



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

**AUGUST 30, 2019**

**NATIONAL NEWS**

[MARYLAND WAS NEVER IN PLAY IN 2016. THE RUSSIANS TARGETED IT ANYWAY.](#)

**THE WASHINGTON POST**

Russia's Twitter campaign to influence the 2016 presidential election in Maryland began in June 2015, 17 months before Election Day, when the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency opened an account it called @BaltimoreOnline and began tweeting about local news events.... The tweet fit neatly into what would become a pattern for Russian activities in Maryland, a solidly Democratic state that hadn't favored a Republican presidential candidate since 1988 and wasn't in play in 2016. Yet, the IRA, the Russian troll factory U.S. prosecutors blame for the massive disinformation campaign during the 2016 campaign, devoted enormous attention and preparation to its Maryland campaign, all in a likely effort, experts say, to widen racial divisions and demoralize African American voters.... A Washington Post review of government-commissioned reports and interviews with experts revealed that the Russian campaign homed in on Maryland specifically in a way that set it apart from most other states. In addition to creating @BaltimoreOnline, the IRA bought more Facebook ads targeting Maryland than any other state — 285, according to Oxford University's Computational Propaganda Research Project and Graphika, two of three organizations that analyzed social media data for Congress. Of those, 193 targeted Baltimore in particular.... The state remains ripe for a renewed campaign, experts note, especially in Baltimore.... Experts say Russia has every reason to use social

media again to influence the 2020 elections.... In fact, recent Russian election interference activity has been detected.... Maryland's legislative efforts to make such Russian disinformation harder ran afoul of the courts, which killed the state's Online Electioneering Transparency and Accountability Act.

## [TRUMP SUGGESTS HIS MIAMI RESORT FOR NEXT G7 MEETING](#)

### **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

President Trump suggested on Monday that he plans to host next year's Group of 7 summit meeting for world leaders at his Doral luxury golf resort near Miami, once again raising ethical issues about the mixing of his businesses and presidency. If he follows through, the spectacle of the annual gathering of heads of state at a Trump-owned property would be the highest-profile example of the president's willingness to flout the boundaries that have historically constrained such presidential activities. The president said on Monday that hosting the summit at Doral made perfect sense, calling the sprawling golf resort "a great place" and bragging that "it's got tremendous acreage, many hundreds of acres, so we can handle whatever happens. It's really — people are really liking it and plus it has buildings that have 50 to 70 units. And so each delegation can have its own building."

*\*Related Story: [Ethics Outcry As Trump Touts 'Magnificent' Doral for Next G7.](#)*

## [BARR BOOKS TRUMP'S HOTEL FOR \\$30,000 HOLIDAY PARTY](#)

### **THE WASHINGTON POST**

Attorney General William P. Barr is planning a holiday treat for his boss. Last month, Barr booked President Trump's D.C. hotel for a 200-person holiday party in December that is likely to deliver Trump's business more than \$30,000 in revenue.... The party will feature a buffet and a four-hour open bar for about 200 people. Barr is paying for the event himself and chose the venue only after other hotels, including the Willard and the Mayflower, were booked, according to a Justice Department official. The official said the purpose of Barr's party wasn't to curry favor with the president.

## TRUMP'S UNPRECEDENTED FIGHT TO WITHHOLD INFORMATION

### **THE ATLANTIC**

President Donald Trump's administration has declared war on congressional oversight, and the House of Representatives is fighting back—by suing in federal court to enforce its subpoenas.... Now, however, in the space of just seven months, this president and his administration have defied, or obstructed compliance with, House-committee subpoenas in more than half a dozen different matters—resulting in at least five lawsuits to date, with more likely to follow. Whatever your political leanings, you should hope fervently that the House comes out on top in these legal fights.... The Trump administration—as it has in so many other dangerous ways—again has set itself apart, this time in the unprecedented degree to which it has resisted congressional oversight. In the space of just a few months, Trump has declared war on the House's investigation of the executive branch—and, effectively, on the Constitution itself—through actions... Under these circumstances, the House has to keep fighting, including by suing civilly to enforce its committees' subpoenas.

## TRUMP'S BANK HAS TAX RECORDS CONGRESS IS SEEKING IN SUBPOENAS TARGETING THE PRESIDENT'S FINANCES

### **THE WASHINGTON POST**

President Trump's biggest lender has in its possession tax records Congress is seeking in targeting the president's financial dealings, the bank told a federal appeals court in New York Tuesday. The disclosure from Deutsche Bank came in response to a court order as part of a legal battle between Congress and the president over access to Trump's business records. The bank's public redacted response filed Tuesday did not identify by name whose records it has. The revelation provides new details about the pool of possible documents Congress could eventually obtain. The House Financial Services and Intelligence committees have subpoenaed the banks for years of financial documents from the president, his three eldest children and the president's companies.

