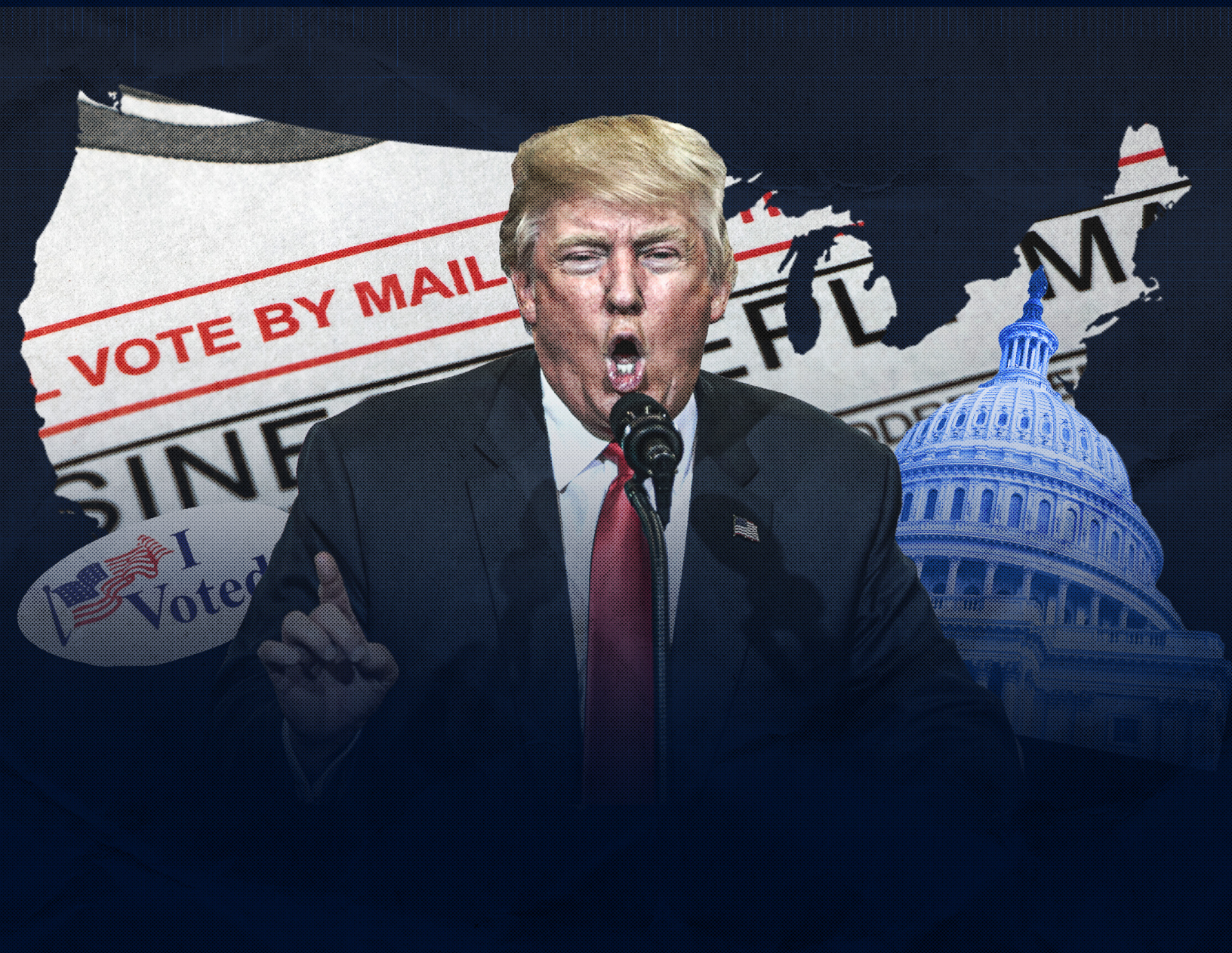


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OUR NATION IN THE BALANCE: ISSUE BRIEF NO. 3

**TRUMP AND HIS ALLIES ARE ENGAGED IN
AN ONGOING CONSPIRACY TO SABOTAGE ELECTIONS
AND OVERTURN RESULTS IN 2022 AND 2024**

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“Trump and his allies and supporters in Congress and the states began readying their failed 2020 plan to overturn the 2024 presidential election later that very same day and they have been unabashedly readying that plan ever since, in plain view to the American public. Today, they are already a long way toward recapturing the White House in 2024, whether Trump or another Republican candidate wins the election or not.” – J. Michael Luttig, [CNN.com](#), 4/27/2245

