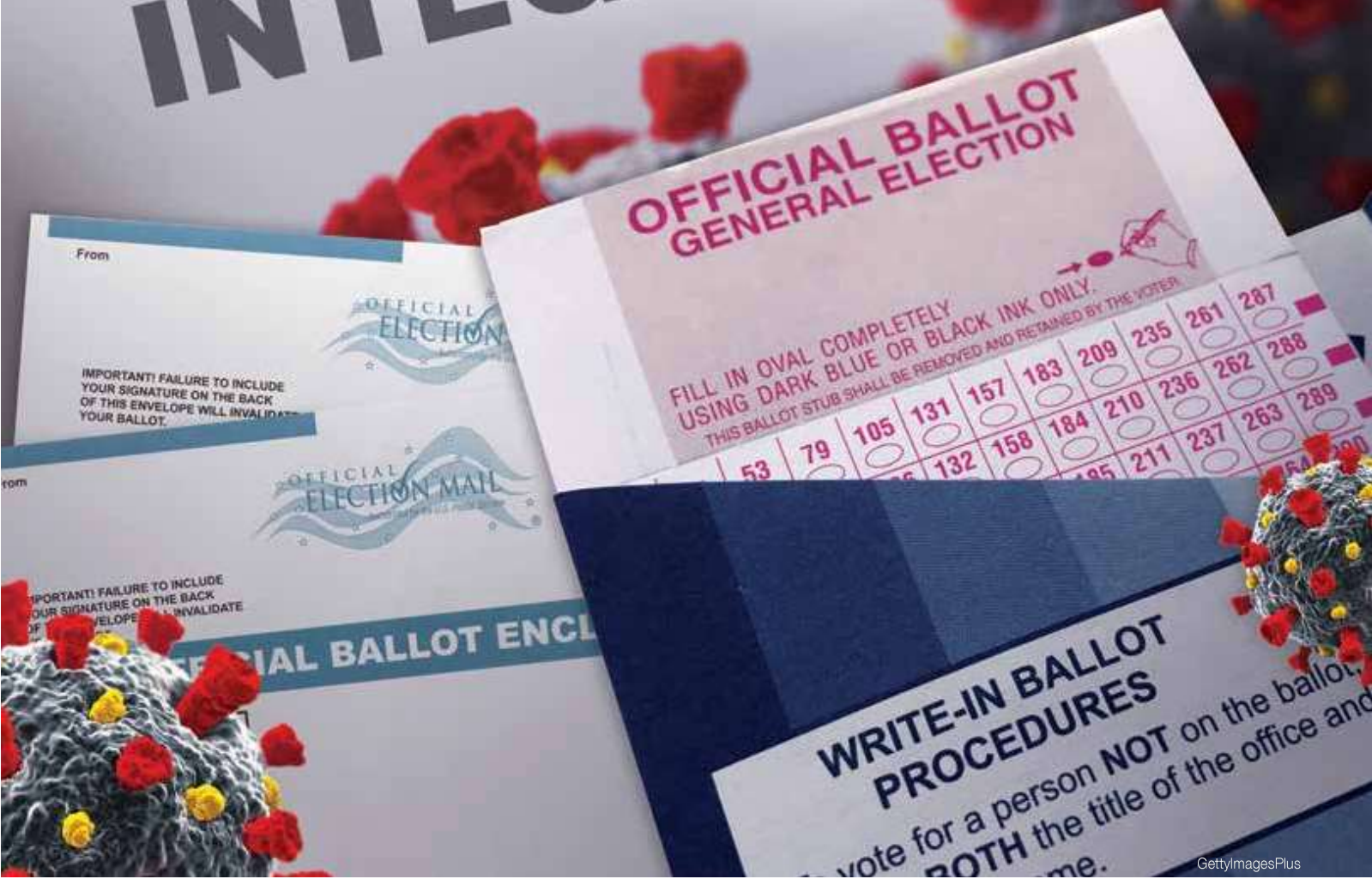


# INFECTING ELECTION INTEGRITY



Politicians and activists — mainly Democrats — are using the excuse of avoiding COVID-19 to move to mail-in voting and completely undo election integrity.

