



DAILY CLIPS  
**CONGRESSMAN JOHN SARBANES**  
MARYLAND'S THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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**NATIONAL NEWS**

[HOUSE DEMOCRATS ARE KEEPING THE PRESSURE ON MITCH MCCONNELL OVER ELECTION SECURITY](#)

**VOX**

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell might be as determined as ever to stymie election security legislation, but House Democrats remain undeterred in their push to advance it. In fact, one of the House Democrats' top priorities after the upcoming August recess will be introducing — and likely passing — another election security bill intended to put pressure on McConnell and Senate Republicans.... House Democrats' latest election security bill will include restrictions on foreign interference that overlap heavily with some of the measures addressed by their sweeping anti-corruption legislation, H.R. 1.... Later in the year, Democrats sought to reiterate their case for election security by breaking out part of H.R. 1 that required the use of back-up paper ballots, passing it independently as the SAFE Act. That bill is also among a growing pile-up that's seen no action in the Senate. House Democrats' efforts to advance another bill to address foreign interference in American elections is the latest sign of how committed they are to pushing this issue in the face of staunch opposition.... According to Sarbanes, the bill, which the House will consider in September, will address three key issues: 1) It aims to pinpoint and limit illicit foreign money that's poured into U.S elections. 2) It requires campaigns to report offers of opposition research from foreign governments to the FBI. 3) It strengthens reporting obligations for digital platforms that identify foreign actors attempting to sow

disinformation. McConnell has said he plans to continue blocking election security bills in spite of repeated warnings from officials like Robert Mueller and FBI Director Christopher Wray, partly because he's concerned about the federal government having too much power over state elections.

## [‘MOSCOW MITCH’ TAG ENRAGES MCCONNELL AND SQUEEZES G.O.P. ON ELECTION SECURITY](#)

### **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

Senator Mitch McConnell is usually impervious to criticism, even celebrating the nasty nicknames critics bestow on him. But Mr. McConnell, the Senate majority leader, is incensed by the name “Moscow Mitch,” and even more miffed that he has been called a “Russian asset” by critics who accuse him of single-handedly blocking stronger election security measures after Russia’s interference in 2016. Democrats had been making the case for months, but it was supercharged last week by the testimony of Robert S. Mueller III, the former special counsel, who told the House Intelligence Committee that the Russians were back at it “as we sit here.” Mr. McConnell cites several reasons for his opposition — a longstanding resistance to federal control over state elections, newly enacted security improvements that were shown to have worked in the 2018 voting and his suspicion that Democrats are trying to gain partisan advantage with a host of proposals.... But whatever Mr. McConnell’s reasoning, the criticism has taken hold — even back home in Kentucky, where the majority leader faces re-election next year.... With the focus on the issue intensifying, Mr. McConnell and Senate Republicans will face more pressure to act. If they do, the most likely result would not be advancing stand-alone bills but instead using the annual spending bills that must pass this fall to funnel more money to states to secure their elections and to make certain they have a paper-ballot trail that can be audited if questions arise about the legitimacy of an outcome.

*\*Related Story: [McConnell Bristles at Those Criticizing His Blocking of Election Security](#).*

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## [SEVEN 2020 DEMOCRATS PLEDGE TO FOCUS FIRST BILL ON FIGHTING CORRUPTION](#)

### **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

Seven Democratic presidential candidates, including Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Ind., have promised that their first legislation as president would be an ambitious clean-government bill, earning their campaigns an influential reform group's stamp of approval. End Citizens United, a grass-roots advocacy group that played a key role in the 2018 midterm elections, said the seven candidates had vowed to prioritize ethics and campaign finance reform in a commitment the group is calling the "Reform First" pledge. The group said it would begin raising money for all seven candidates online and highlight their campaign activities on social media. In addition to Ms. Warren and Mr. Buttigieg, the list of supportive Democrats includes three senators — Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, Kirsten Gillibrand of New York and Michael Bennet of Colorado — as well as former Representative Beto O'Rourke of Texas and Gov. Steve Bullock of Montana. The breadth of support in the Democratic presidential field for the pledge, unveiled on the eve of the second primary debate, shows how significant themes of government integrity and fighting corruption have become in the 2020 race.