## [RYAN ZINKE-LINKED PACS STILL RAISING MONEY — AND SPENDING IT QUESTIONABLY](#)

### **OPEN SECRETS**

But his [Ryan Zinke] leadership PAC, along with an obscure network of dubious PACs, continued to funnel donor money to closely tied political consultants. Four PACs with Ryan Zinke connections collectively raised more than \$2.6 million this year, nearly 70 percent of which came from donors who gave \$200 or less. The groups included Zinke's leadership PAC, the Supporting Electing American Leaders (SEAL) PAC, and a super PAC he created, Special Operations For America, as well as one PAC he fundraised for while he was Interior secretary and another that backed him when he ran for Congress. These groups went on to spend more than \$1.7 million — nearly two-thirds of their total expenditures — at a handful of D.C.-area vendors that share the same personnel and addresses. The PACs themselves contributed next to nothing to Republican campaigns and spent little on independent expenditures to boost Republican candidates. Fraudulent PACs posing as conservative groups are flourishing under the Donald Trump era, using direct mail to target older donors and spending exorbitant amounts of money with largely unknown fundraising companies to do so. These groups spend far more on fundraising expenses than established PACs, often taking in barely more than they spend.

## [HOW DONALD TRUMP'S CAMPAIGN MANAGER BRAD PARSCALE WENT FROM FAMILY BANKRUPTCY TO SPLASHING OUT MILLIONS](#)

### **THE DAILY MAIL**

Working for Donald Trump has made Trump 2020 campaign manager Brad Parscale a very rich man in a very short time. Parscale and his family went from losing one company to bankruptcy in the mid-2000s to multi-million-dollar real estate- and car-shopping sprees. And Parscale's swift trip from business loser to one percenter has raised eyebrows among his peers as well as ethical questions -- especially when campaign records show Parscale has been making just \$15,000 a month as Trump's electioneering guru.

## [FACEBOOK BANS ADS FROM THE EPOCH TIMES AFTER HUGE PRO-TRUMP BUY](#)

### **NBC NEWS**

Facebook has banned The Epoch Times, a conservative news outlet that spent more money on pro-Trump Facebook advertisements than any group other than the Trump campaign, from any future advertising on the platform. The decision follows an NBC News report that The Epoch Times had shifted its spending on Facebook in the last month, seemingly in an effort to obfuscate its connection to some \$2 million worth of ads that promoted the president and conspiracy theories about his political enemies.... Facebook's decision came as a result of a review prompted by questions from NBC News. The spokesperson explained that ads must include disclaimers that accurately represent the name of the ad's sponsors. The Epoch Times' new method of pushing the pro-Trump conspiracy ads on Facebook, which appeared under page names such as "Honest Paper" and "Pure American Journalism," allowed the organization to hide its multimillion-dollar spending on dark-money ads, in effect bypassing Facebook's political advertising transparency rules. Facebook's ban will affect only The Epoch Times' ability to buy ads; the sock-puppet pages created to host the new policy-violating ads were still live at the time of publication.

## [FACEBOOK SHARPENS POLITICAL AD RULES AHEAD OF 2020](#)

### **AXIOS**

As political ad spending for 2020 ramps up, Facebook is tightening its rules to make sure that groups running political or issue ads are legitimate and aren't gaming the system. With some high-profile examples of such evasion already emerging, the changes will make it harder for groups to dodge Facebook's political advertising review program. Facebook will require advertisers to supply more information about their organization, like their U.S. street address, phone number, business email and a business website matching the email, before Facebook reviews and approves their political advertising disclaimer. That information will become part of Facebook's public ad library.... Over the coming months, Facebook says it will make more enhancements to its ad library and will expand its policy to prohibit ads that expressly discourage people in the U.S. from voting.

## [HOW CHINA USES LINKEDIN TO RECRUIT SPIES ABROAD](#)

### **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

Foreign agents are exploiting social media to try to recruit assets, with LinkedIn as a prime hunting ground, Western counterintelligence officials say. Intelligence agencies in the United States, Britain, Germany and France have issued warnings about foreign agents approaching thousands of users on the site. Chinese spies are the most active, officials say.... The use of social media by Chinese government operatives for what American officials and executives call nefarious purposes has drawn heightened scrutiny in recent weeks. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube said they deleted accounts that had spread disinformation about the Hong Kong pro-democracy protests. Twitter alone said it removed nearly 1,000 accounts. It was the first time Facebook and Twitter had taken down accounts linked to disinformation from China. Many governments have employed similar playbooks to sow disinformation since Russia used the tactic to great effect in 2015 and 2016. LinkedIn, owned by Microsoft, is both another vehicle for potential disinformation and, more important, an ideal one for espionage recruitment, American officials say. That is because many of its 645 million users are seeking employment opportunities, often from strangers. To enhance their prospects, many former government employees advertise that they have security clearances. LinkedIn is also the only major American social media platform not blocked in China because the company has agreed to censor posts containing delicate material. Chinese agents often make offers over various channels, including LinkedIn, to bring the prospective recruit to China, sometimes through the guise of a corporate recruiting firm offering to pay them for speaking or consulting engagements or aid in research. From there, agents develop the relationship.

