

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Sam Cornale, Executive Director, Democratic National Committee

DATE: Thursday, November 3, 2022

RE: DNC's Commitment to Voter and Election Protection

President Biden and the Democratic National Committee have made the party's largest ever midterm investment in voter and election protection. Our program has one goal: ensuring that eligible voters are able to vote and, when they do, that their votes will be counted and given effect.

That *should* not be a controversial goal. But in 2022 and beyond, American democracy needs defending. **As Republican actors have repeatedly proclaimed their intent to make voting more difficult, the DNC has prepared and invested in a program to protect voters against these novel efforts. Known as the "I Will Vote" initiative, it totals \$25 million and involves voter protection, litigation, and anti-subversion efforts.** The name was chosen to send a simple message: no matter the increased Republican activity, we will take the steps necessary to ensure that voters have the opportunity to vote and have the information they need to do so.

In this memo, we explain how, working with our state parties and sister committees, we approached that effort, why we are prepared to protect voters and their ballots in the 2022 election, and what the public can expect to see on and after Election Day. Voting is underway in many states at this point and has proceeded mostly without major incident; in the rare cases where hostile actors have attempted to interfere with the process, the courts have been willing to intervene. Local election officials, as always, continue to work incredibly hard in difficult situations to ensure that the elections happen on schedule and that voters are able to cast their ballots efficiently. Our work supports these efforts and will continue to do so as we head into the final stretch before Election Day and beyond.

Historic Investments in Voter Protection

In 2020, the DNC had the largest voter protection program in American history. Though overshadowed by the post-election tumult caused by the former president, that program worked. Voter turnout was the largest ever in raw numbers, and the largest in many decades as a share of the voting-age population. Post-election efforts to interfere with the counting of ballots and certification of the election failed — in part, because the DNC and the Biden-Harris campaign had prepared extensively to counter those efforts in the six months that preceded the election.

As the calendar turned to 2021, the DNC recognized that circumstances required these efforts to be carried forward to the 2022 midterms at a larger scale than ever before for a midterm cycle. That's why Vice President Harris joined Chair Jaime Harrison in July 2021 to announce the historic "I Will Vote" initiative to address and overcome efforts across the country to make voting more difficult and burdensome.

Voter and election protection means making sure that qualified voters: (1) understand how they can participate in the election; (2) have the greatest possible opportunity to cast a ballot; and (3) have confidence that the ballot they cast will count. Early investment in the 2021-22 cycle ensured that the DNC, their sister committees, and the state parties were best able to be effective on each count. The investment means that we are prepared for not just the increased Republican efforts to make the *casting* of ballots more difficult, but also able to counter, successfully, anticipated Republican efforts to impede the *counting* of those ballots.

This investment in voter protection is historic in time, scope, and scale. **Working with our sister committees and state parties, Democrats have Voter Protection Directors in 25 states¹ and more than 100 total voter protection staff² on the ground.** This team is experienced. Indeed, several key states maintained continuous voter protection staffing through the 2020 and 2022 cycles. And the team builds upon work from prior cycles, using the full weight of the party's technology and data resources.

Investing early means that voter protection teams were in position to advocate for accessible early voting sites; to review and identify problematic ballot designs in time to advocate for better designs; and to develop working relationships with local election officials, whose work is essential to the sound administration of the election. As Election Day nears, voter protection teams in key states are able to use voter file information to identify and contact voters who have made a technical error on their mail ballot to ensure those voters take the steps needed to ensure their votes will count.

In addition, these teams have been able to address actions taken to interfere with the voting process, like the mass challenges filed in certain states that have been unsuccessful. And they have trained a network of volunteers to facilitate a real-time response to any effort to interfere with an early voting site or Election Day precinct.

A core element of our program is the provision of clear, easily accessible information for voters — about how to participate and about how to address any questions that may arise in the process. To that end, the DNC has created a comprehensive set of tools and services to assist voters directly and support state voter protection programs.

- **IWillVote.com** is a one-stop shop website for voting questions. Voters can check if they are registered to vote, learn how to register to vote, register online if their state allows it, find their polling location, check requirements such as voter ID, and learn how to cast a mail-in or early ballot. IWillVote is also available in Spanish at voyavotar.com
- **The National Voter Assistance Hotline** 1-833-DEM-VOTE (1-833-336-8683) is monitored by DNC employees and volunteers to field questions pertaining to voter purging, poll worker misconduct, voter machines, accessibility, felon disenfranchisement, and more. The hotline is open year round, takes calls in English and Spanish and offers French, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Tagalog leading up to Election Day. As of October 29, the national hotline has already handled more than 9,000 calls from voters, more calls than we handled in the entire 2018 cycle.
- **The National Voter Assistance Accessibility Textline** (Text “ACCESS” to 43367) allows voters with disabilities that preclude them from calling to text into our hotline to get answers on questions about voting.
- **The Voter Assistance Textline Pilot Program** (Text “QUESTION” to 43367”) was launched in Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Ohio, and South Dakota to provide these states’ voters with the option to text into our hotline to get answers to questions about voting.

