Another Month of Chaos for the Arizona Senate Audit in Maricopa County

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On July 1, The Century Foundation and Keep Our Republic issued a chronology of the Arizona Senate so-called audit of Maricopa County’s presidential election results. The month of July has only provided further evidence of the dysfunction, bias, and misinformation that continue to characterize this initiative. For example:

• Ken Bennett, the Senate liaison to the audit, was barred from further access to audit premises as punishment for disclosing information about the third ballot recount to an outside group of election experts. Bennett subsequently announced he would step down from his liaison position, but retains a lower-profile role at the time of this writing.

• In a hearing held by four Arizona Republican lawmakers, Cyber Ninjas CEO Doug Logan made several “bombshell” claims about the election, which were promptly debunked by county officials and fact checkers. Nevertheless, Logan’s claims set off a nationwide wave of disinformation.

• Logan contended that Maricopa County counted some 74,000 more mail-in ballots than were sent to voters. After an investigation proved this to be untrue, Logan conceded that he failed to distinguish between two types of legitimate ballots.

• Logan also questioned why over 11,000 people were added to the county’s voter rolls after the election, failing to recognize that voters who cast provisional ballots and are found to be eligible are subsequently added to the rolls.

• Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Michael Kemp rejected the Arizona Senate argument that Cyber Ninjas’ records are not covered by the state’s public records disclosure law. In doing so, he stated that it “is difficult to conceive of a case with a more compelling public interest demanding public disclosure and public scrutiny.”

• Twitter suspended the official Twitter account maintained by the audit, along with other related accounts (including accounts involved in fundraising for the audit), due to violation of Twitter rules regarding “platform manipulation and spam.”

This report can be found online at: https://tcf.org/content/commentary/another-month-chaos-arizona-senate-audit-maricopa-county/
• The Associated Press reported that Arizona election officials have referred only 182 cases of possible ballot fraud out of the 3.4 million votes cast, with only four of these leading to charges. Trump lost in Arizona by 10,457 votes.

• News reports revealed efforts shortly after election day by then-President Trump, his attorney Rudolph Guiliani, and Arizona Republican Party Chair Kelli Ward to influence Maricopa County officials in a manner that could potentially be in violation of Arizona law. These phone calls, voicemails, and texts include a November 7 request by Ward to the then-chair of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, a fellow Republican: “We need you to stop the counting.”

• Though the Senate has so far failed to produce any evidence of wrongdoing, the scope of its investigation seems to be expanding. Senate President Karen Fann requested communication records from Secretary of State Katie Hobbs for unspecified purposes, and further subpoenas were issued demanding that Maricopa County (as well as its election equipment contractor, Dominion Voting Systems) turn over, among other items, network routers and detailed voter registration records. Hobbs described such efforts as a “nebulous fishing expedition.”

• Financial records released by Cyber Ninjas reveal that $5.7 million, the vast majority of the audit’s funding, has been provided by “#StoptheSteal” groups that peddle conspiracy theories about the 2020 election, reflecting the inherent intent underlying the Arizona Senate’s efforts.

In short, another typical month of dysfunction and bias for the audit and its enablers.

Authors

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