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# ACRU Election Integrity Bulletin

## LEAD STORY

### Incoming NASS Leader Rejects Democrats' H.R. 1

The next president of the NASS has strong words for House Democrats considering a range of election security measures: Butt out. H.R. 1, a Democratic grab-bag bill with election security provisions, “seems to be a huge federal overreach,” Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate told *POLITICO*. “No matter how well-intentioned, the provisions of the bill give the authority of overseeing and conducting elections and voter registration to the federal government.” Pate’s remarks, were first reported by *National Journal*. Pate cited NASS’s long-standing opposition to federal mandates for election procedures—in October, the group warned against tying federal funds to regulations—and said state election offices like his are “better prepared than the federal government to determine what is right for their residents.”

<https://politi.co/2AMduJ7>

## FEDERAL

### H.R. 1: Democrats Act to Strip State Powers Over Elections

If you thought the midterm elections had problems, wait until you learn about Nancy Pelosi’s plan to terminate state control over American elections. Democrats in Congress have announced their top legislative priority, and it isn’t health care, immigration, or taxes. Instead, they want to centralize power over elections in Washington, D.C. H.R. 1 is number one on the legislative agenda because it is the

number one priority of House Democrats, leftist groups, deep-pocketed dark money, and those who use election process rules to help win elections—or at least to cause chaos. The bill is a 571-page dreamscape of wild wishes and federal mandates on states. The Constitution decentralizes power over American elections and puts states in charge. H.R. 1 would undo that.

<https://pjmedia.com/jchristianadams/h-r-1-democrats-act-to-strip-state-powers-over-elections/>

### No, the Electoral College Is Not a ‘Shadow of Slavery’s Power’

New York’s newest congresswoman, Democrat Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, has been quick to jump onto this bandwagon, recently labeling the Electoral College a “shadow of slavery’s power on America.” Mere hours into the new Congress, a bill was introduced to eliminate this “outdated” system. Such a view of the Electoral College’s roots threatens to become conventional wisdom, but nothing could be further from the truth. The discussions at the Constitutional Convention were shaped more by the delegates’ study of history and political philosophy, as well as their own experiences with Parliament and the state legislatures. They wanted to avoid the mistakes that had been made in other governments. They sought to establish a better constitution that would stand the test of time.

<https://www.dailysignal.com/2019/01/11/no-the-electoral-college-is-not-a-shadow-of-slaverys-power/>

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**STATES****Colorado: State Senator Accuses New Secretary of State of ‘Partisanship’**

State Sen. Jerry Sonnenberg, R-Sterling, and one of his Republican colleagues on the Senate State, Veterans and Military Affairs Committee have criticized incoming Democratic Secretary of State Jena Griswold for appointing “campaign operatives and special interests” to her senior team. In an email statement sent out Wednesday morning, Sonnenberg said Griswold’s staff appointments show the new state secretary wants to “prioritize politics” in her new job. “Jena Griswold has sent a strong signal that, as Secretary of State, she’s going to prioritize politics over free and fair elections,” the senator said. “The people of Colorado should be very worried that the independence of the office has already been sacrificed to Democratic political operatives. As her first act she’s appointed Polis and Kennedy campaign operatives fresh from the campaign trail. Her judgment here is deeply concerning.”

<https://bit.ly/2AKEh8i>

**Florida: Judge: Rick Scott Overstepped When He Suspended Broward’s Embattled Elections Chief**

As signs build that Florida’s new governor may suspend Broward County’s elected sheriff from office, a federal judge has ruled that the state’s former governor overstepped when he effectively fired Broward County’s elections supervisor. In a Wednesday evening order, U.S. District Court Judge Mark Walker found that Rick Scott exceeded his authority when, on the heels of a controversial election recount, he suspended Brenda Snipes from office. Due to the timing of her removal and her plans to resign in early January, Snipes was left without the ability to challenge her ouster or contest the allegations contained in Scott’s executive order. Walker declined to reinstate Snipes, a 15-year veteran of the elections department, which she had sought in the form of a preliminary injunction. He also agreed

that the Florida Senate was right to deny her a hearing that by law is typically afforded politicians who seek to challenge a suspension by the governor. But he did order Scott’s successor, the newly elected Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, to issue a new order by the end of the month explaining the reasons for Snipes’ suspension, and demand that Snipes be granted a special hearing before the governor no later than March 31.

<https://www.tampabay.com/florida-politics/buzz/2019/01/09/judge-rick-scott-overstepped-when-he-suspended-browards-embattled-elections-chief/>

**Georgia: Changes May Be Ahead for Election System**

Georgia’s election system has drawn criticism from cybersecurity experts and voting integrity advocates, and now a commission tasked with examining potential replacements is preparing to make recommendations to lawmakers. The paperless system was closely scrutinized during last year’s nationally watched gubernatorial race between Democrat Stacey Abrams and Republican Brian Kemp, who was Georgia’s secretary of state and chief elections official. Whatever they decide, the timeline is tight. Commission members seemed to agree they’d like to have a trial run during the November 2019 municipal elections and implement a new system statewide for the 2020 election cycle.

<https://apnews.com/014eaefdbb1f4aa3934a96f01f15545c>

**Illinois: Dorothy Brown Alleges Fraud in Her Fight to Get on Chicago Mayoral Ballot**

Mayoral candidate Dorothy Brown on Thursday said she’s being targeted with election fraud in her fight to get on the mayoral ballot, and she called for an investigation into what she said was an inexplicable sudden reversal in her fortunes. Facing what Chicago Board of Election Commissioners spokesman James Allen called “a very steep climb” to prove she has the 12,500 signatures of registered voters required to get on the Feb. 26 ballot, Brown held a news conference to argue that thousands of the names she submitted were suddenly and mysteriously ruled invalid after having earlier been deemed valid.

