

Trump preparations to overturn presidential election far exceed 2020

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Last Friday, barely a month before Election Day, President Joe Biden told reporters at a White House briefing that while he's confident the election will be free and fair, "I don't know whether it will be peaceful."

He continued: "Things that Trump has said and the things that he said last time when he didn't like the outcome of the election were very dangerous." He went on to note that that in the previous week's vice presidential debate, Trump's running mate, Senator JD Vance, "did not say he'd accept the outcome" of the coming election. "So, I'm concerned about what they're going to do."

Yet when asked to comment on preparations his administration is making to counter a second violent coup to overturn a potential Trump election loss, he refused to comment, downplaying the threat he had just raised by saying he is constantly receiving briefings on domestic security.

Biden's remarks on Friday are one of the few times he or any other Democratic official, including Vice President Kamala Harris, the party's presidential candidate, has even raised the clear intention of Trump and the Republican Party to reject a Democratic victory, should it occur. Biden raised it directly in his speech to the Democratic National Convention in August, saying the threat of another coup is "very much alive," and adding, "This sucker [Trump] means it. I'm not joking." But his warning was completely ignored by the convention and the rest of the Democratic Party, as well as by the media.

Harris made a fleeting reference in her debate with Trump to the ex-president's repeated declarations that should he lose, it will be due to fraud. She noted his talk of a "bloodbath," only to say, "Let's turn the page to this. Let's not go back."

The reality is that the Trump campaign, the Republican Party and their fascist billionaire donors such as Elon Musk are carrying out a far more extensive operation to block certification of a possible Harris victory and overturn the election than was conducted in 2020, leading to the storming of the Capitol by a mob of Trump fascists on January 6, 2021.

The plot, being carried out largely in the open, has two basic prongs. Republican groups are flooding the courts in the lead-up to the November 5 vote with lawsuits to purge voting rolls in swing states of fictitious hordes of "illegal" immigrants, restrict mail voting, give state and local election officials authority to refuse to certify election results or delay certification beyond the legal deadline, make it easier to disqualify properly cast ballots, and allow so-called "poll watchers" to harass and threaten both voters and election officials in Democratic-leaning districts.

This pseudo-legal campaign is designed to cause delay and spread chaos even if the baseless suits are initially tossed out, while providing an aura of legal legitimacy to claims of election rigging.

Meanwhile, Trump and his fellow fascists in the GOP will incite paramilitary violence on the basis of anti-immigrant agitation, along the lines of their hysterical campaign against Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio. Just last week Trump reiterated on the campaign trail his intention upon resuming office to end the Haitians' Temporary Protected Status and deport them en masse.

Nearly 90 lawsuits have been filed across the country so far this year by Republican groups. According to Democracy Docket, a Democratic-aligned group, the Republicans have already filed three times the number of lawsuits filed before Election Day in 2020.

Democracy Docket wrote on August 1, "With fewer than 100 days until the election, Republicans are building an election subversion war machine." The group added:

But it's worse this election than previous ones because this year the GOP is far more organized. They might have tried to subvert the results in a handful of places in 2020 and 2022, but this year, they will try to subvert them all, setting the stage now for what's to come in November.

It noted that the Republicans have "sacrificed traditional get-out-the-vote activity to fund and recruit for their massive voter suppression program."

Jessica Marsden, a lawyer at Protect Democracy, a nonpartisan group that monitors elections, said, "Many of these cases reinforce particular narratives, particularly those about immigrants and voting. Putting false claims in the form of a lawsuit is a way to sanitize and add legitimacy."

Voter suppression and purging of voter rolls

A key prong of the Republican legal offensive is the claim that voter rolls in Democratic districts have been packed with undocumented immigrants and others who are ineligible to vote. Suits have been filed in swing states to set the stage for post-election litigation on the theme of a "rigged" election. These specious claims are variations of the fascist "Great Replacement Theory," which contends that billionaire liberal Jews such as George Soros are flooding the country with "illegal" migrants in order to displace native-born Americans.

In September, Strong Communities Foundation of Arizona filed a lawsuit in state court claiming that Arizona's voter rolls are full of non-citizens. It was argued by America First Legal, led by Stephen Miller, a top policy adviser in the Trump White House whose specialty was vicious and racist attacks on immigrants.

Miller was the leading proponent of the border wall, mass deportations and the travel ban on people from a half dozen majority-Muslim countries. In 2021, Miller established America First Legal as a far-right response to the American Civil Liberties Union. He is lavishly funded by fascist oligarchs, including Elon Musk, and is very active in the conspiracies to overturn the 2024 election should Trump lose.