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by Kurt Hyde

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**V**ote fraud and manipulating elections are international phenomena. As recently as May 2018, the world learned of the purported reelection of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, who says he won by nearly a three-to-one margin over his closest competitor, even as 10 percent of the country has fled abroad because of government-caused hyperinflation, starvation, and murders. There is no real healthcare to speak of in that country — outside of government or the black market — and fraud and graft are the overriding goals of government officials. The election was so obviously staged that countries around the world denounced it and deemed Maduro an illegitimate president and a dictator.

That election made world news, but other, less-known cases of fraudulent elections happen all of the time. In the United States, vote fraud has historically been kept to a minimum by safeguards built into the system: voting in precincts, an election paper trail showing how each ballot was cast to check vote totals, election monitors provided from multiple parties to prevent cheating, voter ID requirements, and more. Now, however, the United States is on the cusp of literally throwing all the safeguards out the window and declaring vote fraud OK — all in the name of equality and fairness. This movement is mainly being pushed by Democrats, and it has gained momentum with the coronavirus shutdowns.

If efforts to institute mail-in voting, early in-person voting, and more are not stopped in their tracks, we may never again have unrigged elections. At the very least, we could never have confidence again that elections are secure.

Democrats are making a concerted effort to institute the new election procedures, earmarking \$3.6 billion in the latest \$3 trillion coronavirus stimulus bill toward the effort. California Governor Gavin Newsom has gone so far as to already mandate that every voter in his state be sent a mail-in ballot for the upcoming November election.

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*Kurt Hyde, a member of the National Council of The John Birch Society, is an election-integrity expert who has been warning against vote fraud since 1986.*

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**Election fraud — here, there, everywhere:** Despite many nations refusing to recognize the legitimacy of Nicolás Maduro's reelection, Maduro claims he won handily.

Advocates of universal mail-in balloting have mobilized under the banner of public safety, using emotionally charged statements that have frightened many voters and suppressed their involvement in in-person voting. Former president Barack Obama chimed in and became part of the fracas, saying, “Everyone has the right to vote safely,” as part of his criticism of the Wisconsin primaries that were held on April 7. Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers had attempted to reschedule the primaries by convening a special session of the legislature and converting the primaries to all-mail ballot elections. The legislature did not agree with the governor’s assessment and, refusing to be a rubber stamp for the governor, promptly adjourned.

Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele joined in the scaremongering and was interviewed on WISN TV, where he

said, “If we hold this in-person election, not 90 percent probability, 100 percent. There will be more transmission [of the coronavirus] than there would be otherwise, and probably a lot, and there will be more deaths.”

On April 6, the day before the election, Governor Evers issued an executive order that would have rescheduled the in-person voting until June 9, saying, in part:

WHEREAS, in-person voting on April 7 creates a danger of COVID-19 exposure not only for those who serve as poll workers and in contact with one of those people in the weeks that follow.

Evers’ executive order used the United Nations’ World Health Organization as support, saying, “The World Health Or-

Much to the chagrin of the scaremongers, a study of the effects of the coronavirus following the April 7 elections showed essentially zero effect on the infection rate.

two full months in which to call a special session of the Texas Legislature as provided in Article 4, Section 8 of the Texas Constitution:

**CONVENING LEGISLATURE ON EXTRAORDINARY OCCASIONS.**

(a) The Governor may, on extraordinary occasions, convene the Legislature at the seat of Government, or at a different place, in case that should be in possession of the public enemy or in case of the prevalence of disease threat.

Despite the Texas Constitution having a provision for the possibility of a disease threat, Governor Abbott issued an edict in the form of a proclamation.

In case legislators were afraid of catching COVID-19 while at work, they could have followed the model of the U.S. Congress, which has a protocol for voting where roll-call votes can be conducted by letting a few members at a time into the chamber. So there was no need for the Texas legislators to cower in fright at the specter of participating in a special session.