## [FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION TO EFFECTIVELY SHUT DOWN. NOW WHAT?](#)

### **THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEGRITY**

Federal Election Commission Vice Chairman Matthew Petersen announced his resignation today. This means the agency that enforces and regulates the nation's campaign finance laws will effectively shut down — something that hasn't happened since 2008 — because it won't have the legal minimum of four commissioners to make high-level decisions. Petersen's resignation, first reported by the *Washington Examiner*, will throw the FEC into turmoil for

weeks — and perhaps months — as the nation enters the teeth of 2020 presidential and congressional elections. For now, the FEC can't conduct meetings. It can't slap political scofflaws with fines. It can't make rules. It can't conduct audits and approve them. It can't vote on the outcome of investigations. And while staff will continue to post campaign finance reports and attend to day-to-day functions, the commission itself can't offer official advice to politicians and political committees who seek it.... Trump has so far made a single nomination: Trey Trainor, a Trump-supporting Texas attorney and Republican. Trump first nominated Trainor to the FEC in September 2017. Since then, Trump has twice renominated Trainor after the U.S. Senate failed to grant Trainor a confirmation hearing. The U.S. Senate has yet to take action on Trainor's nomination. He would fill the seat Petersen says he'll vacate Aug. 31.

*\*Related Story: [Thanks to Mitch McConnell, U.S. Now Has No Functioning FEC.](#)*

## COULD TAKE FEC A WHILE TO REGAIN A QUORUM, BUT DON'T EXPECT A 'WILD WEST'

### **ROLL CALL**

Even as the Federal Election Commission prepares to grind to a halt on the cusp of the 2020 elections, campaign finance experts say politicians and donors who flout the nation's political money rules may still suffer consequences. The hobbled agency, which is supposed to have three Democratic and three Republican commissioners, will be down to just three total commissioners starting next week with the departure of Republican Matthew Petersen on Aug. 31. That means the FEC can't hold meetings or hearings, let alone take enforcement action against rule-breakers, because it lacks the minimum of four commissioners required for a quorum. Still, those who advise campaigns and donors, or focus on political money law, say the 2020 campaigns won't be entirely without legal checks or public relations concerns.... Former FEC Chairman Michael Toner, who runs the election law and government ethics practice at the D.C. firm Wiley Rein, said he would not be surprised if the agency is without sufficient commissioners through next year's elections. The White House has nominated one person, Republican Trey Trainor, to serve on the commission, but the Senate has not taken up his nomination. Nor have congressional Democrats and the White House announced any Democratic nominees.... Though it's up to the Senate to confirm commissioners to the FEC, the House Administration Committee has jurisdiction over campaign finance

matters. Rep. Zoe Lofgren, the California Democrat who chairs that panel, said in a statement Tuesday that she planned to probe deeper into the FEC's dysfunction at an oversight hearing in the coming weeks.... Campaign finance watchdog Fred Wertheimer, who runs the group Democracy 21, said that even as the Justice Department could pursue criminal violations, the FEC has sole jurisdiction over civil penalties. Wertheimer noted that Democrats' sweeping campaign finance and ethics bill known as H.R. 1, which passed the House but lies dormant in the Senate, included provisions to overhaul the FEC. The agency's paralysis could boost the argument in favor of such measures, he said.

## [KOCH-FOUNDED CHARITY ASKS FOR SUPREME COURT HELP TO KEEP DONOR LIST SECRET](#)

### **REUTERS**

The Americans for Prosperity Foundation, a libertarian nonprofit founded by Charles and David Koch, filed a petition this week at the U.S. Supreme Court, asking the justices to review a 2018 ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that would require Americans for Prosperity and other California-registered charitable foundations to disclose their major donors to the California Attorney General.... AFPF's petition asserted that the 9th Circuit failed to apply strict scrutiny to California's disclosure requirement, despite the court's claim that the requirement meets "exacting scrutiny" standards. The appeals court found that California has a compelling interest in policing fraud in charitable organizations – an interest that is advanced by disclosure to the state of major donors. The 9th Circuit discounted the prospect that AFPF donors would face harassment because, the court said, there's little risk that information disclosed to the state as part of the charity registration process would become public.

