

# #1507 Installing Loyalists: The Multi-Pronged Destruction of Our Democracy Already in Progress

Intro 8-16-22

[00:00:00] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Welcome to this episode of the award-winning *Best of the Left* podcast, in which we shall take a look at the strategies underway to systematically dismantle democracy in the United States, including installing "big lie" believers in elected and poll working positions, preventing state-level supreme courts from holding GOP-dominated state legislators to the state constitutions, and the plan to wipe out tens of thousands of career civil servants in the federal government, to be replaced by right-wing extremists loyal to the Republican party.

Clips today are from the *David Pakman Show*, the *PBS NewsHour*, *Beyond Politics*, *Ring of Fire*, *The Broadcast*, *Democracy Now!*, and *All In with Chris Hayes* with an additional members-only clip from *The Broadcast*.

## Republicans Caught Planning MASSIVE Voter Fraud - David Pakman Show - Air Date 6-2-22

[00:00:46] **DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, DAVID PAKMAN SHOW:** Politico, quote: "Video recordings of Republican party operatives meeting with grassroots activists provide an inside look at a multi-pronged strategy to target and potentially overturn votes in Democratic precincts. They're targeting the Democratic precincts, install trained recruits as regular poll workers, and put them in direct contact with party attorneys. The plan, as outlined by a Republican National Committee staffer in Michigan, includes utilizing rules designed to provide political balance among poll workers to install party-trained volunteers prepared to challenge voters at Democratic majority polling places, developing a website to connect workers to local lawyers, and establishing a network of party-friendly DAs who could intervene to block vote counts at certain precincts."

So here's the strategy, okay? Most polling places, generally speaking, have a system for poll workers and poll watchers. Most of those systems are designed

that there be partisan balance. You can't have all Democrats watching a poll, a polling place, or all Republicans. The idea would be you have a partisan balance, but these are all just kind of good faith people who are there genuinely to make sure that everything is being done in the correct way.

The Republican plan is to take advantage of the rules, which say you have to have some Democrats and some Republicans, there has to be balance, and to train the Republican poll workers to understand how to disproportionately challenge Democratic votes by virtue of being in overwhelmingly Democratic precincts, in order to have balance on paper. Listen, we've still got Democratic poll workers and Republican poll workers. It's all fine. But the Republican workers that are poll workers that are there, are there not to make sure everything is on the up and up, but they are there because these are left-leaning precincts, where they're going to try to help Republicans by challenging votes that will statistically be more likely to be Democratic rather than Republican votes.

Being a poll worker, you just have so many more rights and things you can do to stop something than as a poll challenger. So again, the idea here is, don't have them there as the obviously partisan poll challengers, have them there just as regular poll workers who are gonna say they're seeing funny business. We have audio recordings, let's take a listen to one.

[00:03:13] **REPUBLICAN OPERATIVES:** Understand that we are upset with the 2020 results. But we cannot just look at the 2020 results or else the exact same thing will happen in 2022. We need volunteers on the ground on election day, ahead of election day, working so that that fraud does not happen again. If we only look at 2020, it just will happen.

I worked the polls the last election, and not only were we extremely poorly trained, I mean, badly trained, but when we caught them cheating -- and I caught them cheating -- they, they had a preplanned thing that they did. They would swarm you, they blocked you from seeing things, they accuse you of doing things that you weren't doing. And then they would go like this and have the police come and escort you out.

So that's why we're here now today, 13 months ahead of election day, as opposed to one month ahead of election day. So if I could ask everyone just to listen to Matt --

[00:04:11] **DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, DAVID PAKMAN SHOW:** And by the way, the reason that they're saying 13 months is the recording's from

October, these recordings were just recently published. So they're talking about October 2021, 13 months before this coming November election. This plan is for the November election.

[00:04:24] **REPUBLICAN OPERATIVES:** -- go through his presentation, and then we can ask questions afterwards, that would be a greatly appreciated.

But seriously, now that's why we're on the ground, like Rob said, so early, we address exactly that, right. The Democrats -- and I'm just gonna go off script and not even follow. So we are trying to recruit truly, it's gonna be an army, right? We are going to try to recruit lawyers. We're going to have more lawyers than have ever been recruited because, let's be honest, that's where it's gonna be fought, right? We're gonna have lawyers that work early to build relationships with different judges, so that when that happens, we're gonna have lawyers that have relationships with the police chiefs in the different areas, with the police officers --

[00:04:58] **DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, DAVID PAKMAN SHOW:** The police chief! So you're going to have: install Republican bad faith poll workers to contest ballots, have them be in touch with lawyers, and the lawyers know the police chief, so maybe they can even involve police in helping to skew the elections in their favor.

[00:05:17] **REPUBLICAN OPERATIVES:** -- in the different areas. So that when that happens, there's preexisting relationships already established so that they can't lie so that they -- I've talked with so many people that work at the TCF Center, and that I've heard, that happens. It happened, right? No one is like it happened and it's wrong that it happened. It's a hundred percent wrong that it happened and we're going to address it. We're gonna address it by having the lawyers on the ground. We're gonna address it by trying to have this --

[00:05:39] **DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, DAVID PAKMAN SHOW:** So the plan is as follows: in most places, in many places, we'll talk about Detroit, Michigan, because this is one place that this is becoming a very big deal. The poll workers have to be selected from names submitted by each of the parties. Great. So we know that Detroit is a particularly blue part of Michigan. So if you want to skew a state election, you don't know whether a particular voter is a Republican or a Democrat. So you say, okay, well, listen, if Michigan as in general is a -- I don't know what the numbers are, imagine it's a 52 to 48 state or a 55-45 Democratic-leaning state. But you know, Detroit is like 75% Democratic. Great.

So what you do is you train a bunch of people to be poll workers, who know the process for contesting ballots, say that I don't believe that this is a valid voter. You force them to have to submit a contested ballot, which then has to be adjudicated and on and on and on. You train them up. And then the list that the Republican party submits in Detroit, right? They don't have to do this everywhere. You say we're gonna target Detroit because that's where we can make a difference. It's so many Democrats, we'll try to fight the validity of Democratic ballots, for no particular reason other than they're Democrats. The list that you submit in Detroit to the county, to the election clerk or the Detroit official that chooses the poll workers, is all these people who have been trained in bad faith, not to prevent fraud, but to try to get votes in Detroit thrown out, which are overwhelmingly likely to be Democratic votes.

And so then, that's how you skew the results. You let the vote happen in other parts of Michigan that are more 50, 50, or even the rural parts of Michigan, which skew Republican. But in Detroit, you send this army of poll workers who are actually bad faith -- sort of like undercover political operatives -- to try to get Democratic votes discounted. And they've got lawyers ready. They claim they're going to have police chiefs ready.

Now, what is happening here is that to win, they increasingly must cheat, at least apparently. Well, why would that be? It's because on the issues, the country is moving more and more to the left. They're losing on the issues.

And by the way, I encourage you to listen to these recordings in full. There's an eight-minute recording from an October 5th "election integrity training." Then there's another 14-minute recording of a Zoom meeting. And you will very quickly understand the strategy which we have more or less explained here.

If Democrats wait until after it happens, it's going to be too late. And it's really important to understand how monumental the outcome of these midterms will be. Because in 2020, they had a bunch of different strategies they tried. It was the national, can Pence overturn it, alternate slates of electors, objections on January 6th, all these different things. More than 60 court cases which failed. Trying to prevent mail-in and absentee ballots. They had all these different things. It didn't work, but it could have. And now they're going to refine the strategy.