## [HAS CONGRESS ALREADY MISSED ITS CHANCE TO STRENGTHEN ELECTION SECURITY AHEAD OF 2020?](#)

### **THE KANSAS CITY STAR**

Congress may have already missed its window to shore up state election systems against foreign cyber-attacks ahead of the 2020 election. Former Special Counsel Robert Mueller's testimony this week on his investigation into Russia's role in the 2016 election has reignited calls for the passage of a bipartisan election security bill. But Republican Senate leaders have balked at approving any such measure prior to 2020. GOP leadership said Mueller's testimony did little to persuade them of the need for legislation. Moreover, one of the only GOP lawmakers pushing election security reforms on Capitol Hill said states have effectively run out of time to implement changes ahead of the next presidential election. Sen. James Lankford, R-Oklahoma, told reporters Thursday that Congress should shift its focus to the 2022 mid-term election.... The country's

national security apparatus stepped up its monitoring of elections and communication with states after 2016, Blunt said. He added that many states have yet to spend federal dollars appropriated last year to upgrade and protect against cyber-attacks.... House Democrats last month passed legislation that would require paper ballots and authorize federal grants for replacement of existing voting systems, a move meant to mitigate the threat from hacking. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-New York, attempted to pull this legislation out of the Senate Rules Committee and pass it by unanimous consent Thursday. He offered a letter from 22 Democratic state attorneys general asking for more help on election security as evidence that states want more federal support. But the attempt to pass the bill was largely symbolic and quickly blocked by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Kentucky.

## [DOJ INVESTIGATING ZINKE'S USE OF PERSONAL EMAIL, INSPECTOR TELLS LAWMAKERS](#)

### **POLITICO**

The Justice Department is investigating whether former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke used personal email accounts for official business, a matter that has become part of a larger criminal probe into the departed official, according to a letter released by House Democrats on Tuesday. The letter is the first public confirmation of a criminal investigation into Zinke, a former Republican congressman from Montana who faced scrutiny about his mixing of official, personal and political business while in President Donald Trump's Cabinet. The Interior Department's acting inspector general, Gail Ennis, told the lawmakers that the email investigation has been combined with an ongoing probe the IG is conducting with DOJ. That larger probe includes Zinke's participation in a land deal with the chairman of Halliburton, as well as Interior's obstruction of a tribal casino project in Connecticut following extensive lobbying by a rival casino company.

## [TRUMP FRIEND'S TIES TO MIDEAST AT HEART OF LOBBYING INQUIRY](#)

### **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

As Donald J. Trump was preparing to deliver an address on energy policy in May 2016, Paul Manafort, his campaign chairman, had a question about the speech's

contents for Thomas J. Barrack Jr., a top campaign fund-raiser and close friend of Mr. Trump.... Mr. Barrack was, in fact, coordinating the language in a draft of the speech with Persian Gulf contacts including Rashid al-Malik, an Emirati businessman who is close to the rulers of the United Arab Emirates. The exchanges about Mr. Trump's energy speech are among a series of interactions that have come under scrutiny by federal prosecutors looking at foreign influence over his campaign, his transition and the early stages of his administration, according to documents and interviews with people familiar with the case. Investigators have looked in particular at whether Mr. Barrack or others violated the law requiring people who try to influence American policy or opinion at the direction of foreign governments or entities to disclose their activities to the Justice Department, people familiar with the case said. The inquiry had proceeded far enough last month that Mr. Barrack, who played an influential role in the campaign and acts as an outside adviser to the White House, was interviewed, at his request, by prosecutors in the public integrity unit of the United States attorney's office in Brooklyn. Mr. Barrack has not been accused of wrongdoing, and his aides said he never worked on behalf of foreign states or entities. Asked about the status of the inquiry, a representative for the United States attorney's office in Brooklyn declined to comment. The relationship between Mr. Barrack, Mr. Manafort and representatives of the U.A.E. and Saudi Arabia, including Mr. al-Malik, has been of interest to federal authorities for at least nine months. The effort to influence Trump's energy speech in 2016 was largely unsuccessful.