Donald Trump and his MAGA allies have an ongoing plan to sabotage future elections by making it easier for them to overturn elections they lose and more difficult for people to vote. They have spent nearly 18 months spreading lies and conspiracy about the 2020 election and encouraging supporters to believe that it can still be overturned and Trump reinstated as president, sowing distrust and discrediting future elections. Republicans in states across the country are seizing control of state and local election boards to give partisan conspiracy theorists the final say over election results in 2024 and passing law after law to restrict early and absentee voting and criminalize standard electoral activities like voter assistance and distributing water to voters waiting in line. The election conspirators are threatening election administrators with jail time or vigilante violence if they won't go along with their plans and running dozens of big lie candidates for electoral administration positions ranging from precinct captain to secretary of state.

Trump And His MAGA Allies Continue To Spread The Big Lie To Sow Distrust And Discredit Future Elections

Donald Trump Is Still Obsessed With Overturning The 2020 Election. Well over a year after his loss, Donald Trump continues to promote election lies on a near daily basis, stoking his base of supporters to discredit future elections. In [rally](#) after [rally](#) he has insisted that he won states that he did not win and gone on lengthy rants about incoherent conspiracy theories involving routers and stolen votes. Trump has openly [offered pardons](#) to January 6 insurrectionists if he is re-elected in 2024 and in a January 2022 statement, he attacked Mike Pence, [falsely claiming](#) that “He could have overturned the election!” Trump seeds more anger and distrust of elections by pushing his supporters to believe that he might somehow be [“reinstated”](#) as president and encouraging Republicans in Wisconsin to attempt a legally impossible [“decertification”](#) of the election results in that state.

Two Thirds Of Republican Voters Don't Believe That Joe Biden Was Legitimately Elected President. An Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research [poll](#) showed that two-thirds of Republicans do not believe Democrat Joe Biden was legitimately elected as president and a January 2022 Monmouth [poll](#) found that roughly 17 percent of people believe that Trump can still be reinstated as president before 2024. Republicans who falsely maintain that the election was stolen say they are [extremely motivated](#) to vote in 2022.

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Republicans Continue To Push For Faulty Election “Audits” In Key States Sowing More Distrust In Elections. The 2020 election was nearly two years ago, but Republicans in key swing states continue to review and “[audit](#)” the results, with some extremists even insisting that the results can still be “[decertified](#),” reversing Joe Biden’s victory. Arizona Republicans have spent over a year running [audit after audit](#) on the 2020 results spending millions of taxpayer dollars seeking out non-existent voter fraud. In Wisconsin, a [discredited investigation](#) by partisan operatives funded at taxpayer expense has continued for nearly a year despite finding no evidence of fraud. Partisan investigations and sham audits have also been pushed by conspiracy theorists egged on by Donald Trump in [Pennsylvania](#), [Michigan](#), [Georgia](#) [Texas](#), and other states. None of these partisan investigations satisfy basic security, accuracy, and reliability measures and only serve to further increase distrust in election systems.

Dozens Of Election Conspiracy Theorists Are Running For Office With Active Support From Donald Trump. Republicans are furiously campaigning to elect Trump supporters to the Senate and House, which could enable them to overturn the next election in Congress if needed. According to an analysis from FiveThirtyEight, [more than 70 percent](#) of Trump’s endorsees actively supported efforts to overturn the 2020 election and “belief in the Big Lie has been perhaps the most consistent part of Trump’s endorsements since the 2020 election.” Trump’s conspiracy theories have transformed placid [local](#) and [state](#) elections into toxic contests with extreme rhetoric and ongoing threats of violence. In addition to his aggressive promotion of candidates who will actively work to overturn the next election, Trump is trying to defeat any Republican politician who refused to overturn the 2020 election, including Governor Brian Kemp and Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger in [Georgia](#) and former U.S. Attorney Bill McSwain in [Pennsylvania](#). Trump even turned on MAGA loyalist and January 6 conspirator [Mo Brooks](#) in his campaign for Senate for suggesting that Republicans focus on future elections instead of continuing to fight to overturn the 2020 election.