And 2022 is going to be a test of how much closer can we get to just controlling the election results by using these techniques, so that in 2024, we might be able to just get a president that didn't really win installed in the White House.

And there's a second layer to that. It's not just testing the techniques. It's also, can we use the techniques in 2022? -- We being them -- Can we use the techniques in 2022 to get enough control over state positions, including secretaries of state and governors, et cetera, so that those individuals will be in power in November of 2024 to maybe do what Trump wanted Brad Raffensperger and Brian Kemp to do in Georgia, for example. Remember that?

[00:09:40] **DONALD TRUMP:** I need 11,000 votes. Give me a break.

[00:09:42] **DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, DAVID PAKMAN SHOW:** It didn't happen in Georgia. But what about Doug Mastriano in Pennsylvania? Doug Mastriano, the now winner of the Republican gubernatorial primary in Pennsylvania, he's a big lie supporter. And he's worse than that, by the way, if you look at his background. He might be willing to do the things Trump wanted them to do in Georgia in 2024, if he's the governor. So what if they use these techniques to get Mastriano in in 2022 so that he will be in power to do this stuff in 2024?

We cannot understate the importance of these midterms.

So should everyone vote? Of course, that's number one. But the Democratic party had better be ready to fight this.

## **Republican plans to use political operatives as poll workers alarm voting rights activists - PBS NewsHour - Air Date 6-1-22**

[00:10:26] **WILLIAM BRANGHAM - CO-HOST, PBS NEWSHOUR:** It's called the precinct strategy, where partisans are recruited to be poll workers on election day at different polling stations. They'll look for fraud, and if they believe they find it, they'll call into a network of Republican attorneys who are primed to file lawsuits to block the vote counts.

A story out in Politico today details how this effort is already underway in Michigan, and it's being led by the Republican National Committee. This idea, putting partisan actors into what are supposed to be nonpartisan roles, has been promoted on the right for months, amplified by former Trump advisor, Steve Bannon.

[00:11:03] **STEVE BANNON:** Well, the establishment signaled that nothing puts a fear of God of 'em in more than the precinct strategy.

It's also been backed by former president Trump, who continues to lie about the results of the last election. In February, he urged his supporters to become precinct committee members, to quote, "take back our great country from the ground up."

So to help us understand this strategy and what it means for elections and for our democracy, I'm joined again by Rick Hasan. He's a law professor at the University of California, Irvine, and the author of the new book, *Cheap Speech: How Disinformation Poisons our Politics and How to Cure It*. Rick Hasan, always good to see you. Could you help us understand what is this precinct strategy all about?

[00:11:47] **RICK HASEN:** Well, the first thing to remember is that, even though we hold national elections every four years for president, we don't conduct a single election, we conduct something like 10,000 different elections. Everything is hyper localized, right? So, while there's been a lot of focus on secretary of state races and on governors, really there are the line workers -- people who check you in at the polling place, take your ballot, maybe scan your ballot into a machine -- it's down to that level where we see people who've embraced the big lie being recruited by one of the political parties to come in and serve, not as a *poll watcher*, which we've seen a lot of in the past, someone observing what's going on in the polling place and maybe reporting to their party, but a *poll worker*, someone who should be having allegiance to the election body that is actually running the election, but who is now being told they should be reporting what they see via an app to a political party.

[00:12:42] **WILLIAM BRANGHAM - CO-HOST, PBS NEWSHOUR:** So as Politico detailed, they heard some tapes of these meetings, planning to train these motivated poll workers, as you say, different from poll monitors, to call Republican lawyers if they see something amiss on election day. Is that legal?

[00:12:59] **RICK HASEN:** So first, because we're talking about this decentralized system, every state has their own rules as to what poll workers are allowed to do. And so I'm sure that in many states, to be communicating outside the chain of command, that is, if you see a problem with the polling place, you should go to your supervisor, going instead to the outside, could be grounds for the person to be let go. You know, I don't think that it would be unreasonable for an election official to say, if you have a problem, tell me and we'll deal with it. And of course you can always talk about the issue later.

I'm concerned that this strategy of going outside could create chaos at the polling places, could lead to disenfranchisement of workers who might be challenged for reasons unrelated to their qualifications. Maybe they don't speak English well or have an accent, and they're being called a non-citizen for no good reason. And ultimately I'm worried that this could create the grounds for a legislature to try and say that the election was not fairly run and try to make some kind of change to election results down the line.

[00:14:00] **WILLIAM BRANGHAM - CO-HOST, PBS NEWSHOUR:** Meaning if partisan poll workers can create enough smoke in a couple of different precincts on election day, we know that, according to the Politico piece, that the GOP is trying to find a network of district attorneys who are sympathetic to this cause as well, that then the legislature might step in and do something more drastic?

[00:14:21] **RICK HASEN:** Right. So you may remember that part of the 2020 strategy that Trump and his allies were going through to try to steal the 2020 election was to say that there was a failed election. There was so much fraud or problems with how the election was run, that we don't really know who won the state of Arizona. So let the Arizona legislature come in and pick its own winner, send in an alternative slate of electors. I mean, this is something we're going to hear about from the January 6th Committee coming up later this month.

You can imagine a similar strategy next time. Lots of smoke, lots of unsubstantiated claims of fraud or problems, and the legislature uses it as a flimsy excuse to try to overturn the voters will, if it doesn't go the way that the legislature wants.

[00:15:01] **WILLIAM BRANGHAM - CO-HOST, PBS NEWSHOUR:** In the Politico piece, several Republican officials who are working on this strategy say this is not nefarious. This is just us trying to offset the demonstrated Democratic population of poll workers in cities like Detroit or Philadelphia, and that we're just trying to balance the scales here. It's nothing to worry about. What do you make of that argument?

[00:15:22] **RICK HASEN:** If all that's going on here is that the Republican party is recruiting workers to work in heavily Democratic areas like Philadelphia or Detroit, I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I think that's actually a good thing for democracy. We need more poll workers. The problem is, people are being recruited based on this idea that they're gonna be looking for this fraud. Fraud is quite rare in American elections. But people believe the false claims of Donald Trump and his allies from 2020 that the last

election was stolen. They're being put into areas where they've been told -- and we just heard Mo Brooks say this yesterday that fraud happens in Democratic areas. They're being primed to believe that it is Democrats, that it's people of color, that is poor people who are stealing votes. And so if you go in with that attitude, as opposed to, I'm gonna go in and help our democracy to assure that all eligible voters and only eligible voters can cast a ballot that will be fairly counted, but then you're in trouble. Then you don't have a system where the process is going to work in the right way.

## **Inside Trump's Stealth Purge Plan with the Congressman Leading the Fight Against It - Beyond Politics - Air Date 7-28-22**

[00:16:20] **MATT ROBISON - HOST, BEYOND POLITICS:** Late last week, a blockbuster report from Jonathan Swan of Axios detailed how former president Trump's top allies are preparing a plan to purge the federal government of thousands of key decision makers and replace them with MAGA loyalists through an executive order called schedule F.