## [ELECTORAL COLLEGE MEMBERS CAN DEFY VOTERS' WISHES](#)

### **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

In a ruling that kicks at the foundation of how America chooses presidents, a federal appeals court on Tuesday said members of the Electoral College, who cast the actual votes for president, may choose whomever they please regardless of a state's popular vote. The ruling by the United States Court of Appeals for the

10th Circuit in Denver said Colorado was out of bounds in 2016 when it canceled the vote of a so-called faithless elector named Michael Baca. Mr. Baca, a Democrat, wrote in the name of John Kasich, a Republican who was Ohio's governor at the time, even though Hillary Clinton carried Colorado, earning its nine electoral votes. The secretary of state replaced Mr. Baca with another elector who then voted for Mrs. Clinton. "The text of the Constitution makes clear that states do not have the constitutional authority to interfere with presidential electors who exercise their constitutional right to vote for the president and vice president candidates of their choice," the court majority wrote in a split ruling by a three-judge panel. Lawrence Lessig, a Harvard law professor who founded the group that brought the case, Equal Citizens, said it was the first time a federal appeals court had ruled on whether electors could be bound in how they vote. Many states, including Colorado, have laws requiring electors to pledge that they will support the winner of the popular vote. The Constitution is mute on the subject. The appeals court noted that a handful of faithless electors have broken pledges to vote with their state's majority since the presidential election of 1796.

## [U.S. OFFICIALS FEAR RANSOMWARE ATTACK AGAINST 2020 ELECTION](#)

### **REUTERS**

The U.S. government plans to launch a program in roughly one month that narrowly focuses on protecting voter registration databases and systems ahead of the 2020 presidential election. These systems, which are widely used to validate the eligibility of voters before they cast ballots, were compromised in 2016 by Russian hackers seeking to collect information. Intelligence officials are concerned that foreign hackers in 2020 not only will target the databases but attempt to manipulate, disrupt or destroy the data, according to current and former U.S. officials.... The Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency, or CISA, a division of the Homeland Security Department, fears the databases could be targeted by ransomware, a type of virus that has crippled city computer networks across the United States, including recently in Texas, Baltimore and Atlanta.... The effort to counter ransomware-style cyberattacks aimed at the election runs parallel to a larger intelligence community directive to determine the most likely vectors of digital attack in the November 2020 election.

## [BOTH DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS DOUBTFUL OF 2020 ELECTION OUTCOME](#)

### **POLITICO**

Nearly 40 percent of registered voters surveyed in a new poll are concerned about the integrity of the results of the upcoming presidential race, echoing warnings of electoral interference blared on both sides of the aisle. Asked how they would feel if their preferred candidate were to lose next year's election, 20 percent of those polled said they would be "not very confident" that the 2020 election "had been conducted in a fair-and-square way." Eighteen percent said they would be "not at all confident" if their candidate lost, according to a USA TODAY/Suffolk University poll released Wednesday. Just over half of respondents said they would be confident in the outcome of the election, with 21 percent of voters saying they would be "very confident" and 32 percent saying they would be "somewhat confident." Nine percent of those surveyed were undecided or refused to answer. Forty-five percent of Democrats and 30 percent of Republicans expressed doubts about the legitimacy of the election. Those Democrats were most concerned by the prospect of foreign interference, while the top threat cited by those Republicans was voter fraud. Democratic voters were also worried about voter suppression, while Republican voters feared the effects of biased media coverage and "fake news."

## [MONSANTO USED FORMER TOP DOJ OFFICIAL INVOLVED IN EPSTEIN CASE TO QUASH FELONY CHARGES](#)

### **YAHOO NEWS**

Monsanto, battling a slew of high-profile lawsuits contending that its Roundup weed killer causes cancer, had its Washington lawyers intervene at the highest levels of DOJ to stop the felony case.... A key attorney handling the matter for Monsanto, Alice S. Fisher, is a former senior DOJ official alleged to have played a part in keeping Jeffrey Epstein's controversial plea deal secret from his victims more than a decade ago, although some U.S. officials have provided other reasons why victims were not notified. Fisher denies playing a decision-making role in the Epstein matter. The felony case against Monsanto was halted after the company's lawyers launched a last-minute appeal to the office of then-Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, according to sources close to the case.

## OBAMA INTRODUCES NEW INITIATIVE IN FIGHT AGAINST GERRYMANDERING

### **THE HILL**

Former President Obama on Monday announced a new initiative in a campaign to combat partisan gerrymandering.... Redistricting U will send trainers throughout the country to offer free, in-person instruction and help to volunteers involved in the redistricting process in states. According to the campaign's website, the initiative is being pushed to empower individuals to "be leaders in the movement for fair maps."... The All on The Line campaign, which was launched earlier this year, began after Organizing for Action, a group founded by former Obama aides, teamed up with the National Redistricting Action Fund (NRAF), an organization started by former Obama Attorney General Eric Holder. Holder and Obama have become outspoken proponents for reforming how congressional and legislative maps are drawn.

