

What did voter suppression attempts reveal about the 2024 US Presidential elections?

Document 1

Civil rights groups warn of potential voter suppression ahead of Election Day

ABC News, by Beatrice Peterson, October 31, 2024

Civil rights leaders believe that a decision handed down by the Supreme Court on Wednesday could lay the framework for post-election challenges.

The high court's conservative majority ruled to block an order from a federal judge that would have reinstated some 1,600 individuals to Virginia's registered voter count.

Those individuals were removed in accordance with an executive order by Gov. Glenn Youngkin that required the daily purge of self-identified noncitizens from the state's voter rolls.

The Aug. 7 executive order brought lawsuits from immigration and civil rights groups, as well as the Justice Department, all of which alleged that it violated the 90-day quiet period mandated by the 1993 National Voting Rights Act.

Now that the Supreme Court's unsigned order has allowed the purging to proceed, those advocates have implied that Virginia may very well be a canary in a coal mine, foreshadowing broader efforts aimed at undermining voting rights.

Damon Hewitt, president and executive director of the nonpartisan Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, which led one of the challenges, told ABC News, "None of this activity is random. It's all highly orchestrated, but it's also orchestrated with a purpose."

"They're trying to really test the bounds of the court's state and federal courts appetite for actually enforcing the NVRA," he added. [...]

"Clean voter rolls are one important part of a comprehensive approach we are taking to ensure the fairness of our elections," Youngkin said.

Civil rights groups have argued that the focus on noncitizens voting is a false narrative.

"The idea of people who are not legal citizens voting is an absolute myth. It is not true," said NAACP Senior Associate General Counsel Anthony P. Ashton. "It is not true."

"This has been a theme that has been expressed now for a later narrative to try to undermine democracy, undermine faith in the democratic process," he added.

One of the voters removed in the purge was a naturalized citizen who had voted in elections for the past 30 years, according to Ryan Snow, a litigator with Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

Other advocates have said that several U.S. citizens, including a Puerto Rican-born voter, were also removed. [...]

NAACP President Derrick Johnson, however, criticized the lawsuits, calling them an effort to “undermine the public's confidence in the entire democratic process.”

"The voter purges here are textbook examples of attempted voter suppression and intimidation," he said. "Those behind the false allegations that saturate the commonwealth's case seek to frighten those they consider their constituents by sounding xenophobic and racist dog whistles."

Nationally, civil rights leaders have been signaling since 2020 that voters of color, particularly black voters, are more likely to become targets of voter challenges, especially in battleground states like Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

Ezra Rosenberg, co-director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Voting Rights Project, told ABC News that voter challenges in Georgia counties such as Fulton and DeKalb, which have large Black populations, were no coincidence.

“There have been these dozens and dozens and dozens of mass voter challenge suits that were filed, and they were all filed just about the same time, around 30 days or so before the election, based upon information that even according to the pleadings they had for months and months and months before that,” Rosenberg said. [...]

NAACP General Counsel Janette McCarthy-Wallace told ABC News in a statement that the nation’s oldest civil rights organization is fighting for free and fair elections in 10 legal battles across the U.S.

“Make no mistake -- across the country, certain state officials are trying to manufacture a legal foundation that they will use to justify false claims of election fraud during and after the election,” McCarthy-Wallace said. [...]

Document 2

North Carolina voter ID challenge is really just about voter suppression

The Hill, by Aron Solomon, September 18, 2024

The recent lawsuit brought against the University of North Carolina by the state Republican Party and other conservative groups over its voter identification procedures is

built on shaky ground. At its core, this action lacks a strong foundation, both in terms of the law and common sense.

The university, in my view, has done everything right. UNC's efforts to issue voter IDs to its students not only comply with the law but also reflect a thoughtful approach to ensuring voter access, especially for young people, many of whom may not have other forms of ID. [...]

In 2018, the state passed a constitutional amendment requiring voters to present identification at the polls. The General Assembly later outlined what forms of ID would be acceptable. It wisely included student IDs from state universities, provided they met certain security standards. UNC followed that law to the letter by implementing a process to issue IDs that would allow students — many of whom are first-time voters — to exercise their fundamental right to vote. [...]

If there are any minor imperfections in the system, they don't rise to the level of fraud or constitutional violations, as the lawsuit suggests.

The North Carolina GOP's lawsuit is, rather, an attempt to turn a legitimate effort to increase voter participation into a manufactured crisis. The complaint focuses heavily on the idea that UNC's method of verifying student identities isn't rigorous enough, and that the university-issued IDs lack sufficient security features to prevent fraud.

But if you peel back the layers, this lawsuit isn't about election integrity at all — it's about voter suppression. It's a deliberate move to target a student population that historically leans liberal, all under the guise of "security concerns."