The report shows that even beyond the typical Republican fixations, like the Environmental Protection Agency and the Internal Revenue Service, the Trump shadow team is targeting the Justice Department, FBI, intelligence, and the State Department and the Pentagon. The plans have become detailed and highly specific, down to which individual people are deemed not loyal enough by Trump to stay. The upshot is that if Donald Trump is reelected, there would no longer be any guardrail between the American people and his whims once the core of the federal service is replaced with a new army of rabid MAGA foot soldiers.

The Congressman who has been leading the fight against this threat is Gerry Connolly, Democrat of Virginia, who chairs the subcommittee that oversees the Federal Civil Service. He successfully passed an amendment in the House of Representatives to this year's Defense Bill to prevent any future president from executing the Schedule F maneuver, but Republicans hope to block it in the Senate.

We are very privileged to have Congressman Connolly here with us to tell us all about it. Congressman, welcome to be on Beyond Politics.

[00:17:39] **CONGRESSPERSON GERRY CONNOLLY:** Great to be with you Matt, thank you.

[00:17:41] **MATT ROBISON - HOST, BEYOND POLITICS:** Well it's our honor to have you, and we wanna start by just expressing our appreciation for you leading the fight on this critical issue. I gave my version, my description of the problem, some of it taken from Jonathan Swan at Axios - hat tip, major hat tip to him for his investigative reporting on this.

Maybe you can just explain, at a high level, to our listeners and our viewers on video, why this Schedule F executive order, and the new Trump team plans to bring it back, are so bad and have you so concerned.

[00:18:12] **CONGRESSPERSON GERRY CONNOLLY:** For the past 140 years, the United States has abided by a principal that we need a professional cadre of civil servants that, yeah, there's gonna be a layer of politically appointed managers who reflect the will of the people in electing a president, but we don't wanna politicize the 2.1 million civil servants who every day make things happen on behalf of the American people. Whether you get your social security check ought not to be a matter of partisanship. Whether you get your veteran's benefits or get treated a VA hospital, or you get your tax refund, shouldn't be a matter of a partisan political appointee looking at who you are and who you were.

And that's been a core principle, frankly, since the assassination of James Garfield, who was assassinated in 1881 by a would-be partisan political office seeker, who was disappointed not getting that partisan appointment. So two years later Congress passed the Pendleton Act that essentially the civil service, and we expanded it to protect almost all of the civil service over the years. That has served us well, that has really served us well.

And as you explained it, correctly I think Matt, what Trump and his cohorts are up to is they get a second bite at the apple in the White House, they are going to go after what they refer to as the deep state, what you and I would call the civil service, and basically purge it and replace it with political hacks. Cronies people not necessarily qualified for the jobs, but who would reflect the political ideology of Donald Trump. And that is a terrifying coup of its own really, and has to be seen in the context of his other activities in trying to thwart election results, suppress voting ability, overturn actual certified election results state by state, subvert honest men and women who are doing their jobs, whether they be Secretaries of State or electoral board members, and now he wants to go systematically after the civil service.

And as you point out, it goes right down a very granular level where he actually has a hit list, by name, apparently of people in agency after agency who are targeted, who are not considered sufficiently loyal.

[00:20:54] **PAUL HODES - HOST, BEYOND POLITICS:** So Congressman, not to make light of this, but that sounds like standard operating procedure for the Trump White House, given what we know about how they operated internally, in the White House, as well as, as now, what they sought to do or want to do if Trump ever was to be reelected. But apparently the Trump White House and its allies, starting in around 2018, assembled detailed lists of disloyal government officials to oust and "trusted" pro-Trump people to replace them. Now we've also seen some reporting that apparently Ginni Thomas, who shows up at the center of, well, it seems like every lunatic right-wing fringe plot, personally handed a purge list to Donald Trump in 2019. Can you shed any light on that [inaudible]? What do we know and what am I making up?

[00:21:48] **CONGRESSPERSON GERRY CONNOLLY:** I can't confirm that, I don't know that, but I think it's fair to speculate that that would be in keeping with the entire modus operandi of the Trump White House and the sycophants he drew around him. Look, if Giuliani and Powell can go around the country flat out lying as officers of the court, they're lawyers, about election results and about what options were available to election officials to overturn them, why would we think it's outlandish to believe that this individual or others prepared, essentially, hitless or insufficiently loyal public servants, who need to be purged. That's what dictators do that. That is not what we do in a democracy, in fact, quite the opposite. We protect the professional cadre of civil servants. We insulate them from the normal warp and woof of parts and politics, just like Great Britain does, Canada does, we do. That's the hallmark of a mature democracy that wants to make sure that we have a professional core of civil servants who serve the American people.

This plan, in its scope, what Jonathan Swan has written about, he took what he tried to do in October of 2020, and they are now crystallizing it, expanding it, and actually making it fairly systemic. That is terrifying, and that would completely subvert the current civil service we have and would, I think, essentially overturn the Pendleton Act and subsequent civil service legislation to protect against partisan political activity within that core.

# 2024 Republican Hopefuls Support Trump Allies' Plan To Purge Government Workers - Ring of Fire - Air Date 8-4-22

[00:23:41] **FARRON COUSINS - CO-HOST, THE RING OF FIRE:** So we all know by now about the plan that Donald Trump's allies have, basically reimagining Schedule F for civil servants here in the United States, which of course would allow a president or their administration to come into office, fire upwards of about 50,000 people, and replace them with their own loyalists in office.

However, that's just a Trump thing, right? That's only if Trump gets elected, do we have to worry about that? Well, Axios who originally reported on that Schedule F plan, now has a follow up report where they went around and they talked to other possible 2024 Republican hopefuls, and, as it turns out, nope, this isn't just a Trump problem, this is now what Republicans, no matter who becomes the nominee, would love to see happen.

The two who spoke and outright said they absolutely support this plan, of course, are Mike Pompeo and Ted Cruz, two names that, of course, have been floated as 2024 potential Republican nominees, and they both told Axios that heck yeah, we'll do this. So now it's not just Trump, now you got Pompeo and Ted Cruz who also say this is what will happen.

Then of course you have the ones who didn't wanna be so committal, but also said, it's a good idea. So these people would do it, they're just too cowardly to admit they would do it right now. They don't want people to think they're full authoritarians, but they really are. And those individuals are, of course, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Florida Senator Rick Scott, Missouri Senator Josh Hawley, and for some reason, they also asked Florida Senator Marco Rubio. All four of those people also said, ah, I don't know if I would, but it's a great idea.

And, of course, they all gave the same reason, here it is. Those aligned with Trump on Schedule F say the apolitical civil service is a myth, and assert that the bureaucracy is stacked with liberals out to block conservatives from exercising policy muscle, won fairly in elections. Several of them also mentioned the deep state. And this is what it's gonna be folks. It's gonna be these idiotic conspiracy theories pushed by Republicans saying, "oh, our entire government is stacked with liberals. And those liberals at every branch, from the janitor to the highest appointments are all trying to stymie our agenda. So

we have to be able to get rid of them, because they're acting as unelected dictators over there at the DOJ or the EPA or the FDA or whatever the hell it is that they want to dismantle."

Of course that's not the case. These are people, again, these are career civil servants. It's not like these are political appointments. These are people who saw a job opening, realized they were qualified, went in, did an interview, got the job, have served through multiple administrations. They certainly, I imagine, have their own political beliefs, but those political beliefs do not in any way interfere with their jobs, and there's no evidence to suggest that it. But that is not going to stop Republicans from using that as an excuse to fire every single one of them and replace them with Republican loyalists. And now we know, based on these interviews with Axios, that pretty much every single Republican that wants to run for president would do the same thing as Donald Trump.