The edict issued by Governor Abbott, officially a Republican but definitely not from the conservative wing of the GOP, is going to greatly hurt Republican chances in Texas in November because this unconstitutional stroke of his pen may make it impossible to do any meaningful cleanup of the Texas voter registration lists, something that is sorely needed. A little-known provision in the grossly unconstitutional National Voter Registration Act of 1993, aka Motor Voter, says:

A State shall complete, not later than 90 days prior to the date of a primary or general election for Federal office, any program the purpose of which is to systematically remove the names of ineligible voters from the official lists of eligible voters.

Election Integrity advocates in Texas had been hoping to get some voter registration cleanup after the runoff elections in May. They would have had two full months to try, albeit with expectations of numerous lawsuits as obstacles. But Governor Abbott threw a monkey wrench into



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**Making it possible for mass election fraud:** California Governor Gavin Newsom issued an executive order on May 8 ordering mail-in ballots to be mailed to each entry in California's voter-registration database.

ganization declared COVID-19 to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern." Fortunately, the governor's executive order was ruled unconstitutional by the Wisconsin Supreme Court, something that should have been done by state supreme courts in numerous other states.

Much to the chagrin of the scaremongers, a study of the effects of the coronavirus following the April 7 elections showed essentially zero effect on the infection rate. The study was conducted by two physicians, Andrew C. Berry, D.O., and Bruce B. Berry, M.D., and a mathematician, Madhuri S. Mulekar, Ph.D.

The published report concluded:

There was no increase in COVID-19 new case daily rates observed for

Wisconsin or its 3 largest counties following the election on April 7, 2020, as compared to the US, during the post-incubation interval period.

Yet advocates for mail-in balloting are still moving full speed ahead, using fear-laden emotional arguments to file lawsuits to implement nationwide mail-in balloting in this year's elections.

While the Wisconsin Legislature and Supreme Court were able to force the governor to comply, at least in part, with the U.S. and Wisconsin constitutions, the rule of law hasn't fared well in most other states, such as Texas, where Governor Greg Abbott issued a proclamation on March 20 changing the primary runoff date from May 26 to July 14. He had had

that by rescheduling the primary runoff elections to July 14. That leaves less than a month's time between the runoff election and the first week of August, which marks the start of when the Motor Voter law makes it illegal to clean up voter registration lists.

### Problems With Absentee Ballots

The edicts by governors and the federal government, which change voting methods almost literally at a whim, also just as quickly eliminate safeguards against vote fraud. Since a main push in the changes being proposed calls for absentee ballots being sent either to all voters or, at least, to anyone who asks for one, it is important to understand how the process is likely to be abused if it is not protected from the proposed changes.

*Chain of custody:* The first problem with absentee ballots is the chain of custody. The ballots disappear from public view for days or even weeks. What happens to them then?

Many Wisconsin residents are asking themselves the same question after the recent primary election in Wisconsin. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported on April 8 that many absentee ballots were not delivered to the voters, saying, "Three tubs of them were discovered in a mail processing center and the Milwaukee Election Commission called for an investigation into a separate set of undelivered ballots."

The article went on to report that the election officials in the Village of Fox Point, Wisconsin, reported finding 100 or more ballots per day being returned as undelivered during the final week before the election.

Baskets full of ballots could have been intercepted and filled out for those who requested them, or ballots could have been screened. For instance, those ballots headed for active members of the Democratic Party might make it to their destinations, while other ballots won't.

And that's just some of the problems with delivery. Opportunities for fraud are abundant when the ballots are sent back, as well.

John Fund, in his book *Stealing Elections*, described a chain-of-custody problem discovered by Melody Rose, a professor at Oregon State University:

Rose herself once stopped by a library after hours to deposit her ballot, only to find an overflowing bin of ballots in the lobby. She could have taken all of them to her car and done some creative pruning based on where people lived or their gender.