[The Conspirators Are Passing State Laws That Will Ensure That In 2024 Election Denier Politicians Can Have The Final Say Over Results](#)

At Least Eight Republican-Led States Have Passed Laws Giving Partisan Entities Control Over Elections. At least [eight states](#), all led by Republican governors or Republican super-majority legislatures, have passed laws that diminish secretaries of states’ authority over elections or shifted aspects of election administration to highly partisan bodies, including state legislators themselves or partisan election boards. Some of these laws are direct retaliation for actions taken by election officials during the 2020 election. For example, Arizona Democratic secretary of state, Katie Hobbs has been [barred](#) from representing the state in lawsuits defending its election code. That power now lies exclusively with the Republican attorney general -- but only through Jan. 2, 2023, when Hobbs’ term expires.

Georgia: A New Georgia Law Gave The Republican-Controlled General Assembly The Power To Take Over Local Election Boards. In Georgia, an [election bill](#) signed by Governor Brian Kemp in 2021 gave the Republican-controlled General Assembly new powers over the state board of elections, which controls its local counterparts. Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger was [removed](#) as chair and voting member of the election board after he defended the integrity of the 2020 election. The GOP-controlled legislature now has the power to appoint the board’s chair and control a majority of the members. The law is already being

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used to launch a review of operations in Fulton County, home to most of Atlanta, which could lead to a state takeover, and in [at least eight](#) other Georgia counties, Republicans have already changed the composition of local election boards by ousting Democratic members and replacing them with Republicans.

Wisconsin: Republicans Are Trying To Dismantle The Wisconsin Election Commission And Replace It With Partisans. Since 2020, Republicans have been working at a fever pitch to [take control](#) of Wisconsin elections. Conservative lawmakers have introduced dozens of bills that would sharply limit absentee voting, bar municipalities from using grant money to cover election-related costs and make a flurry of other alterations to Wisconsin election law. At the urging of Senator Ron Johnson and others, legislators have also attempted to directly take control of the state's elections. Rep. Janel Brandtjen, the chair of the Assembly Committee on Campaigns and Elections has called the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) a "rogue agency" and Republican leaders have spent months calling for Meagan Wolfe, WEC's nonpartisan administrator, to resign, with some even calling for most of WEC's commissioners to be criminally charged for the guidance they issued for the 2020 elections. Undeterred by vetoes by Governor Tony Evers, Republicans in Wisconsin are now pushing to give the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee the authority to cut staff and withhold funding from the WEC if the committee determines it "failed to comply with any election law."

[GOP States Are Limiting Early And Absentee Voting And Criminalizing Routine Activities Like Distributing Water To Voters Waiting In Line To Cast Their Ballots](#)

More Than Sixteen Republican Governors Have Already Signed New Laws Making It More Difficult To Vote. Sixteen [GOP governors](#) signed legislation making it more difficult to vote in 2021. These laws make it more difficult for voters to cast mail ballots, make in-person voting more difficult by reducing polling place hours and locations, increase voter purges or the risk of faulty voter purges, and criminalize the ordinary, lawful behavior of election officials and other individuals involved in elections. In 2022, [hundreds more bills](#) restricting voting rights have been proposed or passed in states from [Arizona](#) to [New Hampshire](#).

Georgia: The GOP Passed Legislation Eliminating Dropboxes, Imposing New Voter ID Requirements, And Even Criminalizing Giving Voters Food Or Water When They're Standing In Line. GOP legislation passed in Georgia in 2021 includes [more than a dozen](#) provisions designed to reduce voting access including a reduction in the number of ballot drop boxes in metro Atlanta from 97 to 23, new voter-ID requirements for mail-in ballots, a far lower bar for rejecting ballots cast in the wrong precinct, less time to request and return mail ballots, a prohibition on election officials sending out mail-in ballot applications to all voters, and even a ban on giving voters food or water while they're waiting in line. As a result, the number of [rejected](#) absentee ballot applications rose from less than one percent in 2020 to four percent during local elections in 2021, demonstrating how easy it would be to change the outcome of an election in a state decided by only 11,000 votes in 2020.

Texas: Republicans Passed Legislation That Has Already Caused The Rejection Of Tens Of Thousands Of Ballots. Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed legislation in September 2021 imposing a wide range of [draconian restrictions](#) on voting in the state. The law bans drive-in voting and 24 hour voting, imposes new voter ID requirements for absentee ballots,

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prohibits election officials from sending unsolicited mail-in ballot applications, empowers partisan “poll watchers” to intimidate voters and election workers, and requires monthly checks and purges of the voter rolls. As a result of the new law, [more than 12 percent](#) of Texas voters saw their mail-in ballots rejected during the March 2022 primary, invalidating more than 24,000 votes.