## **Fake Electors, Real Crimes and Much More - The Broadcast - Air Date 7-26-22**

[00:27:15] **BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** In election related news, some follow up today to last week's, statewide primary elections in Maryland, where Trump-endorsed, insurrection promoting, 2020 election denier Dan Cox was announced the winner of the gubernatorial nomination on the Republican side, as he defeated a more establishment ally of Maryland's current popular Republican governor, Larry Hogan, in an otherwise very blue state. But the 10 person race for the Democratic nomination in Maryland for governor had not yet been called at week's end last week, for one reason because Maryland does not allow election officials to begin processing mail ballots until the Thursday after the Tuesday election day, for some reason. But over the weekend, AP made their call in the Democratic primary for governor, which means everyone else tends to call it as well.

Bestselling author Wes Moore won the Democratic primary for Maryland governor, according to AP, setting up a general election contest against Republican Dan Cox, a hard-line conservative endorsed by former President Donald Trump. Yeah. Conservative, you know, the way "conservatives" call for stuff like overthrowing the American form of government and the constitution itself, you know, conservative, right AP? You know, it's okay to say "right-wing", it's even okay to say "extremist" when the person that you are informing the electorate about happens to be an extremist who, you know, bussed people to the January 6th, 2021 insurrection in cahoots with a sitting President of the

United States, hoping to steal a presidential election and throw thousands of armed insurrectionists at the Capitol in hopes of doing exactly that.

But anyway, AP.

[00:29:12] **DESI DOYEN - PRODUCER, THE BRADCAST:** You digress.

[00:29:13] **BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** Uh, I do, uh, Moore is the author of the African American, a former CEO of an anti-poverty non-profit who with the help of Oprah Winfrey's endorsement defeated a long list of other high profile Democrats, including Tom Perez, the former U.S. Labor Secretary and former Democratic National Committee Chair, as well as a well known state comptroller who's been in office for years and years. Moore will be the strong favorite in the November election against Cox, AP writes, who they describe now as a "right-wing member" - thank you, AP - "of the Maryland House of Delegates whose extreme brand of politics" - again, thank you, AP - "is considered a liability in a heavily Democratic state that twice elected centrist Republican Governor Larry Hogan". Moore would be the state's first black governor, if elected. So AP is happy to call him a "right-wing member" and has an "extreme brand of politics". Why don't they just call him a right-wing extremist right at the top of the article, since it's true? Instead of calling him a conservative, which is false.

Now, Moore may be the favorite. On the other hand, if Cox is elected - who has said he would not have certified Joe Biden's win in the state back in 2020, uh, had he been governor at the time when Biden defeated Trump by more than 33 points, but Dan Cox would not have certified it, 65 to 32 was the final results of the 2020 election in Maryland in Joe Biden's favor - you know, if that guy wins all bets may be, and if he wins in 2022, all bets may be off for 2024. Now as so-called blue, as Maryland tends to be in presidential elections, they also do have a habit of electing Republicans statewide for governors. So Maryland voters, you know, only the fate of the world is, uh, you know, counting on you this November, just as we are also counting on voters in Pennsylvania to defeat another Trump-endorsed, 2020 election denier and insurrectionist organizer - and yes, by the way, fake electors organizer, as we have learned in some breaking news today that I will get to - Doug Mastriano is the Republican nominee in Pennsylvania, in the Keystone state, this November. If he wins in 2022, ask yourself what that means for the 2024 election, when a governor must certify the state's electoral votes. Anyway, we will get to Mastriano's role on the fake electors shortly, as that is just breaking today. But yeah, point is these elections really, really matter this year. I know everyone says that every year is the most important election of our lifetimes, et cetera, et cetera. Seriously. This

year, that is once again very true. So please do what you can pass this message along to folks you know who do not listen to The Bradcast, because turnout really matters this November on a whole bunch of levels, as I think we've been making pretty clear on this program, from governor's races to state legislatures to, uh, both the House and the Senate on everything from *Roe v. Wade* to action on our climate emergency to any possibility of expanding the Supreme Court to, frankly, what Republicans will or won't be able to do in order to steal the 2024 election, where they were unable to do so in 2020. And I just, I can't say that enough, but I suspect I will try. You know, don't count on me. This is up to you. This is up to you to, you know, be a "Brad" with everyone you know, and annoy the hell outta them just the way I annoy the hell outta you.

## **Dark Money Is Fueling Election Deniers In Secretary Of State Races - The Ring of Fire - Air Date 8-6-22**

[00:33:23] **FARRON COUSINS - CO-HOST, THE RING OF FIRE:** A new report from the Brennan Center for Justice shows that millions of dollars in dark money, meaning most of it is totally untraceable, but millions of dollars in dark money are flowing into Secretary of State races across the country to fund, of course, election deniers. States including Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, and Wisconsin have raised 16.3 million so far. So election deniers in all of those states, 16.3 million dollars spread between them, and they all happen to be election deniers. They do not believe that the 2020 election was legitimate. They do believe Donald Trump is the, somehow, real President of the United States. And these are the people that these dark money interests, many of whom the report says have maxed out the amount they're legally allowed to give, because they want these election deniers to be in a position of power to basically overturn the next election, if the need arises. We do know a couple of the names. One of course is Patrick Byrne, the former Overstock CEO, Brian T. Kennedy, a past president of the right-wing Claremont Institute, Michael Marsicano, a former mayor of Hazleton, PA, who recently lost a Republican congressional primary, and you know, you've got, construction software CEO, Michael Ryden, packing supplies magnate, Richard Uihlein, all of these individuals, lots of money, going to these Secretary of State races in a lot of places. Again, Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, and Wisconsin. Swing states, basically. This is targeted, this is intentional, and this is done with the sole purpose of having that Secretary of State in a position where they could overturn the results of one of those state's elections. And here's the thing you: don't have to win 'em. Right? I'm sure it's good. I'm sure they're hoping to win 'em all because then you just control all elections, you

know, for, from now until the next election, I guess. But all you really need is one. Depending on how close a presidential election is, all you really need is one. Because if you can get that one state, right? That one swing state with enough electoral votes to flip an election, you've won. You could do it with a Wisconsin. You could do it with a Michigan. You could do it with a Georgia and Nevada. You could do it with an Arizona. That's why they're spreading this money around. They don't need to win 'em all, just one or two to control the future of United States' elections. That's why they're hyping the election deniers. They know these people have no scruples. They know that they're not adherent to the rule of law. They'll do what they're asked to do. And that is why this is happening.

## **Judicial Coup SCOTUS Gerrymandering Case May Let GOP State Legislatures Control Federal Elections - Democracy Now! - Air Date 7-6-22**

[00:36:23] **AMY GOODMAN:** The U.S. Supreme Court announced Thursday it will hear oral arguments in a case experts warn could be one of the greatest threats to U.S. democracy since the deadly January 6th insurrection at the Capitol. In October, the court will hear *Moore v. Harper*, a case which seeks to reinstate gerrymandered congressional maps that were struck down by North Carolina's highest court. A ruling in favor of North Carolina Republicans could strip state courts of their power to strike down state laws, while expanding the power of GOP-controlled state legislatures to control federal elections. Legal arguments brought forward by plaintiffs in *Moore v. Harper* could drastically alter how congressional and presidential elections are conducted.