## CHEROKEE NATION SEEKS TO SEND FIRST DELEGATE TO CONGRESS

### **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

For Native American tribes, treaties with the United States government have often led to displacement, removal and outright erasure. But now, the Cherokee Nation is turning to treaties signed in the 18th and 19th centuries to push for a delegate to Congress for the first time in history. The treaties, the Nation claims, promised them a seat at the table.... Their effort to seat a delegate in Congress — albeit, a nonvoting member — comes amid a broader push for visibility and political representation among Native Americans. In November, the Democrats Deb Haaland (Pueblo of Laguna) of New Mexico and Sharice Davids (Ho-Chunk Nation) of Kansas became the first Native American women elected to Congress. Congress now has four Native American members, including Tom Cole (Chickasaw Nation) and Markwayne Mullin (Cherokee Nation), both Republicans of Oklahoma.... The House of Representatives already has several nonvoting delegates. They represent Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States Virgin Islands. But there has never been a delegate representing a sovereign Native American government. It remains to be seen how the plan will be greeted by congressional leaders.

## IN THE STATES

### [MYSTERY OF MISSING VOTES DEEPENS AS CONGRESS INVESTIGATES GEORGIA](#)

#### **AJC**

To find a clue about what might have gone wrong with Georgia's election last fall, look no further than voting machine No. 3 at the Winterville Train Depot outside Athens. On machine No. 3, Republicans won every race. On each of the other six machines in that precinct, Democrats won every race.... The suspicious results in Winterville are evidence in the ongoing mystery of whether errors with voting machines contributed to a stark drop-off in votes recorded in the race for Georgia lieutenant governor between Republican Geoff Duncan, who ended up winning, and Democrat Sarah Riggs Amico. Even though it was the second race on the ballot, fewer votes were counted for lieutenant governor than for labor commissioner, insurance commissioner and every other statewide contest lower on the ballot. Roughly 80,000 fewer votes were counted for lieutenant governor than in other down-ballot elections.... The potential voting irregularities were included among 15,500 pages of documents obtained by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution that have also been turned over to the U.S. House Oversight and Reform Committee, which is looking into Georgia's elections. The documents, provided under the Georgia Open Records Act, offer details of alleged voting irregularities but no answers.

### [RUSSIAN HACKERS LIKELY TO TARGET FLORIDA AGAIN IN 2020 ELECTION, EXPERTS WARN](#)

#### **THE GUARDIAN**

Florida's record as a vital swing state made it a target for meddling in the 2016 election when Russians breached two county voting systems and a software vendor and now concerns are being raised about voting security in the state for the 2020 ballot, say election and cyber security experts, federal reports and Democrats. With FBI director Christopher Wray and other intelligence officials predicting more Russian and possibly other foreign interference in the next elections, experts say Florida is again a likely target for Russian hackers, or others

bent on disrupting voting, which potentially could alter tallies and create other problems.... Election security experts are concerned about several potential problem areas, including software that stores sensitive voter registration data, the short timetable for any post-election audits and Florida’s history of voting snafus.... Florida officials are portrayed in the senate report as in the dark about what happened in the counties, and wary of sharing information on the state’s cybersecurity measures.... For their part, Florida officials last month announced \$2.3m in election security grants to 55 counties that applied for them, and have touted their network monitoring sensors, which are considered good tools to detect foreign hacking. But Florida Democratic congresswoman Stephanie Murphy has criticized officials for their slow release of details about what happened in 2016, and their continuing failure to disclose which counties the Russians targeted.

## [VIDEO SHOWS ELECTRONIC MACHINE CHANGING BALLOT IN MISSISSIPPI](#)

### **THE WASHINGTON POST**

The moment, captured on a video uploaded to Facebook and Twitter, where it’s gotten nearly 750,000 views as of early Wednesday, shows one of at least three malfunctioning voting machines reported in two counties in Mississippi, state elections officials confirmed.... Waller’s campaign told the Clarion Ledger it has also received reports of similar mishaps in at least seven other counties.... But the viral video and reports of other machine errors are sure to spark new concerns among election security advocates, who have long warned that electronic voting systems — particularly the type used in Mississippi, which do not generate a verified paper backup — are vulnerable to hackers and mistakes.... Systems without a paper trail are particularly open to problems, experts say. In June, Election Systems & Software, one of the nation’s biggest voting machine vendors, pledged to stop selling paperless machines as primary voting devices and urged Congress to adopt new security measures, calling it “essential to the future of America.” Even President Trump has backed the idea, telling reporters in May that “going to good old-fashioned paper, in this modern age, is the best way to do it.” A bipartisan bill from Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), a Democratic presidential candidate, and Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) would have provided federal funding to help states phase out paperless machines, but that bill — along with most other election security measures — has effectively been blocked by

McConnell (R-Ky.). So for now, Mississippi is one of 11 states that still primarily use electronic machines in some counties and towns, the Brennan Center found.