In truth, Professor Rose could have done a lot more than just a little creative pruning. She could have stuffed the ballot box. If she had access to blank ballots, she could have done a re-vote for every person in the pile. And she was not the only person with such access. Anybody with a key to the building could have stuffed the ballot box with hundreds or even thousands of hastily prepared additional absentee ballots, if necessary, to swing an election. How many people have keys to the public buildings where ballots sit idly in bins in states that have similar forms of mail-in balloting? That's how many people have the after-hours access and opportunity to stuff the ballot box. And add to that the many people who have access to drop boxes that are placed in public and semi-public places.

In fact, similar shenanigans were apparently a common occurrence in Chicago. Former Chicago alderman James J. Lasky, Jr., author of *My Fall From Grace — City Hall to Prison Walls* described what he observed by some precinct captains who picked up absentee ballots and brought them to the Board of Elections. They opened the absentee ballot envelopes to see how the voters voted and altered the ballots if the voters voted wrong:

There was an art to opening absentee ballots. In most cases, steam would be the way to go, because nobody could tell that the envelope had been tampered with after it had been resealed. Another method was to carefully use a letter opener, which required patience and skill to separate the flap from the glue and the rest of the envelope.

Lasky emphasized that not all precinct captains engaged in such operations, but the point is that it is possible and that it has been done. And probably most important-



**Scared for nothing:** Despite a barrage of scaremongering, Wisconsin held its primary elections as scheduled by law on April 7. A study afterward showed no increase in COVID-19 new-case daily rates in Wisconsin compared to the United States as a whole.

ly, the dishonest precinct captains usually acted with complete impunity, with their dirty deeds unpunished. We never would have known about this if not for Lasky's book. And the mail-in process allows for such fraud to be done in spades, and the public would not learn of it unless a whistle-blower such as Lasky stepped forward.

This type of security weakness could be exploited in any close election contest to add however many votes might be necessary to change the outcome. This is especially true in states where absentee ballots are allowed to arrive after election day. All that's needed is the list of voters who haven't voted, something available to anyone with access to the computerized voter-registration list, and a box full of blank ballots.

*Voter misrepresentation:* A second problem with absentee ballots, in many instances, happens when constituents are allowed to request mail-in ballots: People could request ballots for someone other than themselves. For example, the October 26, 2002 edition of the *Washington Times* reported that a former government employee was arrested and charged in an absentee balloting scheme:

Larry Gray, former sanitation director for the city of Helena, was charged

with submitting more than 25 absentee ballots for the May 21 primary election in Phillips County, where there is a history of voter fraud.

But authorities say Mr. Gray falsely applied for 200 absentee ballots, and submitted at least 98 ballots in the Democratic primary for state Senate, state House and sheriff.

Making the situation worse, because mail-in ballots usually do not need an ID card (in some states, such as Wisconsin, when a ballot is requested, the voter is asked to electronically submit a photo ID), it's an effective way for someone to cast ballots using the names of dead people, people who have moved out of the voting district, or even people who've never existed except as entries on voter registration lists, referred to as phantom voters.

Also ramping up the fraud is the fact that voter registration lists are notoriously inaccurate, so fraudsters face little chance of being caught voting multiple times when an extra ballot or two arrive at an address. Adding to the irony, some of the loudest voices advocating for switching to all mail-in ballots are some of the same people who oppose voter-registration cleanup attempts.

A related area in which fraud can sneak through is signature verification on ballots that require signatures — or to be more accurate, substandard signature verification if the signatures are actually checked. Even if they are checked, there are reliability problems in signature verification. People's signatures vary from day to day, the people checking the signatures aren't experts, and the checkers sometimes don't have good vision.

This author knows they are checked in Denton County, Texas, because he has seen it done and even participated in the process, but it is beyond reasonable doubt that signatures are not checked everywhere, especially in areas where one political party dominates and the absentee vote counts are closed to the public.

There is another problem on the horizon with signature verification of mail-in ballots: As some government schools have stopped teaching cursive handwriting, there are now high-school graduates who can't sign their own names, only print them, making signatures less identifiable.