At the heart of the case, a theory known as ISLT — that's the independent state legislature doctrine — which the Supreme Court has repeatedly rejected for well over a century. But the theory has gained support in the new majority-conservative court. Justices Neil Gorsuch, Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito and Brett Kavanaugh have all endorsed different versions of this doctrine. The three liberal justices have signaled they will not overrule the Supreme Court's many precedents rejecting the doctrine. This means the fate of the case could rest in the hands of Justice Amy Coney Barrett. Just one day before the Supreme Court agreed to hear *Moore v. Harper*, it ruled 6 to 3 to reinstate a Republican-drawn congressional map in Louisiana struck down by a lower court as a racially motivated violation of the Voting Rights Act.

New York Democratic Congressman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez tweeted, “We are witnessing a judicial coup in process. If the President and Congress do not restrain the Court now, the Court is signaling they will come for the Presidential election next”.

For more, we’re joined by Carolyn Shapiro, professor of law and director of the Institute on the Supreme Court of the United States at Chicago-Kent College of Law, co-author of the recent *Washington Post* op-ed headlined “A new Supreme Court case threatens another body blow to our democracy.” She is a former clerk to the now-retired Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer.

Professor Shapiro, welcome to Democracy Now! Can you just start off by laying out the significance of the court taking up this case, and what you’re most concerned about?

[00:38:39] **CAROLYN SHAPIRO:** The case is very important. In 2019, when the Supreme Court said that partisan — extreme partisan gerrymandering claims couldn’t be heard by federal courts, in a 5-4 decision, it said, “That’s OK. Don’t worry. There are other ways to challenge extreme partisan gerrymandering, and one of those ways is through state constitutions.” That’s exactly what happened in *Moore v. Harper*, and now the Republican legislators who drew this map, that dramatically skews a congressional delegation in favor of Republicans, are suing and saying that, in fact, the state constitution and the state courts don’t have the power to limit partisan gerrymandering or, for that matter, to in any other way constrain legislatures when they regulate federal elections. So, this could open the door to a host of problems. It eliminates the kinds of ordinary checks and balances that we expect courts and constitutions to place on legislatures.

[00:39:45] **AMY GOODMAN:** Tell us who Moore is.

[00:39:48] **CAROLYN SHAPIRO:** So, Moore is one of the Republican leaders of the North Carolina State Legislature. And North Carolina has a law that allows him and some of his colleagues to intervene in this case and to bring this lawsuit. What they want to be able to do is to draw maps for the congressional districts that the North Carolina Supreme Court has already said violate the North Carolina Constitution. Normally, state legislatures can’t do things that violate their state constitutions. But this ISLT, or independent state legislature theory, says that they do have the power to do that when it comes to regulating federal elections. The reason for that has to do with the language in two clauses of the Constitution that gives state legislatures the responsibility and the power

to regulate federal elections. But nothing in the federal Constitution suggests that they get to do that free of the ordinary limitations of state constitutions.

[00:40:55] **AMY GOODMAN:** So, explain this in practical terms. Are we talking about federal elections and state elections, you have to deal with them separately in each state? How do people vote?

[00:41:09] **CAROLYN SHAPIRO:** This is a great question, and it is one of the really big problems with the ISLT. What it suggests is that a state legislature could pass a single law that governs federal and state elections, which is what happens in most states, and that if a state court finds that some aspect or all of that statute to be unconstitutional under the state constitution, it still has to apply to federal elections. So, you might find yourself — a state might find itself with two registration systems or two different mail-in deadlines for absentee ballots, all depending on the particular state constitutional issues that the state court rules on. This doesn't — this makes less than no sense as a matter of separation of powers. It doesn't make any sense as a matter even of imagining what a legislature might have intended when it passes a single law governing both state and federal elections. So it could cause enormous chaos.

It also opens the door to a kind of mischief. Or, mischief is an understatement. It gives the state legislatures the power to do things that they wouldn't otherwise be able to do. And so they could pass laws that govern just federal elections that are extremely problematic from the perspective of democracy. They could draw, for example, as in North Carolina, incredibly gerrymandered congressional districts. They could even potentially create systems in which a state legislature gets to resolve any disputes over election results in federal elections, which would include presidential elections. And we could imagine what that might look like down the road. It could be extremely dangerous. Much of that, if not all of it, would be unconstitutional under many, if not all, state constitutions. But under the ISLT, that wouldn't matter.

[00:43:09] **AMY GOODMAN:** Finally — we just have 30 seconds — how does this relate to the Voting Rights Act?

[00:43:14] **CAROLYN SHAPIRO:** Well, they're both — both the Voting Rights Act and the ISLT, or, a movement against the ISLT— are ways of trying to protect voting, to protect the power of the people to choose their own representatives. And in those cases, as in others, the Supreme Court, the majority, continues to cut back on protections for voting and protections for democracy. It's extremely dangerous.

[00:43:38] **AMY GOODMAN:** And again, "ISLT" stands for something you'll be hearing much more of with this court, the independent state legislature theory.

## The Supreme Court Case That Could Upend U.S. Elections - All In w/ Chris Hayes - Air Date 7-5-22

[00:43:46] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN W/ CHRIS HAYES:** Donald Trump's big lie that the 2020 election was stolen is still at the center of Republican politics, especially at the state level in state primaries. We've seen this play out from state to state. The Republican front runner to be the next governor of Arizona, Kari Lake last week at a primary debate, she used the big lie to bludgeon her opponent, who is not an election denier.

[00:44:08] **DEBATE ANNOUNCER:** You've called Joe Biden an illegitimate president. What does that mean?

[00:44:13] **KARI LAKE:** He lost the election and he shouldn't be in the White House. We had a corrupt election. I'd actually like to ask everybody on this stage, if they would agree, we had a corrupt stolen election? Raise your hand. Did we have, did we have --

[00:44:26] **UNIDENTIFIED AZ GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE:** I would like to -- I'm not gonna play your stunt.

[00:44:30] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN W/ CHRIS HAYES:** She's not gonna play the stunt, although the stunt sort of happened.

This is a state level race. The January 6th hearings have shown how much pressure was put on state level officials to overturn the elections. And the hearings have also shown how officials like Republican Arizona Speaker of the House, Rusty Bowers, a fellow Arizona Republican, who resisted that pressure ended up playing a key role in saving our democracy. But now the Supreme Court has agreed to hear a case that could essentially make it easier for rogue state officials to carry out the coup the next time around.

Mark Elias is the foremost election lawyer in the country, the founder of Democracy Docket. On this upcoming case, he told the Washington Post

Republicans are, quote, "learning where the pressure points and vulnerabilities are in our election systems and refining their tactics." And he joins me now.

Mark, I have to say that people that I follow -- who are not people given to hyperbole or panic -- sound panicked about the fact the court has taken this case. Explain what this case is and why people are so worried about it.

[00:45:33] **MARC ELIAS:** Yeah. So Chris, thanks for having me back. And I am usually among those people who are not panicked by any one case before one court. I always counsel against assuming that any one court decision is gonna dramatically change the landscape. But this case is different. Because this is a case that Republicans are trying to use to advance a fringe theory that has never been adopted before, that says that state courts, reviewing state statutes, and actions of state legislatures, cannot apply their own state constitutions. This is a radical, radical idea that we would strip state courts of the ability of protecting voters using their state constitutions.

