



DAILY CLIPS
CONGRESSMAN JOHN SARBANES
MARYLAND'S THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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NATIONAL NEWS

[2020 CANDIDATES: PRESIDENTIAL POWER MUST BE CURBED
AFTER TRUMP](#)

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Democratic presidential candidates broadly agree that President Trump has shaken the presidency loose from its constitutional limits and say that the White House needs major new legal curbs, foreshadowing a potential era of reform akin to the post-Watergate period if any of them wins next year's election. In responses to a New York Times survey about executive power, the Democrats — along with two Republicans mounting primary challenges to Mr. Trump — envisioned a rebuke of his term by enshrining into law previous norms of presidential self-restraint. Many called for new laws that would require presidents to disclose their tax returns and to divest from significant assets; bar them from appointing close relatives to White House positions; and constrain their abilities to award security clearances and to fire special prosecutors investigating their administration, among other potential reforms. The survey is the first and most detailed collection of the candidates' views on a set of issues that they are rarely asked about, yet often prove crucial to the outcome of political fights: the scope and limits of a president's power to act unilaterally or even in defiance of statutes.

FROM MAR-A-LAGO TO TRUMP HOTELS, REPORTER SAYS TRUMP PROFITS AS PRESIDENT

NPR

Well, you're looking at a president who is — I mean, he's not ordering the vice president, but does the president ever have to order the vice president to do anything? The president is suggesting to the vice president that when the vice president travels with his large — with his family and his retinue of aides and security people, why don't they stay at this resort that the president owns and in the process put money in the president's pocket? So, you know, the president is the vice president's boss. He is suggesting to Mike Pence that when he travels on the U.S. taxpayer dime that he put some of that taxpayer money into Trump's own pocket.... One of the things that we have figured out in the Trump era is that the safeguards that kept the president from using the presidency to benefit themselves were mostly followed as kind of an honor system.... He exploits honor systems. He uses honor systems as a way — you know, he's violated the honor system. And it takes everybody else a few — you know, a while to figure out what's going on because they're so used to people following it. So in this case, the Emoluments Clauses is — are the sort of operative parts of the Constitution. Those say presidents should not receive anything from the United States government beyond the president's official salary and that the president should not receive emoluments, meaning payments, from foreign governments. Trump has done both. He's gotten lots of payments from the U.S. government related to these presidential and other vice presidential trips to his properties. He's gotten at least a million dollars a year from foreign governments staying at his properties. And the mechanism to enforce that turns out to be the federal courts, which have moved very, very slowly as they try to sort of process this whole new area of law that they really hadn't dealt with before. The practical effect is that Trump gets away with it. There's nobody who really has the authority to tell him to stop.

**Related Story: [Checking In at Trump Hotels for Kinship \(And Some Sway\)](#).*

MILITARY STOPOVER AT SCOTTISH AIRPORT INCLUDES A STAY AT A TRUMP RESORT

THE NEW YORK TIMES

United States military personnel stayed at the Trump Turnberry golf resort in Scotland in March when an Air Force plane stopped at a nearby airport to refuel on the way to Kuwait from the United States, an Air Force spokesman and a Trump Organization representative confirmed Saturday, while defending the decision as a routine matter. Questions about the overnight stays at the Trump golf resort emerged after House investigators wrote to the department in June to ask about the surge in military stopovers at the obscure Glasgow Prestwick Airport, which is 23 miles from the Trump property. Federal contract documents show that the Defense Department signed an agreement with the Prestwick airport to serve as a refueling location for military flights in August 2016, during the final months of the Obama administration. It could not be determined on Saturday if the department had contracts with the airport before then. The records also show that the first payments under this contract started in early October 2017 and that a total of 917 payments for “liquid petroleum” have since been made at a total cost of \$17.2 million. It is unclear how many stopovers this represents, as multiple payments were often made on the same day.

**Related Story: [Trump Had Deal with Scotland Airport That Sent Flight Crews to His Resort.](#)*

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**Related Story: [Inside the Military's Layovers at a Trump Resort in Scotland.](#)*

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HE USED TO WORK AT THE NRA. NOW HE'S SHAPING GUN POLICY AT THE WHITE HOUSE

VICE

As Congress returned to Washington this week, Democrats on Capitol Hill made it clear that pushing for gun control legislation will be their top priority. But first, they'll need to sway President Trump, and that means dealing with a little-known staffer who's playing a role on the issue inside the White House: Michael B.

Williams. Williams is still pretty new on the job, but he does have experience shaping gun legislation — as a lawyer in the gun industry. A deputy assistant to the president, Williams has been one of the White House's main points of contact on gun control in recent weeks, sources on Capitol Hill and in the White House told VICE News. Before working for Trump, Williams spent almost two years as the top lawyer for the American Suppressor Association, which represents silencer manufacturers and dealers. Before that, in 2013, he worked as a law clerk for the National Rifle Association's Institute for Legislative Action.... He's playing this role at a crucial moment in the fight over federal gun regulation — and offers a window into how the revolving door between industry and government can influence Washington policymaking.

