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ACRU Election Integrity Bulletin

LEAD STORY

The Voter Suppression Myth

Democrats accuse Republicans of suppressing the minority vote with laws to ensure ballot integrity. But then how do they explain record minority turnout last November? If Republicans were trying to stop minorities from voting, their schemes were inept. The number of Latino voters nearly doubled in last year's midterms compared to 2014 and came close to presidential year levels, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of new Census Bureau data. The share of blacks who voted climbed 10.8 percentage points to 51.4%, which was similar to the increase in white turnout (11.7 points). Whites made up 72.8% of the national electorate, down from 76.3% in 2014. The minority turnout surge benefited Democrats who picked up 40 House seats, seven governorships and six legislative chambers. But Democrats still blame their defeats in the Florida and Georgia gubernatorial races on voter suppression. Census data show otherwise.

<https://on.wsj.com/2Vgg6Lo>

FEDERAL

Washington Times: Americans Back the Census Citizenship Question, Including 53% of Hispanic Voters

Despite considerable press coverage which undermines the idea of a citizenship question, a sizable number of people approve of the idea and they span all demographics and age groups, according to a new Hill-HarrisX survey of 1,002 registered U.S. voters conducted earlier this week. "Six in 10 registered voters, 60%, said that the U.S. Census Bureau should ask the

citizenship question even if it results in fewer responses. Another 21% said the question should not be included, while 19% were unsure," wrote Hill analyst Matthew Sheffield. "Despite partisan differences, a majority of voters from all demographics included in the survey said they believed the citizenship question should be included. White voters overwhelmingly supported the question, with 65% in favor and 17% opposed. Black respondents favored asking about citizenship by a 53-19% margin. Hispanic respondents supported it, 53-28%."

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2019/may/2/inside-the-beltway-americans-back-the-census-citiz/>

STATES

California: Failures in State's 2018 Midterm Election Demand Serious Investigation

In recent years, much effort has been made by California legislators and election officials to provide increased voter registration and ballot "access," with few restrictions, the emphasis being "voter experience" not voter eligibility. In pursuit of the ultimate voter experience—and in doing so, undermining the integrity of California's election system—legislation has been adopted to include pre-registering children to vote, allowing non-citizens to vote in city elections, allowing mail ballots to arrive after Election Day, rejecting voter ID, removing restrictions on who can handle and return mail ballots, automatic DMV voter registration, same-day registration and voting and, in future, providing all registrants with vote-by-mail (VBM) ballots.

<http://bit.ly/2XVwyxu>

(more)

California: More Corruption in Voter Registration

We already have same day voter registration and even that is not enough for Democrats. “A bill to allow the use of non-provisional ballots for conditional same-day voter registration is being touted as necessary for Californians who miss the deadline to register to vote or update their registration before an election.” Why do you need a safety net for those who missed the voting deadline, when there is no voting deadline? Just another way to have unqualified people vote and be counted. 2018 was the year of the corrupt absentee ballot harvesting by the Democrats. 2020 will be the year of the corrupt voting due to AB 693. Will the GOP take this seriously—since they did nothing to stop the lack of chain of custody to get their voices heard in regard to ballot harvesting?

<https://bit.ly/2Yad0p7>

Connecticut: Candidates Cast Suspicion on Absentee Votes

It would not be a municipal election without charges of absentee or mail-in ballot abuse. Thursday’s complaints were a little more unusual than past years’ because they came in a joint statement from three of the five candidates vying to replace the late state Rep. Ezequiel Santiago, D-Bridgeport. Former state legislator Hector Diaz and activist and one-time school board member Kate Rivera, Democrats who petitioned their way onto the ballot in Tuesday’s special election, plus Republican Joshua Parrow called on the city’s Registrar of Voters to supervise voting by absentee ballot at seven housing complexes. The three opponents also united to ask that Democratic Registrar Santa “Sandi” Ayala not be involved with the mail-in votes because her daughter, ex-state Rep. Christina Ayala, is also running to replace Santiago, who died in March.

<http://bit.ly/2Lpuahc>

Florida: Bill Mandates Felons Pay All Fees Before Voting

Most Florida felons will have their voting rights restored under a bill the state Senate passed Thursday to implement a constitutional amendment approved by voters, though it won’t just be a matter of walking out of prison and being able to register. The bill will require that all financial obligations ordered by a judge be paid

before felons can vote. That’s an obstacle Democrats say wasn’t intended when 64.5% of voters decided to let felons vote once they’ve completed their sentences. The measure approved by voters in November doesn’t allow the restoration of voting rights for murderers and felony sex offenders. Republican Sen. Jeff Brandes said he wishes his bill could be more lenient, but the language of the amendment said all terms of a sentence have to be completed, and that includes restitution, court costs, fines and fees ordered by a judge. He said that language doesn’t give the Legislature any leeway to ignore it.

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

Michigan: State Police Investigating Possible Voter Fraud

Just days before Election Day, Indiana State Police are investigating possible voter fraud in Michigan City. That is where the LaPorte County Clerk says nearly a dozen absentee ballots seemed suspicious. The ballots all had the same return address but for different people.