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/politics/ct-met-dorothy-brown-petition-challenge-complaint-20190110-story.html>

## Iowa: Voter IDs Required at Polls in 2019

Jasper County Auditor Dennis Parrott says county election officials will be ready for changes to Iowa's voting laws in 2019 when the next round of countywide elections hit in November, the first after the state's new voter ID law fully goes into effect. Voter ID, officially called the Election Modernization and Integrity Act, is being fully-enforced as of Jan. 1. The law now requires Iowa voters to show a valid, state-issued voter or approved government ID at the polls to cast a ballot.

<https://www.newtondailynews.com/2019/01/08/voter-ids-required-at-polls-in-2019/aq76pct/>

## Iowa: Iowa City Man Faces Voter Misconduct Charge

An Iowa City man was arrested Monday following an investigation into possible suspicious voter activity. According to the criminal complaint, the Johnson County Sheriff's Office was contacted in October by the Johnson County Auditor's Office regarding suspicious voter registration activity by Joseph P. Hentzel, 40. The complaint said investigators determined Hentzel provided a false residential address on an absentee ballot request form on Sept. 26.

<https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/public-safety/voter-misconduct-fraud-iowa-city-police-icpd-absentee-ballot-fake-addresses-20190111>

## North Carolina: Election Violations Alleged in 2016 Were Aired with Justice Department Official

State findings of North Carolina election manipulation in 2016 were elevated as far as a top Justice Department official in Washington, D.C., but so far, no charges have been filed by prosecutors at any level. The head of the Justice Department's Public Integrity Section met with staff from the North Carolina state board of elections about allegedly improper election activities in Bladen County that occurred during the 2016 elections, according to emails obtained by *The News & Observer*. Republicans and Democrats have lamented the fact that nothing was done despite years of allegations and investigations, all leading to the current mess. Two dozen protesters gathered at the

state board offices Friday and marched to the offices of U.S. Attorney Robert J. Higdon Jr. to deliver a petition with more than 2,000 signatures calling for an investigation into the 2018 elections. "Did the U.S. attorney investigate the very solid evidence of vote stealing in the 2016 election? No," said Jen Ferris, the director of reproductive rights at Progress North Carolina. "If they had, would we be in this situation now? No."

<https://bit.ly/2Fuev3s>

## Virginia: State Threatened with Lawsuit over Non-Citizen Voter Roll Maintenance

The Virginia Department of Elections is being threatened with litigation over its procedures to remove non-citizens from voter rolls by an election integrity group that says the state's procedure is resulting in the wrongful removal of eligible citizens from its registrations. The Public Interest Legal Foundation (PILF), a group that litigates to protect election integrity, sent a notice to the Virginia Department of Elections on Dec. 12 warning that it could face a lawsuit unless it corrects its voter roll maintenance procedures. The department has yet to respond to the group nearly one month after the notice was delivered, according to its spokesman. The PILF released a report in 2017 that detailed how state election officials removed 5,556 noncitizen voters from rolls between 2011 and 2017. Of the 5,556 noncitizens removed, 1,852 cast a total of 7,474 ballots in elections.

<https://freebeacon.com/issues/virginia-threatened-with-lawsuit-over-non-citizen-voter-roll-maintenance/>

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## Virginia: Democratic Governor Working to Repeal Voter ID Law, Remove Absentee Voting Rules

Virginia Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam announced earlier this week that he is backing legislation that would repeal voter photo identification requirements and institute “no-excuse” absentee voting. The move fits part of a wider nationwide push by Democrats to liberalize voting laws under the banner of increasing voter access. Northam’s legislative package also includes proposed changes in campaign finance laws that would ban corporate contributions and set a limit to the amount that individuals can give to a candidate, according to a news release from the governor’s office.

<https://bit.ly/2sqe76y>

### REDISTRICTING

## Ohio: Attorney General Files Motion to Toss Redistricting Lawsuit

Ohio Gov.-elect Mike DeWine in his current role as the state’s attorney general has filed a motion seeking dismissal of a lawsuit attempting to force Ohio to redraw its 16 congressional districts in time for the 2020 election. The lawsuit is scheduled for trial in March before a three-judge federal panel.

Cleveland.com reports the Ohio League of Women Voters and others who are suing for the redrawing of districts argue Ohio’s congressional map violates voters’ constitutional rights by “entrenching partisan advantage.” They say the current map has resulted in 12 predictably Republican districts and four predictably Democratic districts. The judges rejected an earlier attempt in August to dismiss the lawsuit. DeWine’s motion filed this week argues among other things that plaintiffs lack standing and are unable to prove harm.

<https://local12.com/news/local/attorney-general-files-motion-to-toss-redistricting-lawsuit>

## Virginia: After Lengthy Hearing, Judges Redrawing House Map Have Lots of Options but Not Much Time

The three federal judges who could reshape the landscape for Virginia’s 2019 House of Delegates races considered lots of proposed election maps Thursday but said they wouldn’t decide on a way forward for at least a few weeks. After five hours of arguments and testimony in a Richmond courtroom in a long-running racial gerrymandering case, the judges told their hired expert that they want him to resubmit his proposed House maps as a final document with typos fixed, corrections made, and new information added. “We will need a report that straightens everything out,” said U.S. District Judge Robert Payne, who oversaw Thursday’s proceedings. Bernard Grofman, a political science professor at the University of California-Irvine, spent most of Thursday morning defending his proposal on the stand. At the end of the day, Grofman asked the judges for guidance on which combination of his proposed maps they’d prefer. The judges said they would get back to him, but only if they decide to proceed with his proposal.

<https://bit.ly/2Ck3rL5>