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Description:

Other recounts in works after Ariz.

Dems accuse GOP of just perpetuating Trump's false claims

By Marc Levy
Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — The most closely watched attempt by Republicans to examine the 2020 presidential election in a battleground state lost by former President Donald Trump came to an end Friday in Arizona, but their efforts are cranking up elsewhere. The most recent is in Republican-controlled Texas, where the secretary of state's office has announced it would conduct a "full and comprehensive forensic audit" of the 2020 election in four heavily populated counties.

These reviews go by various names: "audits" or "investigations," sometimes with the word "forensic" attached. But their scope is not always well-defined or understood, and critics say they really have one goal: to validate Trump's baseless claims that widespread fraud cost him the election, regardless of what the reviews might find.

None of the reviews can change the fact that Joe Biden won the presidency. His victory was certified by officials in each of the swing states he won and by Congress on Jan. 6 — after Trump's supporters, fueled by the same false charges that generated the audits, stormed the Capitol to try to prevent the electoral certification.

Nevertheless, Republicans have sought the reviews in Arizona, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — all battlegrounds lost by Trump. The latest is Texas, where Trump had a 5.5 percentage point margin of victory.

Auditing efforts have occasionally played out on a smaller scale, such as in Fulton County, Georgia, which includes Atlanta, individual counties in Pennsylvania and Michigan, and in a state legislative race in New Hampshire.

In practically every case,



Contractors working for Cyber Ninjas examine and recount 2020 Maricopa County ballots May 6 in Phoenix. The review ended Friday without producing proof to support former President Donald Trump's false claims of a stolen election. **MATT YORK/AP**

the reviews were launched under pressure from Trump and his allies to carry out an Arizona-style investigation into ballots, voting machines and voter rolls for evidence of fraud to legitimize claims that have universally been debunked.

In Wisconsin, one review is being conducted by the highly respected, nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau. The other, ordered by Republican Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, is being led by a retired Wisconsin Supreme Court justice, a conservative who told Trump supporters in November the election had been stolen.

In Pennsylvania, Republicans are retrenching after counties in July rebuffed a sweeping demand for voting

machines, ballots, computer logs and more.

The quests to unearth election fraud have not resembled the kind of audits that are widely recognized as legitimate by the professional auditing community.

In Arizona, election experts cited numerous flaws with the review, from biased and inexperienced contractors to conspiracy-chasing funders and bizarre, unreliable methods.

Democrats say Republicans are simply perpetuating Trump's "big lie" of baseless claims about election fraud. They say those claims have eroded confidence in elections and that Republicans are on a mission to seize power by taking away voting rights and undermining both democracy

and elections.

Audits also must be viewed as independent. But in these cases, they are being pushed by one political party and, in Arizona, the effort was funded almost entirely by donations from Trump supporters who have promoted conspiracy theories surrounding the election.

There also are security concerns about granting access to election equipment.

Voting systems that pass anti-tampering tests are certified by states, which have chain-of-custody laws that dictate voting machine security and access. The U.S. Election Assistance Commission accredits labs to test voting machines and provides guidance to states on how to maintain a chain of custody over

voting systems.

The audit in Arizona's Maricopa County, pushed by Republicans in the state Senate, ended Friday with a whimper. The six-month process concluded with a report that presented no evidence to support Trump's claim of a stolen election and ended up validating Biden's win in the state's most populous county.

The review had been widely criticized — even by some Republicans — as being riddled with bias and incompetence.

In New Hampshire, where auditors investigated discrepancies in a state legislative race at the behest of lawmakers from both parties, the audit found no evidence of fraud or bias. It concluded

that miscounts in a legislative race were primarily caused by the way absentee ballots were folded.

Nevertheless, it drew the attention of Trump and his allies who were grasping for ways to support their false claims about the 2020 election. In Michigan, GOP legislative leaders resisted calls for an Arizona-style "audit." They instead empaneled a GOP-led Senate committee that held hearings on allegations, reviewed thousands of pages of subpoenaed documents and produced a report that found no evidence of widespread or systematic fraud. It didn't mollify Trump. The former president continues to pressure lawmakers for another review.



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ORANGE COUNTY NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Orange County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) will conduct a public hearing on **Tuesday, October 12, 2021 at 2:00 P.M.**, or as soon thereafter as possible, in the County Commission Chambers, First Floor, County Administration Center, 201 South Rosalind Avenue, Orlando, Florida, regarding the following proposed matter:

Consideration: First Amendment to Joint Planning Area Interlocal Agreement between Orange County and the City of Mount Dora.

You may examine the notice and the proposed plan at the office of the Comptroller Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, 201 South Rosalind Avenue, Fourth Floor, Orlando, Florida, between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS NOTICE, PLEASE CONTACT THE ORANGE COUNTY PLANNING DIVISION, 407-836-5600, Email: planning@ocfl.net

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If you wish to appeal any decision made by the Board of County Commissioners at this meeting you will need a record of the proceedings. You should ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

If you require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, please call 407-836-5631 no later than two business days prior to the hearing for assistance. Si usted requiere ayuda especial bajo la ley de Americanos con Incapacidades de 1990, por favor llame al 407-836-3111.

Phil Diamond, County Comptroller
As Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners
Orange County, Florida

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