*Fraudulent vote counts:* Even when the ballots make it unblemished to their final destinations, the fraud goes on, often via purposely inaccurate vote counting. American elections have historically tried to build in safeguards against fraud at the ballot place through having witnesses to the vote count — either an impartial witness or witnesses from opposing parties — to deter cheating. But such safeguards are often overridden in the case of mail-in voting, typically through backroom vote counts.

This writer, on assignment for *THE NEW AMERICAN* in 2012, found out how easy it is for fraudsters to manage the deal. I attempted to learn where Ohio's absentee and provisional ballots from the general election would be counted, without success. I related my efforts in an online article entitled "Ohio Starts Counting Absentee and Provisional Ballots — But Where, When, and Who's Counting?" dated November 19, 2012:

Election officials in Ohio were scheduled to begin counting absentee ballots and provisional ballots on Saturday, November 17, 2012. Despite numerous requests, *THE NEW*



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**Texas will get more fraud:** Texas Governor Greg Abbott issued a proclamation changing the primary runoff date from May 26 to July 14, eliminating much of the time needed for election-integrity advocates to clean up Texas voter-registration lists. He did this despite the fact that fraud is already happening there. In Harris County, with over 150 candidates on the ballot, an investigation found 30 identically marked ballots — which is statistically impossible unless the same person marked them.

AMERICAN was unable to learn of even one exact location, date, and time of when and where these ballots were to be counted.

This writer, as part of the same assignment for THE NEW AMERICAN, also attempted to learn where the absentee ballots in Philadelphia would be counted, and experienced similar results.

Moreover, most mail-in ballots are processed either solely or predominantly by government employees, and since whoever is in power hires the people who control the vote-counting process, and most of their work is done behind closed doors, deciding who gets such positions is now a major concern of the political parties. (Note that controlling those positions is only a major concern if a party wants to either sway elections, or keep them from being swayed. Which of those two choices seems to make more sense as to why the positions are coveted?)

The August 16, 2006 issue of *USA Today* had a front-page article entitled “Top vote counter becomes prize job — Democrats focus on key state post.” As the article said, “The political battle for control of the federal government has opened up a new front: the obscure but vital state offices that determine who votes and how those votes are counted.” The article detailed a number of PACs that were focusing their expenditures to have the most possible impact on secretaries of state or other chief election officials for states.

And politicians and government bureaucrats themselves aren’t immune from committing fraud. A grand jury that investigated the massive frauds in the 1908 Democratic Primary in Chicago found that many of the culprits were political people or government employees who owed their jobs to the politicians currently in office. The grand jury report said:

Almost universally we found the persons immediately responsible for many of said election frauds to be men holding elective offices and men holding responsible subordinate positions in the service of elected or appointed County Officials and of course paid by the taxpayers. Out of such facts grow the creation and



**Time to cheat:** Mail-in ballots by the box load, with little or no monitoring by the public, sit idly in post offices or in bins before and after being filled out by voters, leaving the ballots to be altered or stolen. In Nevada, mail-in ballots were found in large stacks outside apartment buildings.

continuance of offices serving no other purpose than to draw salaries from the taxpayers for assumed public services, but in fact being used to pay for venal services rendered to party bosses.

The grand jury recommended that the people who had a conflict of interest in the outcome of the election be removed from the electoral process and be replaced with ordinary citizens selected at random, such as how a jury is selected.

*Ballot harvesting:* Another means of vote fraud is done via ballot harvesting, which usually refers to the collecting of absentee ballots by someone, who then brings the completed ballots back to the local elections department. In some states where it’s legal, it is also legal to volunteer to help people mark their ballots, even though the “helper” may not be able to take the completed ballots back to the county or municipal elections department. In some states, it is illegal to engage in any part of the ballot-harvesting process. There are typically exemptions for family members and caregivers.

Ballot harvesting opens avenues to

commit most of the aforementioned methods of fraud, as well as a few others.