## [ONE OF TRUMP'S 'AMERICA FIRST' SPEECHES WAS EDITED BY A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT](#)

### **ROLLING STONE**

In calling for an investigation into Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.) on Tuesday, President Trump made it four straight days of bashing the House Oversight Committee chairman. Driving the president's vitriol is, among other things, the fact that Cummings' committee is investigating potential misconduct by Trump and his administration. It's understandable that the president is worried. Emails and texts uncovered by the committee revealed that Trump's campaign let United Arab Emirates officials edit an "America First" energy speech Trump delivered as a candidate in the 2016 election.... The Oversight Committee's report, which was released publicly on Monday, goes on to provide a trove of additional details as to

how Trump associates, most notably longtime confidant and adviser Thomas Barrack, mixed personal and government business in their dealings with Saudi Arabia, and how the Trump administration continues to pursue deals to transfer nuclear technology to the Middle Eastern nation.... The revelation about the UAE edits to Trump's speech comes amid a series of investigations regarding foreign influence over Trump's campaign, transition, inauguration, and presidential administration.... Barrack's role was more pronounced, to the point that, as the report details, he sought an administration post, either as ambassador to the UAE or special envoy to the Middle East. He continued to push his connections to the Middle East as the head of the inaugural committee, giving the same UAE connection he solicited for edits to Trump's "America First" speech an invitation to the exclusive inaugural dinner.... Shortly after Trump was sworn in, Barrack proposed an idea for American companies — including his own private equity firm, naturally — to help Saudi Arabia build nuclear power plants; or, in essence, to transfer nuclear technology to the Saudis.

## [TRUMP'S PICK FOR MANAGING FEDERAL LANDS DOESN'T BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE ANY](#)

### **THE WASHINGTON POST**

President Trump's pick for managing federal lands doesn't think the federal government should have any. This week, Trump's Interior Secretary David Bernhardt signed an order making the Wyoming native William Perry Pendley the acting director of the Bureau of Land Management. Pendley, former president of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, was a senior official in Ronald Reagan's administration. The appointment comes as a critical time for the BLM, which manages more than a tenth of the nation's land and oversees the federal government's oil, gas and coal leasing program. Two weeks ago, Interior officials announced the department would reassign 84 percent of the bureau's D.C. staff out West by the end of next year. Only a few dozen employees, including Pendley, would remain in Washington.... In the three decades since serving under Reagan, Pendley has sued the Interior Department on behalf of an oil and gas prospector, sought to undermine protections of endangered species such as the grizzly bear, and pressed to radically reduce the size of federal lands to make way for development. "The Founding Fathers intended all lands owned by the federal government to be sold," he wrote approvingly in a National Review magazine article in 2016.

## [A PLAN TO END PARTISAN GERRYMANDERING](#)

### **THE NEW YORK TIMES ('THE DAILY' PODCAST)**

The Supreme Court ruled last month that federal courts cannot rule on cases of partisan gerrymandering, saying that judges are not entitled to second-guess the decisions made by state legislators who draw voting maps. We spoke to one man who has long believed there's a way to address the issue without the courts.