In North Carolina, the Republican National Committee and the North Carolina GOP have sued the state Board of Elections twice over alleged failures to remove non-citizens from voter rolls. The Republicans are calling on the Board of Elections to drop 225,000 people from the voter rolls and force them to cast provisional ballots in November.

Musk, CEO of Tesla, co-owner of social media giant X/Twitter, and the world's richest man, has used X to promote the Great Replacement Theory. He reported a claim that as many as two million non-citizens had been registered to vote in three states.

Another front in the voter suppression drive is the effort to restrict voting by mail. The RNC has filed lawsuits seeking to restrict mail voting, including active cases in Pennsylvania, Nevada, Michigan and North Carolina.

Republicans have filed more than 20 lawsuits related to mail voting, many of which seek to disallow any mail ballot that does not strictly meet all of the requirements in state law, and to eliminate any opportunity for voters to fix errors on mail ballots.

There is an active case in Mississippi that seeks to toss all mail ballots that arrive after the cut-off date, even if they were postmarked on Election Day and arrive within five days. It is expected to end up in the US Supreme Court, whose ruling could impact other states that currently accept late ballots, including California, Nevada, New York and Texas.

In addition, Republican state and local election officials are seeking to impose stricter ID requirements for in-person voting.

Another aspect of the Republican coup preparations is the drive to give pro-Trump state and local election officials, whose mandate is limited by law to the administrative task of recording and certifying election results, the power to delay or reject the actual vote. In Georgia, the five-member state election board, which has a MAGA majority, recently adopted a rule empowering the board to conduct a "reasonable inquiry" into the integrity of the vote in critical districts, which could delay certification of the state results, sowing confusion and doubt in the event of a Harris win.

On September 20, the board, in a three-to-two vote, adopted a rule requiring election workers to unseal every box of ballots printed from the scanner machines at polling stations and hand count them. They are mandated to count the total number of ballots, but not which candidate received more votes. This could, of course, further delay certification.

The Republican Party is also seeking to force local officials to count ballots by hand in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, the state's third-largest county.

Another point of attack is the mobilization and "training" of so-called "poll watchers" to harass, threaten and physically intimidate election officials and workers, as well as voters, particularly in Democratic precincts. Republicans have filed several cases opposing efforts to limit harassment of election officials or voters casting their ballot. One such case is in Arizona, litigated by Stephen Miller's America First Policy Institute.

Last month, the *New York Times* published an exposé on such "election integrity" efforts. The *Times* obtained a recording of fascist Trump promoter Jack Posobiec speaking to a group of volunteers on September 4 on how to "monitor" elections in Michigan. Posobiec, who had been invited by the RNC, told the group, "It doesn't matter who votes. It matters who counts the votes."

He also told them that they were the "final line of defense against the encroaching Marxism."

A leading promoter of the "Stop the Steal" movement, Posobiec was employed from 2018 to 2021 by One America News Network (OANN), a far-right cable channel, as a political correspondent and on-air presenter. He left OANN in 2021 to begin hosting a show for the fascist student organization Turning Point USA.

His recent book *Unhumans: The Secret History of Communist Revolutions (and How to Crush Them)* features an enthusiastic blurb by

Senator JD Vance, Trump's running mate.

The entire attack on the right to vote and effort to delegitimize an outcome unfavorable to Trump is being conducted under the cynical banner of "election integrity." Pro-Trump Republicans, headed by attorney Cleta Mitchell, have formed the Election Integrity Network, which is holding "summits" in swing states across the country to prepare post-election efforts to overturn a potential Harris victory.

Mitchell played a central role in the election denial efforts of Trump in the 2020 election. She participated in Trump's infamous phone call on January 2, 2021 with Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, in which Trump demanded that Raffensperger "find" the additional 11,779 votes he needed to reverse his loss in Georgia to Biden. Alongside her "very dear friend" Virginia Thomas, wife of fascist Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, Mitchell worked to convince Republican state legislatures to discard the pro-Biden elector slates chosen by the voters and send pro-Trump slates to Congress for certification on January 6.

The same cast of criminals

In addition to Miller, Mitchell and Posobiec, other Trump operatives and veterans of the first coup attempt—all of whom should have long ago been prosecuted, convicted and jailed—who are directly involved in the preparations for Trump coup redux include:

- Christina Bobb, a senior counsel on the RNC's election integrity team. She has been criminally charged for her role in the 2020 Republican post-election litigation drive.
- Linda McMahon, a leader of Trump's transition team, who heads American First Policy Institute. AFPI has filed election cases in Georgia, Arizona and Texas. In Wisconsin it is defending the town of Thornapple, which last month was sued by the Justice Department for banning voting machines.
- Bruce Castor, a former district attorney in Pennsylvania and Trump's defense lawyer in his second impeachment trial. Castor's United Sovereign Americans has filed lawsuits in nine states.

