

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

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Opening Statement Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney Committee on Oversight and Reform Hearing Hearing on “Assessing the Election ‘Audit’ in Arizona and Threats to American Democracy” October 7, 2021

On November 3, 2020, Joe Biden beat Donald Trump clearly and decisively in the presidential election. President Biden won 306 electoral votes to Trump’s 232, and he beat Trump in the popular vote by more than 7 million votes.

But rather than accept his loss, Donald Trump tried everything he could to overturn the will of American voters. He and his allies filed more than 60 lawsuits with false claims of election fraud – and lost. He waged a pressure campaign at every level of government, from county election officials, to secretaries of states, to the Department of Justice, to his own Vice President, to try to prevent the certification of the election results.

At each stage, Donald Trump and his allies were asked to bring forward evidence that the election was tainted by widespread voter fraud. But whether in Michigan, or Pennsylvania, or—as we will hear today—Arizona, the purveyors of the Big Lie repeatedly failed to produce one scintilla of credible evidence of widespread fraud.

Yet today, more than eleven months after the election, the attacks on our election system have only intensified. And the latest weapon of choice is the partisan audit.

Let’s be clear: The hyper-partisan audits pushed by Trump and his allies are not about fairness, election security, or the truth. They are instead designed to promote conspiracy theories and raise doubts about our elections.

And the ultimate aim of these audits is even worse: to lay the groundwork for new laws that make it harder for Americans to cast their ballots, but easier for dishonest officials to overturn the results of elections they don’t like.

Today’s hearing will focus on the five-month long, hyper-partisan audit in Maricopa County, Arizona. It was clear from the beginning that this so-called audit, led by the Republican State Senate, was really a fishing expedition in search of evidence of election fraud, no matter how flimsy.

The State Senate rejected a bid from a qualified and certified auditor, choosing instead to hire Cyber Ninjas—an unaccredited firm with no experience auditing elections. What the company did have was a CEO who had publicly supported Trump—and promoted the Big Lie.

During the audit, Cyber Ninjas’ sloppy, insecure practices jeopardized the integrity of ballots and voting machines, forcing Arizona taxpayers to spend millions to replace the compromised machines.

The audit itself was funded with at least 6.7 million dollars from rightwing dark money groups headed by Trump allies and supporters of the Stop-the-Steal movement. Documents show that Trump himself may

have funneled funds to the audit effort in Arizona. Yet all that partisan dark money failed to overcome the truth.

Last month, Cyber Ninjas finally was forced to admit that it had found no evidence of widespread fraud in the Maricopa County election results. In its final report, Cyber Ninjas wrote that there were, quote, “no substantial differences” between the official election count and the audit results and that there is, quote, “no reliable evidence that the paper ballots were altered to any material degree.”

This should have been the end of the story. But rather than admit that they were wrong about voter fraud, Cyber Ninjas and Republicans leaders in Arizona are now pushing a host of unnecessary legislative changes to make it harder to vote and easier to overturn the next election. And hyper-partisan audits are now spreading to more states.

We are holding today’s hearing so we can hear the facts about the Cyber Ninjas audit in Arizona.

We invited the company’s CEO, Doug Logan, to testify today so we could hear firsthand about the audit’s findings. Unfortunately, Mr. Logan refused our invitation, and he also refused to produce documents that the Committee requested back in July. Mr. Logan’s refusal to answer questions under oath is just one more sign that the dark-money-fueled audit he led never should have happened in the first place.

Today we will hear from the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors—both Republicans—who unlike Mr. Logan were not afraid to tell the Committee the truth about this audit. I am honored that they both agreed to put country over party by testifying today—despite threats to their personal safety.

We will also hear from election and democracy experts, who will tell us how partisan audits are spreading to other states including Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Texas, and the threat this poses to our democracy.

The attempts by former President Trump and his allies to undermine America’s elections—after failing to win the last one fair and square—represents the biggest threat to our constitutional republic since the Civil War.

This Committee will not be silent in the face of this threat. We will continue to conduct oversight to ensure that the American people know the truth about these sham audits, and to protect our elections from further interference.

But it should not just be Democrats who stick up for America’s elections. I urge my Republican colleagues to follow the lead of our brave witnesses from Maricopa County by putting country over party and finally renouncing Trump’s Big Lie.

I thank our panelists for being here today, and I now recognize my friend, and our esteemed Ranking Member, Mr. Comer, for his opening statement.

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