## [NC BALLOT OFFICIALS VOTE AGAINST NEW ELECTION-SECURITY RULES, CITING 2020 TIME CRUNCH](#)

### **THE NEWS & OBSERVER**

North Carolina elections officials voted down a proposal Friday to require stricter anti-hacking provisions in the 2020 elections and beyond, upsetting advocates for election security. The State Board of Elections approved in a 3-2 vote three new types of voting machines that counties will have the option to buy. The main difference among them, and the source of much controversy, is whether voters will be using machines that create paper records they can review after they vote to ensure accuracy, or if they will only see a bar code. The machines from one of the approved companies will generate paper ballots with bar codes that contain the list of names.... The board went on to approve ES&S machines in a 3-2 vote. They also unanimously approved machines by Hart InterCivic and Clear Ballot, which use hand-marked ballots.... As the board's decision has drawn out, some lawmakers have floated the idea of delaying the end of the paperless machines and allowing them to be used in the 2020 elections after all. But Circosta said after Friday's meeting that he's "100% committed" to having paper ballots in the 2020 elections and sees no problem with the ES&S machines.... The idea to ban bar codes and ensure people can verify their votes was supported by voter advocacy groups, including the North Carolina chapters of the NAACP, Common Cause and the League Of Women Voters, in addition to several state and national election-security advocacy groups.

## [HOW CALIFORNIA'S VOTERS MAY HAVE SAVED TRUMP FROM RELEASING HIS TAXES](#)

### **SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE**

Forty-seven years ago, California's voters opened the state's presidential primaries to all nationally recognized candidates. That ballot measure could determine the fate of a new state law requiring President Trump and his competitors to release their tax returns in order to run in next year's primaries.... So in 1972, 61 percent of the state's voters approved Proposition

4, a state constitutional amendment, which said the presidential primary ballot must list “recognized candidates throughout the nation or throughout California,” as determined by the secretary of state. Now the state Supreme Court has agreed to decide whether Prop. 4 prohibits California from requiring Trump to disclose five years of tax returns to appear on next year’s Republican primary ballot.... But the federal case is almost certainly headed for higher courts. The California court is the highest authority on the meaning of the state Constitution, and a ruling in the Republicans’ favor would scuttle the state law without any need for further action in the federal lawsuits. It comes before a court with four justices appointed by former Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown and three by Republican governors, but also a court that decides a majority of its cases unanimously. The state justices’ dissenting opinions rarely contain the ideological fervor commonly shown by dissenters on the U.S. Supreme Court.

*\*Related Commentary: [What’s the Hurry on the Challenge to the New Tax Return Disclosure Law?](#)*

## THE VOTING WARS COME TO CAMPUS

### **THE WASHINGTON MONTHLY**

Between 2013 and 2016, Texas eliminated more than 400 polling locations, the largest drop in any state during that time. In 2013, after years of litigation, it implemented a strict voter ID law. The law, which lists seven kinds of acceptable IDs, became infamous for its brazenly partisan implications—handgun licenses are okay, for example, while student IDs are not. All of which makes the following statistic so surprising: at the University of Texas at Austin, the state’s flagship university, undergraduate turnout increased from almost 39 percent to 53 percent between 2012 and 2016. Over that same time period, *national* youth turnout stayed roughly constant. The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement at Tufts University, which calculates campus voting rates, has not yet released numbers for last year’s midterms. But at UT Austin’s on-campus polling locations, the number of early ballots cast was more than three times higher than it was in 2014.... That’s because at institutions like UT Austin and ASU Tempe, students and staff work to make registering and voting as easy as possible, even as Texas and Arizona have made it harder.... These efforts appear to be making a difference. Nationwide, college voting rates increased by more than three percentage points between 2012 and 2016, more than the overall turnout increase. Between 2014 and 2018, youth

turnout rose by nearly a third.... University students and staffers find new ways to surmount obstacles to voting rights, and legislators find new obstacles to put up. This helps explain why Democrats have increasingly pushed for nationwide measures to protect voting rights. The first bill Democrats introduced would require all states to implement automatic voter registration for federal races. Separately, several Democrats have introduced legislation to allow any voter to cast their ballot by mail, prior to election day.