The argument that UNC's IDs are somehow more vulnerable to tampering than other accepted forms of identification is unconvincing. If state Republicans were genuinely concerned about election security, they would be pushing for better election infrastructure across the board, not zeroing in on student IDs. Instead, they're using the specter of voter fraud — something that has been repeatedly debunked in the academic and legal arenas — as a tool to limit the voting power of young people.

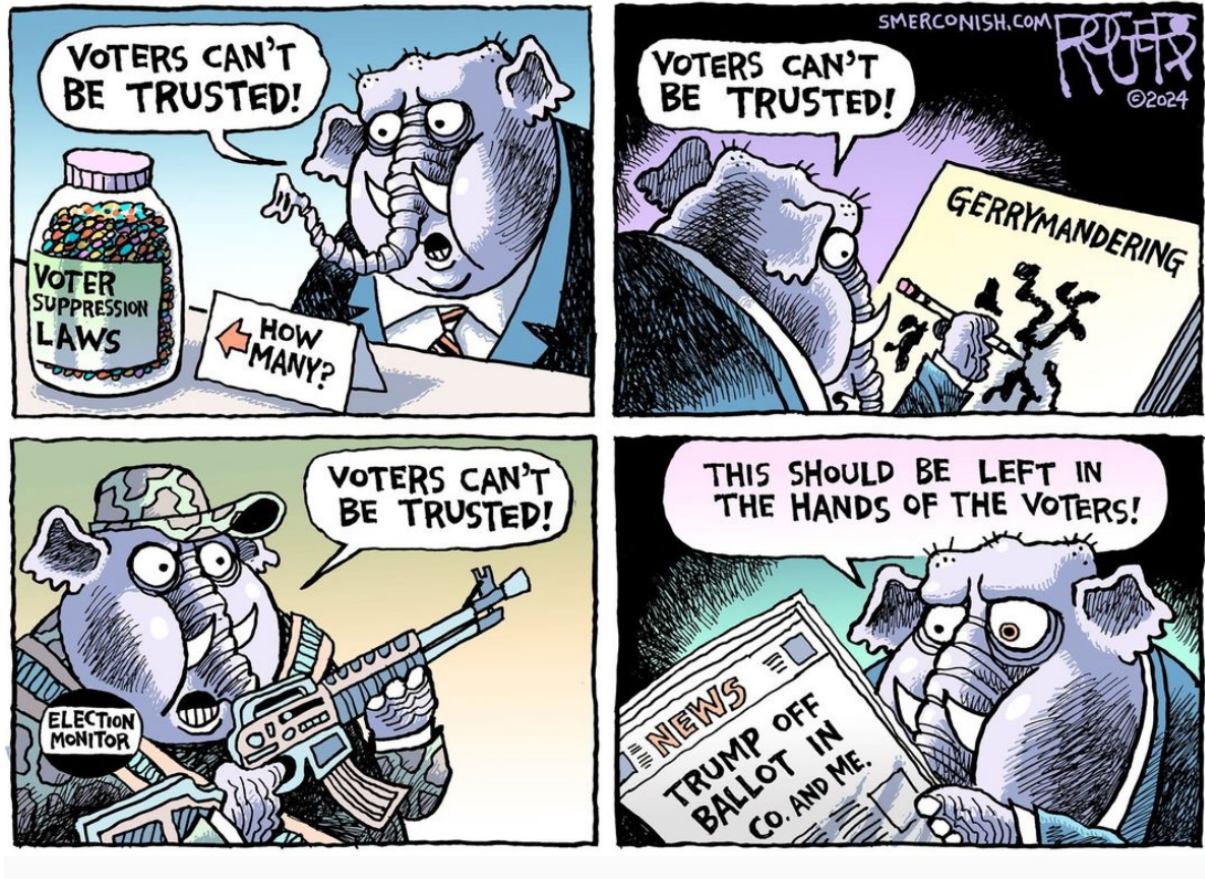
The reality is that voter fraud in the U.S., and specifically in North Carolina, is exceedingly rare. The notion that UNC's student IDs are opening the door to widespread voter fraud is a fantasy designed to justify a partisan agenda. [...]

At its core, this case taps into the broader national debate around voter ID laws, which have been used by conservative lawmakers as a tool to suppress the votes of historically marginalized groups, including young voters, people of color and low-income individuals. The attack on UNC's voter ID process is just the latest chapter in this disturbing trend.

The court, if it acts rationally, should dismiss this lawsuit or, at most, ask for minor adjustments in UNC's ID-issuing process. There's no reason to believe the university's procedures are undermining the integrity of elections. In fact, UNC is doing precisely what

Republicans around the country say they want — ensuring that people have state-issued ID in order to vote.

Document 3



By Rob Rogers