<https://bit.ly/2VReh72>

New Jersey: Lawmakers Call on AG to Ensure Secure Vote-by-Mail Process

Republican lawmakers sent a letter to Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal requesting his office provide guidelines that would allow the N.J. Division of Elections to issue rules to county superintendents of elections for the purpose of ensuring a secure vote-by-mail process. In August 2018, Gov. Murphy signed a new vote-by-mail law that caused confusion because the state did not provide proper guidance on interpretation and implementation prior to it going into effect. Under the law, voters who signed up for and got mail-in ballots for the 2016 general election will continue to be sent those ballots for all future elections unless they opt-out in writing to their respective county clerks. If they don’t opt-out, they are required to vote by mail or fill out a provisional ballot at the polls. In addition to securing the integrity of the vote-by-mail process, the lawmakers called for a thorough investigation of any alleged voter fraud, which is consistent with the attorney general’s initiative to combat corruption and increase confidence in government in the newly created Office of Public Integrity & Accountability (OPIA).

<https://bit.ly/302dQpG>

New Jersey: New Brunswick Woman Charged with Voter Fraud

A city woman has been charged with trying to use someone else's name in an attempt to register to vote, according to a press release from Middlesex County Prosecutor Andrew C. Carey and Director Anthony Caputo of the New Brunswick Police Department. Mallory Marchese, 51, of New Brunswick is charged with one count of false registration in the third degree, one count of forgery in the fourth degree and one count of tampering with public records, a disorderly person's offense. An investigation by the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office began in December 2018, when notification of these crimes was made by the Middlesex County Board of Elections.

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/east-brunswick/articles/new-brunswick-woman-charged-with-voter-fraud-91dab488-7ef3-40d7-9311-9432450efa17>

New York: Amid Public Outrage, NYC Board of Elections Pulls Private Voter Records from Internet

After massive public backlash, and the possibility for legal backlash as well, the New York City Board of Elections has quickly wiped the public's private information from the internet. Voter rolls listing full names, home addresses that included apartment numbers, and party affiliations for all 4.6 million registered voters in New York City were dumped on the BOE's website.

<https://newyork.cbslocal.com/2019/04/30/board-of-elections-pulls-records/>

Texas: Dallas Woman Says She Was Victim of Mail-in Ballot Fraud

A Dallas woman has told KXAS-TV in North Texas that she was a victim of mail-in ballot fraud, after a man who had ordered and collected mail-in ballots for her in the past told her this time she had to change her vote. Bridgett Moore, who lives in Dallas Housing Authority's Cliff Manor development for elderly and disabled people, told the TV station (also known as NBC) that the same man—whose name she doesn't know—has presented her in recent city elections with mail-in ballots he claimed he had ordered for her. The man came back later to collect it each time. This year, Moore wanted to

vote for Albert Black, former chairman of the Dallas Housing Authority Board, for mayor in the May 4 election, but the man insisted she should vote for another candidate.

<https://texasmonitor.org/dallas-woman-says-she-was-victim-of-mail-in-ballot-fraud/>

REDISTRICTING

Michigan: GOP Appeals Gerrymandering Ruling to Supreme Court

Michigan legislative and congressional Republicans are asking the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse a blockbuster ruling that the state's political maps must be redrawn because of an unconstitutional gerrymander of "historical proportions." Attorneys for GOP lawmakers on Tuesday filed notices of appeal with the U.S. District Court in Detroit, where a three-judge panel last week ordered officials to create new boundaries for at least 34 state House, Senate and congressional districts. The brief notices did not include arguments for the appeal, which would be filed separately with the U.S. Supreme Court. Attorneys are also expected to seek a "stay" delaying the panel ruling while the nation's highest court considers separate gerrymandering cases out of North Carolina and Maryland. At issue in the Michigan case are political maps approved by the Republican-led Legislature in 2011 and signed into law by then-Gov. Rick Snyder for the 2012 elections. A federal panel comprised of two Democratic appointed judges and one Republican appointee last week unanimously ruled the maps violated the First and 14th Amendment rights of plaintiff voters who filed the federal lawsuit.

<https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2019/04/30/gop-appeals-michigan-gerrymandering-ruling-to-supreme-court/3629983002/>

(more)

Texas: In Long-Winding Case, Court Considers Federal Oversight of Redistricting

Back in the federal courthouse where most of an eight year-long case has played out, the fight over forcing Texas back under federal oversight of its mapmaking appeared to hinge on whether the state should be held accountable for political maps that never took effect. The arguments for a return to the days when Texas needed approval of its political districts diverged significantly during a Thursday court hearing before a panel of three federal judges. The state and the plaintiffs each appeared to have a judge on their side. One judge was skeptical of any sort of supervision for state lawmakers, while another judge openly considered why Texas should be allowed to redraw its maps without any sort of guardianship given its recent discrimination against voters of color. But the high-stakes fight—and ultimately the ruling from the three-judge panel overseeing the case—may very well rest on Chief U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia, who made few remarks during the hearing but summed up the issue in one question. “Is it actual injury or threatened harm that controls the issue?” Garcia asked.

<https://www.texastribune.org/2019/05/02/texas-redistricting-federal-lawsuit-hearing-preclearance/>

Virginia: Northam Vetoes Anti-Gerrymandering Bill

Gov. Ralph Northam vetoed a bill, SB 1579, that sought to ban gerrymandering by requiring legislative and Congressional districts be geographically compact. The bill’s sponsor, state Sen. David Suetterlein, R-Roanoke County, said Northam’s action belied the governor’s stance on gerrymandering when he ran for office.

“Governor Northam has once again put partisanship first by vetoing the only anti-gerrymandering bill to cross his desk,” Suetterlein said, noting that of the eight localities in his Senate district, six are split by Senatorial district lines.

<https://www.dailypress.com/news/politics/shad-plank-blog/dp-nws-northam-veto-gerrymander-20190430-story.html>