[00:46:23] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN W/ CHRIS HAYES:** And just to get some context here, this case emerges out of North Carolina, but we've seen in North Carolina and many states, either states have adopted referenda or state ballot initiatives or state constitutional changes that control how the state is gonna do things like gerrymandering, that say that you can't partisan gerrymander.

And what we've seen in state after state -- Ohio is a place that you've been litigating that we've put a lot of attention, we've seen in North Carolina -- what's happened in state after state is Republicans have basically said, Screw you state law. We're gonna maximize our electoral strength through gerrymandering. And again, then what often happens, as happened in North Carolina I believe, and Ohio and other places, is the state supreme court, sometimes dominated by Republicans, comes in and say you can't do this, that's a violation of the state constitution. Republicans want to make that impossible, is that right?

[00:47:11] **MARC ELIAS:** Correct. And not just in the redistricting arena. It would be bad enough to say that the North Carolina state courts can't hold the state legislature to the state constitution in drawing congressional districts. It'd be bad enough if that we're true with the Ohio Supreme Court and the redistricting process there for Congress.

But this would affect state courts like Montana that has struck down voter suppression laws in that state, under the state constitution. Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Minnesota, Michigan, the list goes on and on.

What Republicans want to do is take a vital tool out of the toolbox for those people trying to protect democracy. And that tool are the state courts using state law and state constitutions to hold their state legislatures accountable to those laws.

[00:47:59] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN W/ CHRIS HAYES:** And we should just be clear about the -- I mean, I hope we're spelling this out clearly, 'cause it could be a little complex. But just to give an example here, what's so dangerous about this is if the state legislature draws its own districts and it draws it in such a way that, say, a Republican party can get 57% of the seats with 45% of the votes, then they've used this kind of anti-democratic means to kind of barricade themselves in power. And then if the Supreme Court comes along and says, sorry, those guys are essentially unreviewable. They can do whatever they want, you're in a pretty like a vice grip of minority rule then.

[00:48:36] **MARC ELIAS:** Right. And Chris, remember, it was only in 2019 that the US Supreme Court said you cannot challenge a partisan gerrymandered map in federal court. Okay? There's no way to challenge partisan gerrymandering in federal court. That was a five-four decision by the Supreme Court. But Chief Justice Roberts said in that opinion, don't worry, you're gonna be able to go to your state courts, and some state courts will allow you to pursue partisan gerrymandering claims that will protect you from extreme partisan gerrymandering.

Well, that's North Carolina. North Carolina's state supreme court said we're going to protect the citizens of North Carolina from this extreme form of partisan gerrymandering, using our state constitution, because that's what Chief Justice Roberts told us to do. And yet now we're back before the US Supreme Court on whether the state supreme court of North Carolina can use the state constitution to protect its voters.

[00:49:36] **CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN W/ CHRIS HAYES:** And to connect it back to what we saw in 2020, there's two connections here. One is that the fringe version of this theory, put forward by John Eastman -- who's now facing possible criminal investigation -- is that state legislators can basically do whatever they want. They have what he says, plenary power, absolute power to basically say, you \*wink\* from the voters who just elected Joe Biden in the state, nope, we're not doing that.

And then the kind of softer version of that was the Josh Hawleys and the Ted Cruzes, who sort of dressed up the coup in this fringe theory that said, well, state legislators and state courts particularly, made all kinds of changes to the

time, place and matter the elections were had because of COVID; that's illegitimate. We wanna strike the votes.

But those were arguments on the fringe of coup and insurrection that are pretty related to what the plaintiffs are trying to do here.

[00:50:22] **MARC ELIAS:** Yeah. So as you know, Chris, and much of your audience knows, I was involved in litigating more than 60 cases against Donald Trump and his allies in the post-2020 period. And this independent state legislature theory came up time and time again, and court after court -- Democratic appointees, Republican appointees -- said, nonsense.

But this is the single most important doctrine for the Trump Republicans to advance. This is at the heart of what John Eastman and Sidney Powell and Rudy Giuliani and Donald Trump's other band of misfit lawyers tried to advance. And we won't be so lucky next time, if they're able to use this doctrine to strip from state courts the ability to hold their legislatures in check.

## **Fake Electors, Real Crimes and Much More Part 2 - The Broadcast - Air Date 7-26-22**

[00:51:09] **BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** The dozens of emails among people connected to the Trump campaign, outside advisors and close associates of Trump, show a particular focus on assembling lists of people who would claim, with no basis, to be electoral college electors on his behalf, in battle ground states that he had lost. In emails reviewed by the New York Times and authenticated by people who had worked with the Trump campaign at the time, one lawyer involved in the detailed discussions repeatedly used the word "fake" to refer to the so-called electors. They knew they were fake electors, that's what they called them. They were intended to provide Vice President Mike Pence and Trump's allies in Congress a rationale for derailing the congressional process of certifying the outcome on January 6th, and lawyers working on the proposal made clear that they knew that the pro-Trump electors that they were putting forward might not hold up to legal scrutiny.

So yes, even they knew this plan was to come up with fake electors, and yet they went through with it anyway. "We would just be sending in 'fake' electoral votes to Pence so that 'someone' in Congress can make an objection when they start counting votes, and start arguing that the 'fake' votes should be counted."

[00:52:31] **DESI DOYEN - PRODUCER, THE BRADCAST:** So that's not a rationale, that's a pretext. I mean, a rationale has gotta have something behind it. This is just a made up idea in order to say, we gotta have some kind of pretext.

[00:52:40] **BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** Which they knew. Jack Wilenchik wrote that, he's a Phoenix based lawyer who helped organize the pro-Trump electors in Arizona, the pro Trump fake electors in Arizona. He wrote that in a December 8, 2020 email to Boris Epshteyn, a strategic advisor for the Trump campaign and a regular pro Trump propagandist on local TV stations around the country owned by this company named, this right-wing, far right-wing company named Sinclair, which pretend to be regular TV news outlets instead of pro-Trump, yes, fake news outlets. Putting on guys like Boris Epshteyn as if he is some sort of a political expert or a pundit when actually he literally works for Donald Trump.

In a follow up email, Mr. Wilenchik wrote that alternative votes is probably a better term than fake votes. He added a smiley face emoji. So insurrection, tyranny, autocracy, and the overthrow of the American government, but with a smile. He wrote, "PPS alternative votes is probably a better term than fake votes smiley." Also, it sounds like Kelly Ward and the rest of the electors, now Kelly Ward is the head of the Republican Party in Arizona. She's a crazy lady. Anyway. Sounds like Kelly Ward and the rest of the electors would be very much into the idea. Kelly's thought is to try to keep it under wraps until Congress counts the vote on January 6th, so we can try to "surprise the Dems and the media with it. I tend to agree with her," he wrote.

The emails provide new details of how a wing of the Trump campaign worked with outside lawyers and advisors to organize the elector plan and to pursue a range of other options. At the same time, the emails show that participants in the discussions reported details of their activities to Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal lawyer at the time, and in at least one case to Mark Meadows, Trump's Chief of Staff. So, yes, this went all the way to the top. This went all the way to the White House and directly to Donald Trump through Giuliani, through Meadows.