## [FINLAND IS WINNING THE WAR ON FAKE NEWS. WHAT IT'S LEARNED MAY BE CRUCIAL TO WESTERN DEMOCRACY](#)

### **CNN**

The course is part of an anti-fake news initiative launched by Finland's government in 2014 – two years before Russia meddled in the US elections – aimed at teaching residents, students, journalists and politicians how to counter false information designed to sow division. The initiative is just one layer of a multi-pronged, cross-sector approach the country is taking to prepare citizens of all ages for the complex digital landscape of today – and tomorrow. The Nordic country, which shares an 832-mile border with Russia, is acutely aware of what's at stake if it doesn't. Finland has faced down Kremlin-backed propaganda campaigns ever since it declared independence from Russia 101 years ago. But in 2014, after Moscow annexed Crimea and backed rebels in eastern Ukraine, it became obvious that the battlefield had shifted: information warfare was moving online.... As the trolling ramped up in 2015, President Sauli Niinisto called on every Finn to take responsibility for the fight against false information. A year later, Finland brought in American experts to advise officials on how to recognize fake news, understand why it goes viral and develop strategies to fight it. The education system was also reformed to emphasize critical thinking. Although it's difficult to measure the results in real-time, the approach appears to be working, and now other countries are looking to Finland as an example of how to win the war on misinformation.

### [STATES RUSH TO MAKE VOTING SYSTEMS MORE SECURE AS NEW THREATS EMERGE](#)

#### **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

Amid growing warnings about the security of American voting systems, many states are rushing to address vulnerabilities exposed by the 2016 election, even as intelligence officials worry they are fighting the last battle and are not sufficiently focused on a new generation of threats headed into 2020.... And the fear among American intelligence officials is that the federal government and the 50 states may be making the classic mistake of believing their adversaries will use the same techniques again.... Other officials point to evidence that Iran, having seen how cheap and easy it is to create election-year chaos in a Western democracy, is already experimenting with the possibilities. So while the states are thinking about how to ensure every voter can confirm their selections on paper, and in the best case track an encrypted ballot to make sure it is counted, federal officials are war-gaming emerging risks.... Most echo the same advice: Make sure systems have “tamper alarms” that alert officials to intrusions, employ the same kind of two-factor authentication methods for passwords that millions of Americans use for their bank accounts, and conduct regular audits to look for irregularities.... But money is scarce. Much of the \$380 million that Congress allocated two years ago has been spent and Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky, blocked a Democratic effort on Thursday to provide more money to the states for election security.

### [SENATE INTELLIGENCE REPORT ADDS TO CONFUSION OVER RUSSIAN ELECTIONS HACKING IN FLORIDA](#)

#### **THE MIAMI HERALD**

Three months after Florida’s state government was blindsided by the release of previously classified information that two local elections offices were hacked ahead of the 2016 presidential elections, Gov. Ron DeSantis and members of Congress have been caught off-guard once again by a newly released intelligence report on Russian elections interference. On Thursday, the U.S. Senate Select

Committee on Intelligence released a heavily redacted 67-page report that appears to include new information about efforts by Russian hackers to probe and target elections networks in Florida — including the FBI’s suspicions in 2018 that, in fact, four county elections systems had been hacked rather than two. The report, which mentions that hackers may have carried out cyber reconnaissance missions across all 50 states, details attempts by the Russian intelligence GRU syndicate to probe elections systems in Illinois and 20 other unnamed states. It specifically discusses those efforts in Illinois and an unnamed “State 2,” where details about meetings and cybersecurity efforts appear to mostly jibe with what’s previously been disclosed about the election system hacking attempts in Florida.

## [CAN A CALIFORNIA LAW REQUIRING TRUMP TO DISCLOSE HIS TAX RETURNS SURVIVE LEGAL CHALLENGES?](#)

### **LOS ANGELES TIMES**

Nearly 30 years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court decided 5 to 4 that states could not impose qualifications on candidates for Congress that were stricter than those specified in the Constitution, a ruling that could apply to presidential candidates. The Constitution says that to be president, a person must be a natural-born citizen, a resident for 14 years and at least 35 years old. A measure signed into law by California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Tuesday adds another requirement for presidential candidates who want to appear on the state’s presidential primary ballot: They must disclose their income tax returns. Passed on a party-line vote, the law was clearly aimed at President Trump, who has refused to release his returns. Legal scholars said Wednesday that the 1995 ruling that barred states from imposing certain requirements for ballot access is likely to be at issue in litigation over the constitutionality of California’s new law. They disagreed, however, about whether the law would be upheld. “This new law raises some very interesting and novel constitutional issues,” said UCLA constitutional law professor Adam Winkler. “Because it is novel, it is hard to know how the courts would go, but there is plenty of reason to think courts will be hostile to California’s requirements.”

