly.com/Blogs/archives/2018/12/23/federal-judge-sets-hearing-for-suspended-broward-elections-supervisor-brenda-snipes>

Maine: LePage Takes Parting Shot at 'Stolen Election' That Cost Fellow Republican His Seat in Congress

Jared Golden will be sworn in with the other members of the incoming Congress on Jan. 3. Gov. Paul LePage signed off on the state's first-in-the-nation ranked-choice election to Congress on Friday, but also left a note of protest against the voter-approved election law that propelled Democratic State Rep. Jared Golden to a victory over incumbent Republican U.S. Rep. Bruce Poliquin in the 2nd District. LePage initialed Golden's certificate of election but also wrote "stolen election" beside it before sharing a photo of the certificate on Twitter with an additional comment. "I've signed off

on the CD2 election result as it's no longer in federal court. Ranked Choice Voting didn't result in a true majority as promised—simply a plurality measured differently. It didn't keep big money out of politics & didn't result in a more civil election #mepolitics,"

LePage's official account tweeted.

<https://www.pressherald.com/2018/12/28/lepage-leaves-note-of-protest-on-golden-election-certificate/>

Montana: Recount Drama Continues After Attorney Calls Judge's Rules Illegal

A recount in the Musselshell County sheriff's race set for Friday was delayed at the last minute after an attorney for the winner said a judge's recount rules were illegal. In the Nov. 6 general election, Undersheriff Shawn Lesnik beat write-in opponent Ronnie Burns, a horse breeder and former Texas police officer, by 41 votes (1,142 to 1,101). In the primary election, Lesnik had won the three-way Republican race by 40 votes, and Burns filed in June to run as a write-in candidate. In a ruling issued Friday morning shortly before the recount was to begin, Richland County District Court Judge Katherine Bidegaray set eight parameters for the recount process. But Lesnik's attorney, Lisa Speare, claimed in an afternoon hearing the parameters were illegal, pointing to one allowing ballots for Burns to be counted when the voter wrote in his name but did not color in the oval. "That is illegal, absolutely contrary to Montana law," Speare said.

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

North Carolina: Lawmakers Override Election Bill Veto

North Carolina lawmakers have overridden the governor's veto of legislation that will allow the state elections board to keep confidential any allegations of campaign fundraising law violations. The state House and Senate on Thursday voted to retain the law, which also will affect the country's last undecided congressional race. The law will require new primaries and a new general election in North Carolina's 9th Congressional District if the state elections board looking into an ongoing case of ballot fraud decides it's necessary.

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

North Carolina: Election Fraud Problems Require a Bigger Fix

Potentially illegal absentee ballot activities in Bladen County should never have affected the 2018 congressional election. The allegations were public knowledge—and national news—two years before, but a breakdown in election law enforcement left the matter unresolved for this year's midterm elections. The state elections board received complaints in 2016 that Bladen County political operative McCrae Dowless was paying people to collect voters' absentee ballots and give them to him. That's the central allegation against Dowless in 2018 as he worked for Republican Mark Harris' congressional campaign. If true, that's illegal. Elections board investigators looked into the issue, but the state board only ruled on a complaint that Dowless filed against another group. The state elections board ultimately dismissed that complaint, determining that what occurred did not affect the outcome of the election. The board turned hundreds of pages of investigatory findings over to federal prosecutors—and that's where the safeguards that should protect our democracy broke down.

<https://bit.ly/2Rsyf5O>

Ohio: Ward 3 Seat Changes Hands Several Times

The Ward 3 City Council seat was at the center of controversy for more than half of 2018. Reginald Holman resigned on April 2 just hours before his fellow City Council members were prepared to approve a resolution finding he vacated and forfeited the office of Ward 3 representative by reason of non-residency and failing to qualify as a voter. Holman was also indicted in May and accused of knowingly registering or making application to register in a precinct in which he was not a qualified voter. Both the council resolution and charges stemmed from testimony Holman gave March 21 to the Ashtabula County Board of Elections, as part of a voter registration and residency challenge filed by Ashtabula City Solicitor Michael Franklin. Based on the "substantial evidence" presented at the hearing, the Board of Elections unanimously determined Holman was not a resident of 1123 W. 43rd St. and removed him from the voter registration rolls.

<https://bit.ly/2BPM5pl>

REDISTRICTING

Liberty Nation: Obama Gerrymandering Battle Has One Purpose: Boosting Dems

Former President Barack Obama is reportedly turning his entire political focus to redistricting, while claiming to battle gerrymandering. Which is just another way to say he is looking to maximize the voter clout of an urbanized Democratic Party. The Atlantic reports that Obama has "announced a major shift in the politics of his post-presidency," consolidating his Organizing for Action group into the National Democratic Redistricting Committee. Why this is considered major news is unclear. It seems he's just changing the subject head for his financed efforts dedicated to bringing about Democratic election supremacy. Drawing electoral districts for biased political gain has been a hallmark of both political parties for as long as this nation has been holding elections. When especially egregious, it is called gerrymandering. Obama is apparently ready to take a stand against politically motivated line-drawing—by engaging in some redistricting of his own. In fact, the left-leaning website ProPublica writes that Obama's entire political career may have been launched via gerrymandering. After losing a race in 1999, Obama successfully redrew an Illinois state senate district to fit his desired specifications for a 2001 run.

<https://www.libertynation.com/obama-gerrymandering-battle-has-one-purpose-boosting-dems/>