## [OHIO AGREES TO LET BALLOTS OF CERTAIN PURGED VOTERS COUNT IN UPCOMING ELECTIONS](#)

### **TALKING POINTS MEMO**

One of the disputes fueling the war over Ohio’s purge process was resolved Thursday, with the announcement of a settlement in years-long litigation related to the purge regime. Under the settlement, some voters who were removed from the rolls this year and in purges going back to 2011 will still be able to cast provisional ballots and have those ballots counted. The settlement covers votes cast through 2022. Voting rights advocates cheered the settlement, even as they vowed to continue their outreach to 200,000-plus individuals who are on the list to be purged next month. Ohio’s use-it-or-lose-it system of voter purges — known official as the “supplemental process” — has been a source of controversy that traveled all the way up to the Supreme Court. Under the regime, the state sends mailers to registrants don’t participate in an election for two years informing them that they will be removed from the rolls if they don’t participate in the next four years of elections or otherwise confirm their registrations. The Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision last year, okayed Ohio’s use of voter inactivity to start the purge process. However, litigation has continued over whether the notices the state sent through 2016 complied with the National Voter Registration Act, which sets guardrails on how states can remove voters from their rolls. That litigation is what was settled Thursday. While Secretary of State Frank LaRose did not concede that the notices were NVRA violations, he said in a statement that “it made little sense to continue to spend taxpayer resources litigating the legality of a form of notice that is not used anymore.”

## [THOUSANDS ON PROBATION CAN'T VOTE IN NC. HERE'S HOW MANY WERE CONVICTED FOR TRYING.](#)

### **THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER**

North Carolina has referred more than 460 allegations of felons voting illegally to prosecutors since 2015, but so far fewer than 30 people have been convicted. Prosecutors chose not to bring charges in nearly 200 cases. Hundreds more remain under review. Convicted felons in North Carolina who have completed their prison sentence but not probation or post-release supervision are prohibited from voting. But a 2017 audit by the state board of elections — commissioned after allegations of fraud made during and after the contentious 2016 elections for president and governor — discovered hundreds of cases. The new data, which the state board provided to The News & Observer, shows far fewer cases in the years without an audit. The board, too, has taken several measures to alert voters to the law since many of those referred for prosecution said they were not aware of it. Probation officers were even called to testify as witnesses in trials. The audit said some voters did not know they “had lost their voting rights upon conviction.” Intent does not matter in the North Carolina law.... Democrats in the U.S. House included a provision about restoring voting rights for felons in one of its top bills. H.R. 1 passed on a party-line vote and the Republican-controlled Senate has not taken it up. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell called the bill, which includes a host of elections-related provisions including making Election Day a national holiday, the “Democrat Politician Protection Act” and said it amounted to an “unprecedented federal takeover of elections.”... There does not seem to be much momentum for changing North Carolina’s law.

## [JANET MILLS WILL DECIDE ON BILL TO SWITCH MAINE TO RANKED-CHOICE VOTING IN PRESIDENTIAL RACES](#)

### **BANGOR DAILY NEWS**

In a surprise move, Maine lawmakers passed a bill Monday extending ranked-choice voting to presidential primary and general elections, though it’s unclear if Gov. Janet Mills backs it and she could stop it from taking effect before the 2020 election. The proposal from Senate President Troy Jackson, D-Allagash, would put Maine further in uncharted territory on ranked-choice voting. A 2016 referendum made it the first state to adopt ranked-choice voting statewide, but legislative tweaks motivated by conflicts with the state Constitution have limited its

use to congressional elections and state primaries.... It was revived Monday toward the end of a one-day special session convened to address bonds proposed by Mills, a Democrat who said on Monday that she wanted the Legislature to only work on those measures and other technical fixes to Maine law.... If the measure becomes law, Maine's process could be modified to fit a Democratic National Committee rule setting a minimum threshold of 15 percent of votes to get delegates by state. The ranked-choice count could continue until the last remaining candidate crosses that threshold, then delegates could be allocated proportionally.

## KEY OPINION

### [THE G7 SUMMIT, BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE TRUMP ORGANIZATION](#)

#### **THE NEW YORK TIMES (EDITORIAL)**

Few people would doubt that a Trump resort had adequate space — and parking — to accommodate such a gathering. Mr. Trump has built his brand on the core principle that bigger is better. The more relevant question is whether it is ethical, or even legal, for a United States president to use a summit meeting to flog his resort and then host an official event at it, all to his personal profit. “Trump would basically be compelling foreign governments to spend money at his personal resort, while promoting the resort on the world stage,” Deepak Gupta, an ethics lawyer, told The Times. It’s not hard to imagine why the president would be tempted to throw his Miami property a little extra business. A high-profile global gathering could give the resort’s bottom line a much-needed boost. Thus far, lawsuits accusing Mr. Trump of violating the foreign and domestic emoluments clauses of the Constitution have proved less than successful; according to some constitutional scholars, those clauses prohibit presidents from profiting from public office beyond their basic compensation.... While most presidents strive to avoid the perception of corruption and self-dealing, Mr. Trump takes obvious delight in flouting the usual constraints on his position. (Two words: tax returns.) As he sees it, such concerns are for suckers, and he has no intention of being bound by them — no matter how much his behavior erodes public faith in government.