Chaos, confusion and delay caused by a combination of litigation and political violence could result in failure by one or more states to meet deadlines in December for the certification of electors, including a December 25 deadline for electoral votes to be received by the president of the US Senate (the US vice president).

An extensive article in Wikipedia, titled "Republican Party efforts to disrupt the 2024 United States presidential election," notes:

The failure of a state to have its electoral college votes counted on January 6 could result in neither presidential candidate reaching the minimum 270 electoral votes, causing the election to be thrown to the House. In that scenario, the election outcome would be determined by a simple majority count of state delegations; Republicans hold a majority in 28 of 50 delegations in the 118th United States Congress. *The Guardian* confirmed that "experts have been particularly alarmed by efforts to try and halt certification at the local level—something that could cause delay and chaos after the presidential vote in November."

The outcome of the election, regardless the actual voting, could be thrown into the US Supreme Court, whose ruling on one or another legal case could determine the winner. This is a court that last term, in a 6-3 vote, gave Trump substantial legal immunity for crimes committed while

in office, and two of whose members, Justices Thomas and Alito, are implicated in the attempt to overthrow the 2020 election.

The very fact that four years after the violent attempt to overthrow the 2020 election and impose a presidential dictatorship under Trump, the conspirators remain at large and active in a new attempt, beginning with the ex-president and Republican candidate himself, is a damning indictment of Biden, Harris and the Democratic Party. They have done nothing to punish the fascist plotters for their crimes or ensure a peaceful transfer of power in 2024.

On the contrary, just as Biden refused to call on the American people to block the attempted coup of January 6, 2021, the Democrats and the corporate media refuse to alert the population to the immense danger of a second coup. Under conditions where the Democrats are in power and, according to the Constitution, will remain in power for at least another two-and-a-half months following the November 5 election, they refuse to say how they will use the immense powers at their disposal to uphold the Constitution.

Instead, they support a police-state crackdown on student protests against the genocide in Gaza on college campuses all across the country.

The ruling class—both parties and all factions—is more concerned with blocking a mass movement against dictatorship from below than defending democratic rights. It does not want to alert the population to the fact that the election is taking place under conditions of an escalating breakdown of the entire political system of the United States. Petrified by the signs of growing working class radicalization, including the strikes at Boeing and on the docks, increasing sections of the ruling class are turning to fascism in an attempt to preempt a socialist movement of workers.

There is no significant constituency within the ruling class, including the Democratic Party, for the preservation of democratic forms of rule. The central priority of the Biden administration has been the prosecution and escalation of war—against Russia in Ukraine and the US-Israeli genocide in Gaza, which is now being extended to Lebanon and war against Iran.

This policy of global war means intensifying attacks on the social conditions and democratic rights of the working class at home, which will pay the price for escalating military violence in both living standards and lives. This is what allows Trump to exploit mass anger and direct it along the most dangerous, extreme nationalist and fascist lines.

Biden has from day one sought bipartisan agreement with the Republicans to wage this global war, beginning with his statement following the January 6 coup calling for a “strong” Republican Party. The Harris campaign continues this policy, summed up in Harris’ joint campaigning with arch-warmonger and Republican reactionary Liz Cheney.

In the resolution passed at its National Congress in August, the Socialist Equality Party wrote:

The fundamental objective causes of the turn of the ruling class toward fascism and dictatorship are: 1) the escalating global imperialist war; and 2) the extreme growth of social inequality.

It continued:

Even if Trump is defeated in the November election—and fails to carry out another coup d’état—the objective economic and social contradictions of American imperialism drive the ruling elites, with or without Trump, to dictatorship. Trumpism is a symptom of a systemic crisis that cannot be resolved democratically within the framework of capitalism.

The threat of world war and fascism cannot be averted through the Democratic Party. Whatever their differences, both parties are instruments of the American capitalist oligarchy and enemies of the working class.

Democratic rights can be defended only through the independent mobilization of the working class in opposition to the corporate and financial oligarchy, which requires a complete break with the Democratic Party. It is not through the Democratic Party that fascism can be defeated, but in the fight for socialism against both parties and the capitalist profit system they uphold.



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