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ACRU Election Integrity Bulletin

LEAD STORY

Breitbart: House Dems Look for 'Power Grab' with H.R. 1 Effort to Overhaul Voting, Elections

Once a year, dignitaries gather in Selma, Alabama for the annual commemoration of 1965's "Bloody Sunday" Edmund Pettus Bridge crossing. During election cycles, many of those dignitaries are Democratic Party politicians, and even some seeking the highest office in the land, the United States presidency. If there was a takeaway from the occasion, Democrats are looking to make voter suppression and voting rights one of the main issues of the campaign. Right out of the gate, Democrats filed H.R. 1, titled as the For the People Act of 2019. The bill, sponsored by Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD), includes a number of initiatives Democrats have long advocated. Among those items included in the nearly 600-page bill are internet, automatic and same-day voter registration, restriction on removing or purging names from voter rolls. "H.R. 1 is a nothing but a liberal wish list and massive government overreach forcing states into a one-size-fits-all approach to administering elections," Rep. Mike Rogers (R-AL), the ranking Republican on the House Homeland Security Committee, said to Breitbart News.

<https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2019/03/06/house-dems-look-for-power-grab-with-hr-1-effort-to-overhaul-voting-elections/>

FEDERAL

Washington Times: ACLU Blasts Democrats' Election Bill as Unconstitutional

The American Civil Liberties Union dealt a blow Monday to Democrats' new election overhaul legislation, saying the bill does too much damage to the First Amendment and the storied rights group cannot support it. ACLU officials said they support parts of the bill, such as making it easier to register to vote, but said the legislation attempts to control even the mere mention of a politician, which goes too far. "They will have the effect of harming our public discourse by silencing necessary voices that would otherwise speak out about the public issues of the day," the ACLU's national political director and senior legislative counsel wrote in a 13-page letter announcing opposition. Democrats plan to put the bill, H.R. 1, on the chamber floor for a vote later this week. They've cast it as their top legislative priority, after saying last year's elections were tainted by too many problems with voting, and too much money controlling the outcomes of elections and legislating.

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/mar/4/hr-1-democrats-election-reform-bill-unconstitution/>

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Census Bureau Quietly Seeking Status of Millions of Immigrants

Under a proposed plan, the Department of Homeland Security would provide the Census Bureau with a broad swath of personal data about noncitizens, including their immigration status, the *Associated Press* has learned. A pending agreement between the agencies has been in the works since at least January, the same month a federal judge in New York blocked the administration from adding the citizenship question to the 10-year survey. On Wednesday, a federal judge in California also declared that adding the citizenship question to the Census was unconstitutional, saying the move “threatens the very foundation of our democratic system.” The data that Homeland Security would share with Census officials would include noncitizens’ full names and addresses, birth dates and places, as well as Social Security numbers and highly sensitive alien registration numbers, according to a document signed by the Census Bureau and obtained by *AP*.

<https://nyp.st/2J0OB2B>

PJ Media: Democrats Want Children to Vote

Oregon legislation to allow children to vote should bring to an end our first reaction to crazy ideas involving our elections—namely laughter. It’s dangerous to laugh at proposals like child-voting when the advocates are deadly serious. Oregon Senator Shemia Fagan introduced legislation at a press conference to allow sixteen-year-olds to vote. She was flanked by teens wearing homemade T-shirts criticizing firearms. “Sixteen-year-olds are couch surfing with friends while their families are experiencing homelessness and begging us to take action to protect their future and planet,” Fagan said. As long as democracies have existed, and as long as this democratic republic has existed, voters must be adults. This, the latest in a long march of transformational rules over our elections, is a loud alarm that these efforts to change election process rules are really an effort to change America.

