

## **One Of Our Political Parties No Longer Believes In Democracy.**

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For most of our history, the US has been dominated by two political parties. Though they have been fiercely competitive, they have always seemed willing to agree on the relative infallibility of the Constitution. And they have been willing to put their faith in the electorate. But over the past few decades, something changed.

The Republican Party, the Grand Old Party that led the fight to end slavery; the party that staked its future on holding the nation together following the secession of the South; the party of Abraham Lincoln; has seemingly abandoned its faith in democracy. Instead of fighting for the right of every American citizen to vote, they have falsified claims of widespread voter fraud as an excuse to create numerous obstacles for college students, the elderly and minority voters.

Prior to the midterm election, North Dakota's GOP-controlled legislature passed a law requiring voters to have IDs with street addresses knowing that those living on the state's Native American reservations have none. In Georgia, the GOP gubernatorial candidate who held the office of Secretary of State used his office to purge legitimately-registered voters, to shutter polling places in predominately minority areas, and to stall roughly 53,000 voter registrations over alleged inconsistencies with their voting registration information.

In Texas, there were accounts of electronic voting machines changing votes from Democratic candidates to Republicans. In Florida and numerous other GOP-controlled states, the voting rolls were purged of tens of thousands of voters for failure to vote in previous elections or failure to update their voting information following a move. Many students were not allowed to vote where they attend college, instead being required to vote in their parent's state of residence.

Want more evidence of the GOP's contempt for democracy? Consider the fact that, as a result of extreme GOP gerrymandering, Republicans were able to elect more candidates to legislatures despite Democrats receiving substantial majorities of votes. Or consider that, as Arizona, Florida and California continued to count legal votes following Election Day – many of them absentee and mail-in ballots that were dropped off at polling places – Republicans screamed fraud. They demanded the counts be stopped. They even claimed that election officials put in place by

Republican governors and legislatures were attempting to steal the election for Democrats. Meanwhile, Democrats insisted that every vote count regardless of party.

And, in at least three states where Democrats were elected governor, GOP-controlled legislatures have pushed laws to diminish and restrict the power of the governor's office before the governors-elect can be sworn into office! Can there be any greater affront to the will of the voters? To democracy itself?

Republicans must be held accountable for their actions. Voters should demand that all states commit to automatic or same-day voter registration such as Minnesota. They should demand an end to gerrymandering through the implementation of independent redistricting commissions such as those in Arizona, California, Idaho and Washington. They should demand modern, reliable and tamper-proof voting machines that create a paper trail for recounts. And they should punish any political party that tries to undermine the will of the people.