## [VOTER PURGE RATES REMAIN HIGH](#)

### **THE BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE**

Using data released by the federal Election Assistance Commission (EAC) in June, a new Brennan Center analysis has found that between 2016 and 2018,

counties with a history of voter discrimination have continued purging people from the rolls at much higher rates than other counties. This phenomenon began after the Supreme Court’s 2013 ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder*, a decision that severely weakened the protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.... Before the *Shelby County* decision, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act required jurisdictions with a history of discrimination to submit proposed changes in voting procedures to the Department of Justice or a federal court for approval, a process known as “preclearance.” After analyzing the 2019 EAC data, we found: At least 17 million voters were purged nationwide between 2016 and 2018, similar to the number we saw between 2014 and 2016, but considerably higher than we saw between 2006 and 2008; The median purge rate over the 2016–2018 period in jurisdictions previously subject to preclearance was 40 percent higher than the purge rate in jurisdictions that were not covered by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act; [and] If purge rates in the counties that were covered by Section 5 were the same as the rates in non-Section 5 counties, as many as 1.1 million fewer individuals would have been removed from voter rolls between 2016 and 2018.... Problems arise when states remove voters who are still eligible to vote. States rely on faulty data that purport to show that a voter has moved to another state.... As the country prepares for the 2020 election, election administrators should take steps to ensure that every eligible American can cast a ballot next November. Election administrators must be transparent about how they are deciding what names to remove from the rolls.

[EDWARDS: PROP FOUR CAN REDUCE GERRYMANDERING PROBLEMS. UTAH LEGISLATORS SHOULD KEEP IT AS IS.](#)

**THE DAILY UTAH CHRONICLE**

Last November, Utah voters passed three ballot initiatives, one of which was Proposition Four — an anti-gerrymandering initiative that establishes an independent redistricting commission to propose district boundaries for the 2021 redistricting cycle. Gerrymandering is the manipulation of an electoral district — and therefore the electoral constituency — in order to favor one demographic group over another. There are multiple viable options to choose from going forward, all of which have limitations. But building on continued public support for fair redistricting despite imperfections is better than wallowing in self-pity and lamenting the destruction of democratic principles. Relief from partisan

gerrymandering can still be sought through the court system, but because of the *Rucho v. Common Cause* decision, voting rights advocates will have to turn to state courts. State courts can overturn existing boundaries and order redrawn maps, which has already happened in Pennsylvania and Florida, but of course some courts will refuse to do so.... And while some people may support anti-gerrymandering legislation because it's in their own self-interest, many people do not. In fact, some of the most visible leaders in the fight against gerrymandering are people who benefit from the status quo. Congressman John Sarbanes represents Maryland's 3rd Congressional District, one of the most gerrymandered districts in the country, and he is the primary sponsor of H.R. 1. The Better Boundaries campaign for Proposition Four was lead by two Republicans and two Democrats. There are certainly provisions of Proposition Four that could possibly use improving — conservative Utah Legislators will be the first to remind constituents that legislating via ballot initiative is not a perfect process. But the Utah Legislature has a responsibility to do their part in reducing the corrosive practice of partisan gerrymandering and the best way to do this is by maintaining the integrity of Proposition Four prior to redistricting in 2021.

## REPUBLICANS SUE TO BLOCK MICHIGAN REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

### **THE DETROIT NEWS**

Republicans are suing to stop Michigan's new citizen redistricting commission before it begins, alleging the voter-approved amendment is "blatantly unconstitutional" and discriminates against participants based on political service or family ties. A high-stakes federal lawsuit filed Tuesday morning with the U.S. District Court in Grand Rapids seeks to invalidate Proposal 2, block implementation and prevent the independent commission from drawing new legislative and congressional district maps for the 2022 election cycle. Instead, whichever political party wins control of the state Legislature next year would lead that process in 2021 but need approval from Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. Republicans drew existing lines in 2011 and currently hold majorities in the Michigan House and Senate.... The amendment to the Michigan Constitution prohibits service on the commission by anyone who in the last six years was a partisan candidate, elected official, political appointee, lobbyist, campaign consultant and officer or member of the governing body of a political party....