<https://pjmedia.com/jchristianadams/next-up-democrats-want-children-to-vote/>

STATES

Delaware: Senate Approves Compact Giving State’s Electoral College Votes to Winner of Nation’s Popular Vote

When Delawareans head to the polls to cast ballots in future elections, their votes might not decide which presidential candidate gets the state’s three votes in the electoral college. That scenario would play out under an interstate compact the state Senate voted to join on Thursday in a 14-7 decision. Senate Bill 22 would enter Delaware into an agreement with other states to tie their votes in the electoral college to the winner of the nationwide popular vote, regardless of how individual states voted. The compact does not go into effect until enough states sign onto the agreement and pool together an aggregate of at least 270 votes in the electoral college—a majority needed to elect a president. Legislatures in eleven Democratic-leaning states and the District of Columbia have signed onto the agreement, representing 181 votes. Delaware may only represent three votes in the electoral college but passing Senate Bill 22 would reduce the remaining votes needed to reach the threshold of 270 votes.

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

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Florida: Woman, 71, Used Fake Citizenship Papers to Vote

A 71-year-old woman who prosecutors say used a counterfeit naturalization certificate to vote in at least five Alachua County elections was arrested Wednesday. Aida Xilomen Rodriguez de Shehab, who authorities say is not a U.S. citizen, faces five counts of being unqualified elector willfully voting and four counts of submitting false voter registration information, according to the charging document filed Feb. 25 by State Attorney Bill Cervone. Rodriguez de Shehab, a registered Democrat, voted in elections—possibly in more than one county—over several years, Cervone said. His office was alerted to the case after receiving a tip from investigators in Duval County, where de Shehab is now registered to vote. Rodriguez de Shehab repeatedly voted while knowing she wasn't qualified, Cervone said, but the charging document does not indicate that she voted in the same election twice. In the charging document, Cervone said she voted illegally in Alachua County elections on Aug. 28, 2018, March 20, 2018, March 14, 2017, and Aug. 30, 2016. She also voted illegally in Alachua County on Nov. 8, 2016, which was the U.S. presidential election.

<https://www.gainesville.com/news/20190307/prosecutor-woman-71-used-fake-citizenship-papers-to-vote>

Hawaii: Lawmakers Pass Automatic Recount, Voter Registration

Hawaii lawmakers have passed several bills to reform how elections are run in the state. In the state House, the measures include requiring automatic recounts when victory margins are exceptionally narrow, voting by mail across the state and automatic voter registration. Another bill would use ranked-choice voting for special elections and partisan primary contests. The bills are heading to the state Senate for consideration. The state Senate has also passed a voting by mail bill and an automatic recount measure. These will go to the House for consideration. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Rep. Chris Lee says lawmakers want to make it easier for everyone to

vote. He says this is especially true in Hawaii where voters have a low turnout rate for elections.

<https://www.kitv.com/story/40086799/hawaii-lawmakers-pass-automatic-recount-voter-registration>

Illinois: Cook County Investigating Reports of Vote Buying in Harvey

The Cook County sheriff's office has opened an investigation into alleged voter fraud in Harvey at the request of the county clerk's office, an agency spokeswoman said. Spokeswoman Sophia Ansari declined to elaborate on the nature of the allegations or when they were made, but said the investigation had been launched recently and could lead to criminal charges.

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/news/ct-sta-voting-fraud-harvey-investigation-st-0308-story.html>

Illinois: Republican Lawmaker Says There's Voter Fraud Across the State, Including Jackson County

State Rep. Allen Skillicorn, (R) East Dundee, wants to take tougher action against people who vote twice. "It undermines our democracy," Skillicorn said. "The state's attorneys across the state of Illinois are not prosecuting election fraud. These are documented, audited cases of election fraud." He cites records from the Illinois State Board of Elections, detailing about 130 people cast two ballots or more, mostly in the Chicagoland area. It's not nearly as prevalent in southern Illinois but Jackson County has four cases of people casting at least two ballots in 2016. Jackson County Clerk Frank Byrd said each case was forwarded to the FBI. "We go into the state database and we compare history. We look for issues," Byrd said. "If it's found, we turn it over to the FBI and hopefully action is taken." Skillicorn filed two bills: HB 2633 would add Illinois to the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck Program, despite a study that says the program purges valid voters from voter rolls far more than invalid voters. HB 2632 would enhance criminal penalties for filing more than one vote and make it a felony to vote in different states.