Around the same time, according to the House committee investigating January 6th, Meadows emailed another campaign advisor saying, "we just need to have someone coordinating the electors for states." So Meadows knew this was all being done, this was all being... Donald Trump's. Chief of Staff knew this was all being done was recommending, hey, let's just get a coordinator in each of the states to handle each of these fake electors. Many of the emails went to Mr. Epshteyn, who was acting as a coordinator for people inside and outside the

Trump campaign and the White House. He also remains a close aid to Donald Trump, even now.

Epshteyn, the email show, was a regular point of contact for John Eastman, he's the rogue lawyer who's plan for derailing the certification of the electoral college results on January 6 was embraced by Trump. Epshteyn, not only fielded and passed along to Giuliani the detailed proposals for January 6th that was prepared by Eastman, he also handled questions about how to pay Eastman and made the arrangements for him to visit the White House on January 4, 2021, according to these emails.

So everyone was in on it. Everyone knew about it. Everybody knew it was fake. Nobody put the breaks on this illegal scheme to try and steal a presidential election. Nobody except, I guess, Mike Pence. Case closed Mr. Attorney General. January 4 the day that they worked to get Eastman to the White House, that was the day of the oval office meeting in which Trump and Eastman unsuccessfully pressured Pence to adopt this plan, an exchange that was witnessed by Pence's two top aids, both Mark Short, I believe his chief of staff, and Greg Jacob, his top attorney, both of whom we have now learned, have testified last week to a federal grand jury that is investigating all of this. Investigating the assault on the Capitol and what led to it. So yes, the Department of Justice is moving forward. They are, it seems, very high up in that they are now, the federal grand jury, is subpoenaing the Chief of Staff to the vice president and the top attorney for the Vice President.

The emails highlight how much of the legwork of finding ways to challenge Trump's losses in the battleground states was done by a guy named Mike Roman, who was the director of election day operations for the Trump campaign. Epshteyn and Roman, according to the emails, coordinated with others who played roles in advising Trump, among them GOP lawyers like Jenna Ellis, Bruce Marks, Gary Michael Brown and Christina Bob. Remember that name by any chance?

[00:57:56] **DESI DOYEN - PRODUCER, THE BRADCAST:** That sounds familiar.

[00:57:57] **BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** She worked, during the election and the post-election period, for the One America News Network, which is another fake right-wing news outlet. And she now works, of course, for Trump's PAC. Everyone was in on it. Well, everyone except the White House council's office, apparently. The emails were apparently not shared with the lawyers at the White House. They advised that the fake electors

plan was not legally sound. The House committee investigating the January 6th attack on the Capitol has produced evidence that Trump was aware of the elector's plan. Ronna McDaniel, that's Ronna Romney McDaniel, the chair of the RNC, said in a deposition to the January 6th panel that Trump had called her and put Eastman on the phone, "to talk about the importance of the RNC helping the campaign, gather these contingent electors." So they went from fake electors to alternative electors, to contingent electors. Well, that sounds much better. Just a contingency, just in case. We're not doing anything wrong here. Let's keep it totally secret until the very last minute just in case, but other than that, we're not doing anything wrong with our fake, I mean, alternative, I mean, contingent electors.

Wilenchik, the the Phoenix attorney, wrote in an email on December 8th to Epshteyn and half a dozen other people describing the idea being pushed by a guy named Ken Chesebro, an associate of Eastman's. He's the one apparently came up with this fake electors idea. "His idea is basically that all of us, Georgia, Wisconsin, Arizona, Pennsylvania, et cetera, have our electors send in their votes, even though the votes aren't legal under federal law, because they're not signed by the governor." he says that in the email. So that members of Congress can then fight about whether they should be counted on January 6th. Also that they could have something to give the appearance that there was some sort of doubt about the results of the election that they all knew were never in doubt in the least. It was all a show to help, somehow, some way, overthrow the American government to steal a presidential election. And they knew that it was unlawful.

"The votes," he writes in the email to all of these people, "aren't legal under federal law," but let's do it anyway so that Congress has something to fight about. To pretend that there is some controversy on January 6th. "The members of Congress," the email continued, "could potentially argue that they're not bound by federal law because they're Congress and they make the law," et cetera, kind of wild/creative. I'm happy to discuss," Wilenchik continued. I hope somebody today is writing a complaint to the Arizona Bar Association about this guy recommending this unlawful scheme.

[01:01:01] **DESI DOYEN - PRODUCER, THE BRADCAST:** Knowing he be disbarred.

[01:01:02] **BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** Yeah. Yeah. Add him to the list. He says for example, "we would just be sending in 'fake' electoral votes to Pence so that 'someone' in Congress can make an objection when they start counting votes and start arguing that the 'fake' votes should be

counted." That's in the email. That's what he wrote. That was the plan. As they organized the fake elector scheme, lawyers appointed a point person in seven states to help organize those electors who were willing to sign their names to false documents.

In Pennsylvania, I gave you a teaser about this earlier, in Pennsylvania. Any guess who that point person is?

[01:01:43] **DESI DOYEN - PRODUCER, THE BRADCAST:** No.

[01:01:44] **BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST:** Douglas V Mastriano. He was the point person. He's a proponent of Trump's lie that the election was stolen, and now the Republican nominee for governor in Pennsylvania. Doug Mastriano. He was in charge of the fake electors. He was not just part of this scheme, he did not just bring busloads of people to DC, he was actually organizing this fake electors plot that they knew was illegal in Pennsylvania, and now he's running for governor, and if he wins, Pennsylvania, the electors in Pennsylvania will have to have his signature to be sent to Washington, DC. He's already said he would not have certified the 2020 election had he been governor at the time. Yes, the 2022 election really matters. Hello, Pennsylvania.

## Summary 8-16-22

[01:02:38] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** We've just heard clips today, starting with David Pakman describing the precinct strategy. *The PBS NewsHour* also looked at the precinct strategy and highlighted that it may only take smoke and not fire to throw a state vote count into chaos. *Beyond Politics* described Schedule F, the plan to fire tens of thousands of federal workers to be replaced with loyalists. *Ring of Fire* highlighted the point that Schedule F is not restricted to a potential Trump administration. *The Bradcast* focused on the efforts to elect 2020 election deniers to positions of power, to influence future elections. *Ring a Fire* highlighted the dark money flowing to support these election deniers. *Democracy Now!* discussed a case headed to the Supreme court that could change the way state legislatures are allowed to draw congressional maps. And *All In with Chris Hayes* pointed out that it's not just partisan gerrymandering that's at risk, but also voter suppression laws that could be beyond review.

That's what everybody heard, but members also heard a bonus clip from *The Bradcast* which dove into the details of the fake elector scheme in 2020, meant to throw the electoral college count into chaos. To hear that and have all of our

bonus contents delivered seamlessly to the new members-only podcast feed that you'll receive, sign up to support the show at [bestoftheleft.com/support](https://bestoftheleft.com/support) or shoot me an email requesting a financial hardship membership, because we don't let a lack of funds stand in the way of hearing more information.

And now, we'll hear from you.

## Power is the ability to act - Pat from Chicago

[01:04:06] **VOICEMAILER: PAT FROM CHICAGO:** Hi Jay! and company, this is Pat from Chicago calling back to continue the conversation about power. The definition that I like of power was something that I, again, learned at the organizing training that I attended, and it is simply power is the ability to act. So it's a definition that is kind of opposed to some conventional understandings about power, for example, that knowledge is power, or power corrupts, or these different beliefs about power that actually serve to benefit the people who already have power and make the rest of us believe that we either don't, can't, or shouldn't have power ourselves.