¹ Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

² Funding sources include but are not limited to the DNC, the DSCC, the DCCC, and state parties/coordinated campaigns.

Litigating to Protect Voters and the Election System

Over the midterm election cycle, the DNC, working as appropriate with state parties, has successfully defended state election laws providing for early and mail voting against Republican challenge, including in Arizona and Pennsylvania. Millions of voters will cast ballots through voting methods defended by Democrats this cycle.

We also have brought and joined litigation, in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, to ensure that voters casting mail ballots have the opportunity to correct errors in returning those ballots and to ensure that minor errors are not a basis to throw out the ballots of eligible voters.

In the lead up to Election Day and thereafter, the DNC is ready to bring litigation, as necessary, to ensure unimpeded and unintimidated voter access; and to ensure that any efforts to interfere with the post-election counting of votes fail.

Countering Efforts to Undermine Election Administration and Vote Counting

Coordinated efforts to interfere with and call democratic elections into doubt unfortunately have become a calling card of Republicans. These efforts have included [harassing election officials](#), [refusing to certify election results](#), and supporting a [collection of election denier candidates](#) running for office. Before 2020, this conduct was nothing but noise on the far right fringe; now, these are tactics at the heart of the Republican operation. The DNC's response was preparation and investment to meet the conduct where it occurs: at the local level. At the state and national levels, we are prepared to seek judicial intervention as and when necessary.

Pre-Election Preparation

To best prepare for disruptive conduct, the DNC began hiring expert election counsel in spring 2022 in key states to “red team” state election law, by evaluating how bad-faith actors might seek to manipulate existing law to disruptive ends. We have used these evaluations to inform our strategy.

The DNC and state parties worked with every voter protection staff member on the ground on what to expect from Republican subversion tactics and how to work to counteract them. And we work with outside partners in sharing information about the tactics that may be in play.

Monitoring

The DNC has become a hub for information gathering regarding GOP subversion efforts. With hundreds of election deniers running on the Republican ticket, anti-democracy groups proliferating, and new subversion policies cropping up regularly, information has become difficult to track. The DNC dedicated hundreds of staff hours to tracking pro-subversion candidates³, organizations, and legislation; and cataloging these efforts. The DNC also spent time in late summer and early fall conducting briefings to share what we learned about the threats to democracy.

The DNC also created a subversion tip line at (202) 951-7533 that is currently open 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. ET daily (or 6 a.m. – 11 p.m. to Election Day) so voters around the country can report subversive activity

³ The DNC's operating definition of a subversive candidate is an individual who has either purported the Big Lie or vowed not to uphold, certify, or otherwise say that the 2022 and 2024 elections were fair and legitimate if they or their GOP allies lose.

they may see in their local communities. Voters can also text TIP to 43367 with information regarding potential subversive activity.

We are also using the traditional tools we've honed through years of election monitoring to observe during the post-election period. Democrats will have observers at ballot processing, counting sites, canvass boards, and all other post-election processes in priority counties. We will be there to ensure these processes are done by the book and that GOP observers cannot disrupt or interfere in the process. State party poll observers are trained to be the first line of defense and to peacefully work to resolve problems as they arise.

Because setting up and coordinating these efforts can be a full time job, the DNC stepped in with resources. The party financed **Special Deputy Voter Protection Directors for Democracy Defense (SDVDP)** in key states and worked with state parties that had preexisting positions to grant full access to state resources. These SDVDPs are focused on spearheading anti-subversion efforts in their states as well as preparing for ballot cure, count, canvass, and recount efforts.

Election Night and Post Election Reporting

As was the case in 2020, we anticipate that the processing of large numbers of absentee and early votes in many states will result in the delayed reporting of election results. This is to be expected and not indicative of anything other than the sheer number of votes and those votes being counted according to the timelines set out in state law. In Michigan and Pennsylvania, for example, mail ballots cannot be processed until Election Day or shortly before, and this processing takes time. In Arizona, where ballots can be processed well before Election Day, but where an overwhelming majority of Arizonans are expected to vote early, counting typically continues through election week.

The timeline set out in state law is also important to consider when evaluating results that are reported on election night. Again using Michigan and Pennsylvania as examples, in contrast to mail ballots, in-person ballots are counted as they are cast, and will therefore predominate in early returns. As these ballots now tend to favor Republican candidates, while mail ballots tend to favor the Democrats, there is a good chance that even if a Democratic candidate in these states appears to be at a considerable deficit on election night, they may ultimately prevail in the election by a large margin. This anticipated "shift" in the results is the simple result of the timing permitted for the counting of ballots voted in different ways in accordance with state law.

The processing and counting of all ballots in a prescribed, methodical way is a symptom of a functioning democracy. It is incumbent upon all of us to educate ourselves and others about the expectations for election night so as not to even unintentionally fuel misinformation that tends to reach a fever pitch when faced with uncertainty, however anticipated it may be.