<http://www.wsilv.com/video?clipId=14777190&autostart=true>

Iowa: Bipartisan Bill to Uniformly Count Mail-In Ballots Advances

Lawmakers in the Iowa House advanced a bill Tuesday that would ensure absentee ballots that get mailed on time are counted in a consistent way. It is a bipartisan effort to avoid repeating what happened in a recent northeast Iowa contested election that was separated by nine votes. The House ultimately voted along party lines in January to not count 29 mail-in ballots in House District 55. According to Republicans, the ballots didn't have the right kind of barcode to prove they were mailed on time. Democrats said the ballots were mailed on time and refusing to count them amounted to disenfranchising voters. Rep. Jon Jacobsen, R-Council Bluffs, said the bill (with amendments) requires all counties to pay for and use the same barcode system so that all ballots are treated equally across counties. "I think uniformity is absolutely mandatory, that all of the counties do this in a similarly situated way, otherwise we're back to *Bush v. Gore* where we would have different counting standards in different counties," Jacobsen said.

<https://www.iowapublicradio.org/post/bipartisan-bill-uniformly-count-mail-ballots-advances#stream/0>

Kansas: Citizen Grand Jury Disbands in Kobach Case Without Returning Indictment

A citizen-initiated grand jury that was impaneled in January to investigate alleged election-related crimes by former Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach's office has adjourned without bringing an indictment, according to a court document in the case. After reviewing the citizen petition, exhibits and testimony of witnesses, the grand jury found "no cognizable crime under the laws of the State of Kansas," said the document, obtained Wednesday by the *Journal-World*. Otherwise, as with any type of grand jury, the panel's proceedings were secret and closed to the public, from jury selection to investigative actions it may have taken. Steven Davis, the Lawrence resident who petitioned to convene the grand jury, said Wednesday that he was

disappointed in the outcome but that he respected the process. In his calls for the grand jury, Davis had alleged that Kobach's office failed to properly register a number of voters in 2016 who applied for registration while renewing their driver's licenses or filling out an online form through the Kansas Department of Revenue's website.

<http://www2.ljworld.com/news/public-safety/2019/mar/06/citizen-grand-jury-disbands-in-kobach-case-without-returning-indictment/>

Oregon: Uncounted Votes Expose Election Vulnerability

Days before last November's elections, members of a political action committee in Oregon went door-to-door in Portland and its suburbs and collected filled-in ballots from voters, saying they would send them in. But the committee delivered about 100 of those ballots to an election's office a day after the election. They were not counted, disenfranchising those voters. The secretary of state fined the committee \$94,750. As doubts arise in the nation about security of election systems that can be hacked and about reliance on aging or inadequate voting machines, more attention is being paid to voting by mail. After Oregon pioneered the all-mail vote in 2000, Colorado and Washington state followed suit. The incident in Oregon exposed a potential election vulnerability. An organization collecting ballots might mishandle ballots, as happened last year, or even dump them to try to sway an election. No one knows how many groups in Oregon collect ballots to turn in because state government officials in charge of elections don't track the groups.

https://pilotonline.com/news/government/politics/article_a141d969-b9d2-541d-94f0-5feadd95f51e.html?vfz=medium%3Dsharebar

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Tennessee: NAACP President Says He Asked Grimes' Office to Search Voter Rolls for Education Board

The office of Kentucky Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes has found an explanation for why one of her staffers searched for information about members of the Kentucky Board of Education in the state's voter registration database. The additional information comes a little more than a day after the State Board of Elections publicly released details about those searchers and hundreds of others, and more than a month after the *Lexington Herald-Leader* and *ProPublica* first reported that employees of Grimes had used the voter registration system to look up political rivals, state investigators and a range of political operatives. The news organizations also found that Grimes has gained unprecedented power over the elections board, detailing how she pushed through a \$150,000 contract to a cybersecurity consultant that state employees had worried was unqualified, but whose CEO had donated to Grimes' campaigns. The reporting also showed Grimes and then-assistant secretary of state Lindsay Hughes Thurston had instructed elections board staff to delay acting on a federal consent decree aimed at cleaning the state's voter rolls.

<https://www.kentucky.com/news/politics-government/article227295789.html>