But as you rightly point out, Jay, I think it is critical for us as progressives to think about this definition of power as the ability to act, and to recognize that if we don't have the ability to enact our policies and our ideas and our values in the world, then we each need to ask ourselves, what am I doing to get more powerful and to build power along with other people who share my values so that we can have a greater chance as we all want to bring our beliefs and values into practice in the real world.

So I encourage anybody to connect with a power building organization, do a training, a tenant event, become a member, and not just in a passive way, but in a way to actively build more power for yourself and your community and communities.

I actually hope that there are other people who respond, who are doing organizing so that my voice isn't repeated, but I'm also really happy to continue this conversation as a community. Thanks Jay!, for everything that you're doing and keep up the great work.

# Final comments on building movement power

[01:06:03] **JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Thanks to all of those who called into the voicemail line or wrote in their messages to be played as VoicedMails. If you'd like to leave a comment or question of your own to be played on the show, you can record a message at 202-999-3991. Or write me a message to [jay@bestoftheleft.com](mailto:jay@bestoftheleft.com).

Thanks again to Pat for calling in and talking to us about power. I feel a little silly now. I admit I sort of wussed out. Pat called in previously and asked my definition of power and the way he asked it, I knew he had an idea of his own. And I thought, Hmm, I don't know, like if I, if I give an answer and it's not as good as his, then what was the point? I think I would've come close, but it's too late. Can't take it back now. Should have said it. When I had the chance. Pat came in, he explained to us what power is. And I fully agree. I think I would've said something like, you know, the ability to get things done or, you know, to accomplish your goals or something like that. But I mean, honestly, the ability to act is, I mean, that really does summarize it right down to the core. And I like the comparison with the idea of power corrupting. That's the one that maybe resonates the most with me in terms of my argument as to why the Left sort of shys away from power a little bit, because there's the corruption of like, you know, having too much power makes a person selfish and they turn the power inward and, you know, use their power for selfish gains. Like, that's the kind of corruption we generally think of. But among the Left, when we fight about strategy and best way to move forward, I feel like corruption sort of gets mixed into that discussion as well. And in our case, the way it comes across is that compromise almost is corrosive. It corrupts. And once you start working with people you disagree with, or, you know, supporting things that you don't fully, actually support, you know, that it's not as good as you wish it was, but you go along with it, that, you know, it's a form of corruption. And so, you know, given the choice, I feel like many on the Left will gravitate toward remaining ideologically pure rather than pursuing, strategically and thoughtfully, power. And to be fair, I think that they usually convince themselves that staying pure is actually the path to power. So it doesn't feel like a choice that's being made or a contradiction. But I think that that's an issue of misunderstanding the levers of power. You might think of the Bernie Sanders campaign as evidence that remaining true to your values, energizes your supporters and gives you a real solid chance at winning, which is true because people crave authenticity for a variety of other reasons. And also if your positions are extremely progressive, then that actually means you're just gonna be sort of right in the mainstream of

American political thought on an issue-by-issue basis. People pretty much agree with the stuff Bernie Sanders is saying. So that's very helpful. So, people can, you know, respect authenticity even when they disagree with it, but in terms of people like Bernie Sanders and progressives, a whole lot of people agree with what we say. They just get turned off by, you know, like partisanship and like, Well, if the Left is the side that's saying it then I'm not in favor, or if Democrats are in favor of that, that I'm not in favor, but actually, you know, our ideas are very popular.

But Bernie - getting back to power dynamics - Bernie, who very much understands the levers of power in this country, knows that you can stay true to your values while working with people you disagree with, and even voting for legislation that doesn't fully meet your standards. If you start and end your ideology, your strategy, with 'stay true to your values', then you may not even know about the fact that compromise is integral to having power. In fact, in an ostensible democracy that is as structurally conservative, not necessarily actually politically conservative as ours, we might be better off using the term "influence" as opposed to "power". Power actually sounds more powerful or too powerful. Influence is actually what people have in our political system.

So, yes, remaining powerless allows one to remain pure, which is attractive to people. And if you can convince yourself that purity is actually the path to power, that means there's no trade off. It's a win-win. And then they get to just sit on the sidelines, powerless, indefinitely, as evidenced by, you know, the Green Party for the last three decades, and, you know, and then they can just criticize everyone else and, you know, feel very confident about their choices. But movements need wins to maintain themselves. Losing is not inspirational and misdirected effort stymies success - yes, obviously - and diminishes movement enthusiasm, which then becomes a negative feedback loop.

So like, for instance, recently, the climate and health bill - the Inflation Reduction Act - is a good example of something that really needs to be seen as a win. Partly because it's true, in spite of its downsides, as we heard on this show, but partly because just always focusing on the negative, the insufficient, is demoralizing. That's why strategy is so important, not just to have success, which is the obvious goal, but to build a successful movement that can last over time. Success can build upon itself as a movement becomes inspiring and more people join it, making it more likely to be successful in the future.

And then there's also organizational strategies that are important. Like, if you organize a rally, an event, a protest, and you are not collecting contact information to stay in touch with those who show up, you are committing

organizational malpractice. You know, in modern times you should also have a one-stop landing page to send people to relevant campaign websites, newsletter signups, social media pages, and have all of that accessible via, like, a QR code on a sign, so that people can access it easily.

But this is really a moment for the all-of-the-above strategy. Get people's contact information so that you can stay in touch with them. That is Organizing 101. And if you're attending an event, sign up for those notifications: give people your email, address, your phone number, whatever they're asking for, connect on social media, so that you can be in touch with your local groups. That's how you get alerted to next steps and future events and that's how power builds over time. Organizational power needs to be a long-term game and, ideally, should include both an inside and outside strategy. The politics inside the halls of power and the people power outside. And celebrations - as I said, every movement needs wins - celebrations to keep motivation high can simply be for successful protests. Wins can include symbolic and rhetorical victories - you know, maybe push a politician to publicly change their stance on something - but ultimately goals should generally be legislative. And so strategies need to include electoral politics. And that has been my report on what power means to me.

Thanks again to Pat. And, Pat, I know you'd love to have others chime in, but people are shy or they won't hear this conversation for weeks or months. So don't hesitate to keep the good ideas flowing. If you have more to share as always. Everyone can keep the comments coming in at 202-999-3991 or by emailing me to [jay@bestoftheleft.com](mailto:jay@bestoftheleft.com).

That is going to be it for today. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show and participation in our bonus episodes. Thanks to the Monosyllabic Transcriptionist Trio, Ben, Ken, and Brian, for their volunteer work helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets, activism segments, graphic, designing, web mastering, and bonus show co-hosting. And thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at [bestoftheleft.com/support](https://bestoftheleft.com/support), through our Patreon page or from right inside the Apple podcast app. Membership is how you get instant access to our incredibly good bonus episodes in addition to there being extra content and no ads in all of our regular episodes, all through your regular podcast player. And as always, if you wanna keep the conversation going, join us on our Best of the Left Discord community to discuss the show, the news, other podcasts, literally anything you want, and links to join are in the show notes. So coming to you from far outside the conventional wisdom of

Washington, DC, my name is Jay, and this has been the Best of the Left podcast coming to you twice weekly thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from [bestoftheleft.com](http://bestoftheleft.com).