Florida: Republicans Passed Discriminatory Legislation Imposing New Restrictions On Mail-In Voting. In April 2021, Florida Republicans passed legislation making a wide range of changes to voting in the state, including making voter registration more difficult, empowering “poll watchers” to be more disruptive, and restricting the ability to provide snacks and water to voters waiting in line. Most prominently, the bill imposed a host of [new restrictions on mail-in voting](#) echoing attacks on the practice by Donald Trump, a sharp reversal in a state where absentee voting has long been popular with Democrats and Republicans alike. The law imposes voter ID requirements on mail-in ballots and sharply restricts ballot drop boxes and voter assistance. A federal judge ruled that Florida’s restrictions were [intentionally discriminatory](#) against minority voters, but the law was [reinstated](#) by an appeals court in May 2022.

[Election Conspirators Are Threatening Election Administrators Who Won't Go Along With Them And Running Big Lie Candidates For Election Administration Offices](#)

More Than 80 Election Conspiracy Theorists Are Running For The Offices That Control Elections In 2022. More than 80 candidates who have made false claims about the 2020 election or supported Donald Trump's "Big Lie" are running for state offices that run, oversee or protect elections. According to [States United Action](#), at least 51 Republican candidates who have falsely claimed that Trump won the election, spread lies about the election's legitimacy, backed "forensic" audits, promoted conspiracy theories or took other actions to undermine election integrity are running for governor in 24 states. At least 21 election deniers are running for secretary of state in 18 states, an office that would put them in power to oversee voting in their states. Another 11 election deniers are running for attorney general, which would position them to get involved in election litigation and law enforcement matters.

Republicans In Many States Are Threatening To Jail Election Workers. In 2022 alone, Republican lawmakers have introduced 16 different bills in eight states that create new [criminal or civil penalties](#) for functions associated with running elections. Election officials in Arizona could face criminal charges if a noncitizen registers to vote on their watch. In Iowa, a law enacted in 2021 makes it a felony for election clerks to willfully buck state election laws. And in Florida, election supervisors face fines of up to \$25,000 for leaving a ballot drop box unattended. Republicans in Wisconsin have gone even further, with [Assembly Republicans](#) trying to jail the chairwoman of the state Elections Commission, Racine’s mayor and other officials as part of their endless review of the 2020 presidential election and the [Racine sheriff](#) seeking criminal charges against five state election officials because they told clerks to bypass state law during the coronavirus pandemic and send absentee ballots to nursing homes instead of first visiting in person.

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Trump Told Donors In March 2022 That “The Vote Counter Is Often More Important Than The Candidate.” At a GOP donor summit in March 2022, Trump continued to aggressively push his claims that he won Georgia, Wisconsin and other states in the 2020 election and accused Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg of rigging the election against him. Trump then [pushed](#) for the Republican Party to be more loyal in backing up his claims about fraud and to elect or appoint officials that will decide elections in his favor. “The vote counter is often more important than the candidate,” Trump said. “... We have to get a lot tougher and smarter at the polls.” To that end, Trump is actively campaigning against Republicans, including Georgia Governor Brian Kemp and Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, who refused to overturn the election for him in 2020.

Steve Bannon Is Encouraging MAGA Supporters To Become Poll Workers And Precinct Officers. Steve Bannon was one of the loudest voices supporting Donald Trump’s efforts to overturn the 2020 election, and since 2021 he has been engaged in an active campaign to remake the Republican Party to support the MAGA agenda and undermine future elections. Bannon has been encouraging his followers to become precinct officers in key states, a position which can influence how elections are run. In some states, precinct officers have a say in choosing poll workers, and in others they help pick members of boards that oversee elections. Since Bannon’s campaign began, at least [8,500 new Republican precinct officers](#) have joined the party in 41 key electoral counties. Bannon also provides a platform for the most extreme election conspiracy theorists running for office in 2022, including Mark Finchem in Arizona, and Matthew DePerno in Michigan.

Election Workers Are Facing Increasing Threats Of Violence. Since the 2020 election, election workers have faced a rising wave of violent threats. Reuters identified [more than 100](#) threats of death or violence made to U.S. election workers and officials as part of the campaign of intimidation inspired by Trump’s claims that the 2020 election was stolen. As of September 2021, there were only four known arrests and no convictions. A 2022 [Brennan Center](#) survey found that one in six election officials have experienced threats because of their job and one in five officials say they are unlikely to continue to serve until the 2024 election. As a result of the spike in violent threats and intimidation from conspiracy theorists, election officials in [Colorado](#) are undergoing active shooter training and some have worn bulletproof vests.