## WHAT'S TRUMP'S IDEA OF 'AMERICA FIRST'? G-7 CASH FLOWING TO HIS GOLF RESORT

### **THE WASHINGTON POST (BY REP JAMIE RASKIN)**

If the public has grown wearily conditioned to expect Trump's use of the government as an instrument of self-enrichment, we should also remember that the framers of the U.S. Constitution foresaw the potential for this kind of abuse of public office for private gain and did everything in their power to prevent it.... These presidents joined all the others in internalizing the basic logic of the foreign emoluments clause: that in a nation that fought a revolution to break free of foreign domination by monarchical power, and whose Constitution commits us to the sovereignty of "We the People," our elected officials are prohibited from pocketing payments, big or small, of any kind, from foreign rulers seeking political influence and leverage with our government. It is only Trump — the president who dusted off "America First," the mantra of anti-Semites and isolationists in the 20th century, and redeployed it for immigrant-bashing and impetuous trade wars in the 21st — who refuses to accept the honest-to-goodness America-first policy spelled out in our Constitution by American revolutionaries in the 18th. He has reaped hundreds of thousands, if not millions, from foreign governments patronizing his properties. Yet he has never asked for Congress's consent for any of it.... The issue, in any event, is the president's appalling self-dealing. And it is Congress, which has ultimate authority over emoluments, and which must act to redeem and restore the constitutional design.

## THE ELECTION WATCHDOG THAT CAN'T BARK

### **THE NEW YORK TIMES (EDITORIAL BOARD)**

The United States is headed into what promises to be among the most contentious and expensive campaign cycles in modern history — with foreign and domestic actors eager to make mischief — without the chief elections cop on the beat. Sure, presidents are busy people, but in the interest of safeguarding democracy, President Trump needs to move a neglected item toward the top of his to-do list: put forward nominees to fill the vacancies at the Federal Election Commission — and push the Senate to confirm them.... he harsh truth is that the commission has been a model of dysfunction for over a decade. Among the problems: Squabbling between Republican and Democratic commissioners increasingly results in gridlock over enforcing laws; funding has

long been stagnant; and poor staff morale has created a critical “brain drain.” The Center for Public Integrity has described the agency as “rotting from the inside out.” That is an argument for reforming this vital agency, not letting it die.

## [FILLING THE EMPTY SEATS AT THE F.E.C. WON'T FIX AMERICA'S CORRUPT ELECTIONS](#)

### **THE NEW YORKER**

If the law of diminishing returns applied to American politics, the resignation of the vice-chair of the Federal Election Commission (F.E.C.), Matthew Petersen, on Monday, would be a single data point on the downslope of democracy. The F.E.C. is the sole agency tasked with overseeing and enforcing campaign-finance laws, and Petersen’s departure leaves it without a quorum to levy fines, initiate investigations, or respond to foreign interference. It’s not that the door is now wide open to dark money influencing politics (it was already ajar); it’s that the door is now off of its hinges, taking with it the pretense of genuine campaign oversight.... The erosion of democratic norms, which predates Donald Trump and has been exponentially accelerated by his Administration, is incremental. It is also cumulative. Those who are eager to keep large numbers of Americans from voting, and who seek to undermine free and fair elections, have found ways to do it through the courts, through legislation, through dark money, through voter suppression and misinformation, and, as with the dismemberment of the F.E.C., through attrition. It’s no surprise that the engine of democracy is sputtering. How long before it breaks down?

## [ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ UNDERSTANDS DEMOCRACY BETTER THAN REPUBLICANS DO](#)

### **THE NEW YORK TIMES (OP-ED)**

Spend enough time talking politics on the internet — or in any other public forum — and you’ll run into this standard reply to anyone who wants more democracy in American government: “We’re a republic, not a democracy.” You saw it over the weekend, in an exchange between Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York and Dan Crenshaw of Texas. In a brief series of tweets, Ocasio-Cortez made the case against the Electoral College and argued for a national popular vote to choose the president. “Every vote should be = in

America, no matter who you are or where you come from,” she wrote. “The right thing to do is establish a Popular Vote. & GOP will do everything they can to fight it.” Crenshaw, who has sparred with Ocasio-Cortez before, jumped in with a response: “Abolishing the Electoral College means that politicians will only campaign in (and listen to) urban areas. That is not a representative democracy.” And then he said it: “We live in a republic, which means 51% of the population doesn’t get to boss around the other 49%.” Crenshaw is wrong on the impact of ending the Electoral College. A presidential candidate who focused only on America’s cities and urban centers would lose — there just aren’t enough votes.... But the crux of Crenshaw’s argument is his second point. “We live in a republic.” He doesn’t say “not a democracy,” but it’s implied by the next clause, where he rejects majority rule — “51% of the population doesn’t get to boss around the other 49%.” ... The point of the slogan isn’t to describe who we are, but to claim and co-opt the founding for right-wing politics — to naturalize political inequality and make it the proper order of things. What lies behind that quip, in other words, is an impulse against democratic representation. It is part and parcel of the drive to make American government a closed domain for a select, privileged few.

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