Jamie Lyons-Eddy, director of campaigns and programs for Voters Not Politicians, said she is confident the proposal will survive "any and all legal challenges," noting opponents failed in an attempt to keep the measure off the ballot.

## KEY OPINION

### [DON'T GIVE UP ON H.R. 1. THE BATTLE LIES AHEAD.](#)

#### **THE FULCRUM (OP-ED BY FRED WERTHEIMER)**

The House passed historic reform legislation to repair and strengthen the rules of our democracy on March 8. H.R. 1 is unprecedented, holistic reform legislation to fix our broken political system. It passed on a 234-193 party line vote, led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Rep. John Sarbanes. A companion bill was introduced in the Senate by Tom Udall with all 46 of his Democratic and independent colleagues as sponsors. H.R. 1 provides essential reforms to address what's broken in our political system — money corruption, voter suppression and discrimination, extreme partisan gerrymandering, and government ethics abuses.... It was no surprise to reform advocates when Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said he would not schedule a Senate vote in this Congress on H.R. 1.... He has been obstructing anti-corruption bills for more than three decades, as well as blocking action on countless other bills.... Today's partisan polarization in Congress has created special challenges for enacting the reforms necessary to revitalize democracy. Reform advocates, however, have a secret weapon: The American people overwhelmingly want an end to Washington corruption, and they want our rigged political system fixed.... Stage one of the strategy for victory has already been achieved. The blueprint for repairing our political system has been set by H.R. 1.... Stage two is playing out in the 2020 campaign. The coalition is taking various steps, including communicating directly with presidential campaigns and conducting grassroots activities, to advocate that all candidates make democracy reform a central part of their message.... Stage three will depend on the outcome of 2020. If a more responsive president and Senate are elected, and if House support for H.R. 1 remains intact, we will be on the doorstep of historic campaign finance, voting rights, redistricting and government ethics reforms in the next Congress.

## AMERICA'S DEMOCRACY FACING MULTIPLE THREATS

### **THE CHICAGO SUN TIMES (OP-ED BY JESSE JACKSON)**

Our democracy is in peril, but we the people can preserve it. The Senate Intelligence Committee last week startled the nation with a democracy shaking report entitled "Russian Efforts Against Election Infrastructure." The independent Mueller Report had previously indicated, "The Russian government interfered in the 2016 election in sweeping and systematic fashion," and last week Robert Mueller testified before the House Judiciary Committee that Russia was continuing to intervene in our voting infrastructure. Americans had already been made aware of Russian efforts in Illinois, Arizona and certain counties in Florida in 2016. The Senate report was shocking because it documented that Russia's efforts had actually targeted all 50 states.... Immediately following Mueller's testimony, Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA) attempted to pass the FIRE Act asking for unanimous consent. The Fire Act was a simple, narrowly targeted bill. All it did was make sure that foreign attempts to interfere in future presidential elections are promptly reported to the FBI and the FEC. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) instantly killed it, claiming it was a partisan effort to defeat Trump. McConnell's maneuver amounts to an open invitation for outsiders to again meddle in our presidential election.... The first House Bill passed in the 116th Congress was a comprehensive voting bill (H.R. 1) that would have increased voter security, made voting easier for all eligible voters, established a national holiday for voting and much more, but McConnell, the self-declared grim reaper, said this bipartisan legislation was dead on arrival.... I've advocated adding a right to vote amendment before, basically in the name of democracy and good citizenship. Now, however, it's becoming clear that it's also a national security issue. Our representative democracy, our Republic, is threatened and being undermined by Russia and possibly other countries.

★★★