Even when ostensibly operating within the law, the process is often abused. There have been cases where ballot harvesters have mailed in absentee ballot request forms for unsuspecting voters, marking on the request that the voter is disabled, when the voter isn’t disabled. Ballot harvesters have been known to steal absentee ballots from people’s mailboxes or get them at the source before they are sent. Ballot harvesters have been known to use connections in government, sometimes an incumbent politician or political operative who has hired them, to learn when the absentee ballots are being mailed, enabling them to arrive at the voters’ homes on the day the ballots are delivered — either to steal the ballots or put pressure on the voters to vote a certain way — or intercept the ballots before they are sent or while en route.

Breitbart News reported on March 7, 2017 that U.S. Postal Service employee Noe Abdon Olvera pleaded guilty to charges that he accepted \$1,000 in exchange for names and addresses of the people on his postal route for whom he was delivering

absentee ballots. Olvera was paid to give those names and addresses to Yolanda Perez Hidrogo, a ballot harvester, or *politiquera* as she would be called in the Spanish-speaking sector. Upon being caught, Hidrogo explained that she worked for the reelection campaign for Mayor Norberto Salinas in Mission, Texas: “My job was to handle the mail-in ballots by meeting with the people who received them,” Hidrogo wrote. “I would encourage them to choose Mayor Salinas, and they would.”

The *politiquera* also explained that electioneering was being done by Olvera while he was being paid by the taxpayers to deliver mail:

Noe rode with me a few times to go talk to people. He was making promises to a lot of people. He told one lady that he was going to help her get her citizenship papers in return for her vote for Mayor Salinas.

Offering to help her become a citizen in exchange for her vote? It’s illegal in Texas for a non-citizen to vote. Yet a ballot harvester and a U.S. Postal Service employee knowingly helped an ineligible person to vote.

Hidrogo also explained how she would sometimes follow Olvera while he was delivering mail, and he would call her with the name and address whenever he delivered an absentee ballot.

Hidrogo noted that her conscience wouldn’t let her harvest the vote of a probable Alzheimer’s-afflicted voter. Hidrogo decided not to harvest this lady’s ballot. The lady’s daughter thanked Hidrogo for not helping her mother vote, but Hidrogo also learned that another ballot harvester had subsequently harvested the old lady’s ballot.

Noted Election Integrity advocate J. Christian Adams, while referring to a similar case, was quoted saying, “All under the honorable guise of ‘voter assistance,’ local political bosses accessed and leveraged absentee votes to score electoral victories.”

And this is how some people want to elect our next Congress, president, and vice president.

Ballot harvesters often fill out, then sign (if necessary) the ballot. The forged signatures are obviously good matches in cases where the ballot harvester requests the ballot illegally in the first place.

There have been voters in Texas who

have shown up on election day hoping to vote, only to learn that someone else already voted for them via absentee ballot. Ballot harvesters are suspected, but with absentee ballots, there frequently isn’t enough evidence to catch them. Consequently, the honest voter is disenfranchised.

Some ballot harvesters take advantage of the elderly in nursing homes. Many nursing-home residents have poor eyesight, poor hearing, or poor memories. The ballot harvester, in this case, can easily mark the ballot the way he chooses rather than as the voter instructs. Too, some residents of nursing homes are old and lonely, and they don’t care what the ballot harvester does with their ballots so long as they get a friendly visit. Middle-aged women can be very effective at this form of ballot harvesting. They often establish rapport with seniors quite easily. Sometimes the ballot harvester pays money to a key staff person or two at the nursing home to make sure he or she is the only ballot harvester with access to that nursing home during the ballot harvest.

Ballot harvesting has also become a way for non-citizens who entered this country illegally to exert their political influence. The *Los Angeles Times* of January 1, 2019 had an article entitled “How Young Immigrant ‘Dreamers’ Made Flipping Control of the House a Personal Quest.” The article told the story of a young Dreamer, who was brought into this country illegally when she was one year old. She can’t vote because she is not a citizen, but she is politically active. It related how she found a man named Ronald Silva who had been sent an absentee ballot, but hadn’t voted. “Half an hour later, she was helping Silva look up candidates as he filled out his ballot by the light of her phone.” The article went on to describe her as “part of a new wave of immigrant activists who mobilized this year to return control of the House to Democrats.”

