

The Delray Democrat

The Fraud of “Voter Fraud” The Reality of Voter Suppression¹

Michael K. Cantwell

Recently, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy was heard to complain, “I don’t think anybody is questioning the legitimacy of the presidential election.”

He’s twice wrong. First, if true, it would be a cause for celebration that tens of millions of Americans had finally come to their senses. Complaining that not enough people are questioning the 2020 election is like complaining that not enough people believe the QAnon conspiracy that the world is run by a cabal of [Satan-worshipping](#) pedophiles who kill and eat their victims.

Second, there’s been no shortage of crypto-fascists and paid professional liars only too happy to regurgitate Trump’s Big Lie since it first emerged from his maw. What America *has* lacked are Republicans with the courage and patriotism to challenge the Big Lie and the Big Liar.

As a consequence, [two-thirds of Republicans](#) now believe the election was stolen. They are unaware or unmoved by the fact that more than sixty lawsuits challenging the election were dismissed (many of them by Republican judges) or that election officials in every state (many of them Republicans) certified or upheld the certification of the vote.

To return to the simile begun in the second paragraph, [56% of Republicans](#) also believe that the core QAnon conspiracy theories noted above are either mostly or partially true.

How did tens of millions of Americans become so mad so quickly? Like the proverbial frogs put in a pot of cold water and then slowly boiled alive, they accepted Trump’s Big Lie because they were conditioned by the onslaught of lies Trump has spewed since launching his presidency with the palpably false claim that the rain stopped and the sun came out when he began his inaugural address.

The other answer is that many were already mad. Trump’s Big Lie resonated because it was sown in the fertile ground of another, even more malignant, Big Lie, namely, that “voter fraud” is rampant and threatens our democracy.

Unlike the [77% of self-identified Republicans](#) who believe voter fraud was widespread in 2020, however, Republicans spreading or tolerating Trump’s Big Lie are not credulous fools. They know that there is no empirical evidence of voter fraud, for all their efforts to find it have all ended in failure:

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- A commission Trump established to “prove” he “won” the popular vote in 2016, led by former Vice President Mike Pence and Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, [disbanded](#) without finding any evidence of voter fraud.
- A [crackdown](#) begun under former President George W. Bush found no evidence of organized voter fraud. The 120 instances it identified nationwide over a 5-year period translated to a *less than one instance per state every other year*.
- The Heritage Foundation’s “[Election Fraud Database](#)” trumpets “1,328 proven instances of voter fraud.” Their database extended back over 20 years, so it amounts to slightly over *one instance of voter fraud per state per year*.

The threat to our democracy is not voter fraud – *it is the fraud of voter fraud*. Republican leaders are using a non-existent threat to enact voter-suppression laws because they know that they cannot compete on a level playing field.

According to the [Brennan Center](#), 14 states have enacted laws that restrict access to the vote since the beginning of the year, including SB 90 in Florida. Currently, 12 states have enacted laws to make it more difficult to vote by mail, 8 states have enacted laws that make in-person voting more difficult, and 18 states have voter-suppression laws moving through the state legislature. Overall, Republicans have introduced at least 389 restrictive bills in 48 states in the 2021 legislative sessions.

These laws are despicable and anti-democratic and are an admission that Republicans cannot win elections honestly. If, as intended, they allow Republicans to retake Congress in the 2022 midterms, the overthrow of our democracy that we narrowly averted on November 3, 2020, and again January 6, 2021, will just have been postponed. And that is the “steal” that must be stopped.