*Invalid Voter Registrations:* The Pew Center on the States released a report in 2012 with its findings that voter registration lists were plagued with errors. They noted:

Approximately 24 million — one of every eight — active voter regis-



AP Images

**Elder abuse:** Ballot harvesters target nursing homes, where they frequently find lonely residents eager for a visit. Even though many nursing-home residents are in high-risk demographic groups for COVID-19, mail-in balloting will likely increase visits by ballot harvesters.



AP Images

**Federally aiding fraud:** House Speaker Nancy Pelosi wants unconstitutional federal legislation that would mandate mail-in balloting in all states, despite the fact that voter rolls contain millions of people who are ineligible to vote or are dead (Los Angeles County has 12 percent more voters registered in the county than there are people who can legally vote). Such legislation would increase the risk of stolen elections.

trations in the United States are no longer valid or are significantly inaccurate.

More than 1.8 million deceased individuals are listed as active voters.

Approximately 2.75 million people have active registrations in more than one state.

All forms of voting are adversely affected by inaccurate or invalid voter registrations, but with absentee voting, it is even more critical. And if America adopts universal mail-in ballots with an active ballot mailed to each registered voter, how many of the 24 million invalid or inaccurate ballots will be delivered incorrectly and just find themselves available to anyone who wants to pick them up and cast them? How many of them will find their way into the hands of eager ballot harvesters?

Universal mail-in balloting is too risky to be tried even if the voter registration databases get cleaned up, and certainly even worse in the condition the databases are now.

**Real or Hypothetical Danger?**

Activists are using the fact that many Americans are fearful of catching the coronavirus when voting at polling stations to

initiate changes to voting laws — changes that actually make voting more prone to election fraud, a situation that every honest American should abhor. The reason that Deep State power elites want the changes is because, as Americans become aware of their machinations and begin to fight back at election time, the elites can block grassroots efforts to blunt globalism, and they benefit by making elections less honest and easier to manipulate. This is not a hypothetical danger; it's real.

While the original intent of America's absentee-ballot laws was to provide voting opportunities to people who were sick, now because of the quarantines, activists want to apply those rules to people who are not sick, but who may just not want to travel to the polls for one reason or another. If the activists are successful, this may lead to potential court precedents greatly expanding the concept of absentee balloting and may open the floodgates for universal, no-excuse absentee voting.

And the lawsuits to gain such an end

have already begun. The *Dallas Morning News* reported in its April 7 issue that the Texas Democratic Party has filed two lawsuits in Texas, one in a state court and one in a federal court. The coronavirus and shelter-in-place orders are central to both lawsuits, which are backed by a propaganda campaign to influence decision-makers. Michele Obama is active in promoting mail-in balloting. The Daily Signal quoted her as saying, "Americans should never have to choose between making their voices heard and keeping themselves and their families safe. Expanding access to vote-by-mail, online voter registration and early voting are critical steps for this moment — and they're long overdue."

How is this good for us? Supposedly, present voting laws discourage the sick, the disabled, and poor people — mainly minorities — from taking part in the electoral process, and "every vote should count." However, while it's a nice slogan, such election changes will absolutely ensure not only that many Americans' votes will not count at all, but that a few people will have a large say in our elections through electoral fraud.

And following the creed of never letting a crisis go to waste, the first stimulus bill, H.R. 748, already contained a \$400 million appropriation for "Election Security Grants" to "prepare for, and respond to coronavirus, domestically or internationally, for the 2020 Federal election cycle."

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is advocating for even more robust federal funding for voting by mail-in ballots in this year's general elections. On April 2, she tweeted, "Vote-by-mail is essential to protecting the future of our democracy as we confront this public health crisis."

As of now, the trend is toward more and more of the electoral process being done where the public can't observe the procedures. That must not only be stopped, it must be reversed. ■



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