[TRUMP AGENCY TO HALT HOUSE OVERSIGHT TRIPS AMID COMPLAINT OVER STAFF BEHAVIOR](#)

NBC NEWS

The Department of the Interior has decided to halt its sponsorship of all House trips to various agency sites around the country until a resolution can be found to a dispute over the rules of engagement between congressional staff and the career and political officials who facilitate the oversight visits, according to a senior department official. The Interior Department oversees the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and several other agencies. The decision, which had not officially been rendered to Capitol Hill as of early Wednesday evening, was driven by Interior Department chief of staff Todd Willens.... It was Willens who requested that House Appropriations Committee staff member Peter Kiefhaber return immediately to Washington after an incident during a House appropriations staff tour of BLM sites in Nevada in late August in which Willens described Kiefhaber's behavior toward a Washington-based BLM official as "overly aggressive and unprofessional"... The Democratic-run House Appropriations Committee has defended its work and Kiefhaber, a longtime aide to appropriators on both sides of the Capitol.... Democrats also believe the battle is a proxy fight in a larger war between Subcommittee Chairwoman Betty McCollum, D-Minn., and Secretary David Bernhardt over the department's plans to relocate Interior staff from Washington to Grand Junction, Colorado, and McCollum's efforts to intervene.

[MICHAEL COHEN IS INTERVIEWED FOR PROBE INTO TRUMP ORGANIZATION](#)

CNN

Prosecutors with the New York district attorney's office interviewed Donald Trump's former personal attorney Michael Cohen in recent weeks as part of their investigation of the Trump Organization's handling of hush money payments, according to people familiar with the matter. Officials from the district attorney's office, led by Cyrus Vance, interviewed Cohen at the federal prison in Otisville, New York, where he is serving a three-year sentence after pleading guilty to multiple crimes including campaign finance violations tied to payments to two women alleging affairs with Trump a decade ago. Trump has denied having affairs with the women. The district attorney opened the investigation last month and sent subpoenas to the Trump Organization and American Media Inc. seeking documents and records relating to payments made to Stormy Daniels and Karen McDougal to silence their allegations ahead of the 2016 presidential election. The investigation is looking into whether the Trump Organization violated a New York state law involving false business records. Investigators are exploring whether the real estate company falsified its records in describing the reimbursement to Cohen for the payments.

[APPEALS COURT ALLOWS TRUMP EMOLUMENTS CASE TO MOVE FORWARD](#)

THE HILL

A federal appeals court in New York on Friday ruled that a lawsuit accusing President Trump of violating the Emoluments Clause can proceed after a lower court had thrown out the case. A panel of judges with the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals ruled 2-1 in favor of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), which has alleged that the president violated the constitutional clause by refusing to put his business assets in a blind trust while in office and profiting off the presidency. But the case had been dismissed by a lower court in December 2017. "Plaintiffs have plausibly pleaded that the President's ownership of hospitality businesses that compete with them will induce government patrons of the hospitality industry to favor Trump businesses over those of the Plaintiffs so as to secure favorable governmental action from the President and Executive branch," Judge Pierre Leval wrote in the decision.... The ruling revives yet another lawsuit for Trump to defend against.

He is also warding off legal challenges involving his tax returns, and his administration is facing numerous legal challenges of its policies on immigration, health care and other topics.

[AT THE BEDRAGGLED FEC, A CLEAN SLATE OF LEADERS? THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMISSIONER?](#)

THE CENTER ON PUBLIC INTEGRITY

The U.S. Senate and President Donald Trump could easily appoint new commissioners to the FEC and soon end the agency's involuntary trip through limbo, which has now entered its second week. Restart ingredients are certainly present: Senate Democrats have recommended Shana Broussard, an attorney and executive assistant to longtime Commissioner Steven Walther, to Trump for nomination, three sources familiar with the FEC nominating process confirmed to the Center for Public Integrity. (Broussard and Walther did not respond to requests for comment.) Broussard, if nominated by Trump and confirmed by the Senate, would become the first African American to serve on the six-member FEC, which today only has three commissioners — one short of a needed quorum. Meanwhile, the Republican-controlled Senate could at any moment consider Trump's lone FEC nominee to date, Texas attorney Trey Trainor, who's languished for nearly two years without even a confirmation hearing. The hang-up, perhaps predictably? Disagreement among Senate Republicans and Democrats, as well as the White House, on how to proceed.

[CONGRESSIONAL STANDOFF MAY DELAY FEDERAL ELECTION OVERSIGHT](#)

BLOOMBERG GOVERNMENT

The Federal Election Commission's paralysis on key campaign-finance matters could be extended indefinitely as leaders in Congress skirmish over how to appoint new commissioners. Senate Republicans, led by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), want to install six new commissioners. The move would fill vacancies and replace current commissioners, including Ellen Weintraub, the FEC's Democratic chairwoman, who has frequently criticized President Donald Trump. A clean slate of members will go a long way toward fixing some of the

perceived dysfunction at the commission, said a Senate Republican aide, who asked not to be named. Democrats, meanwhile, say the Senate should move quickly to fill existing vacancies, restoring a quorum and allowing the commission to function fully. Democrats aren't calling for immediate replacement of the current commissioners. The standoff could delay for weeks or months restoring the FEC's ability to enforce campaign-finance laws as the 2020 election approaches.

[RANSOMWARE ATTACK AGAINST THE 2020 ELECTION COULD DISRUPT STATEWIDE VOTING DATABASES](#)

THE WASHINGTON POST

Top government cybersecurity officials are worried that ransomware, which has wreaked havoc by locking up the computer networks of businesses, schools and police stations, could be used to sow chaos during the 2020 election. Perhaps most damaging of all would be if hackers used ransomware — an attack disabling an organization's computers and encrypting its data — to lock up a state's voter registration database in the days before an election. That would prevent local election officials from verifying that people are voting where they're supposed to, Chris Krebs, the top cybersecurity official at the Homeland Security Department, said yesterday. Krebs's organization, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, is launching a major initiative to ensure those databases are protected against ransomware, which was first reported by Reuters last week. The organization is also contacting more than 8,000 election jurisdictions and urging them to take basic cybersecurity measures to ensure their other election infrastructure is as secure as possible, he said.... A ransomware attack could conceivably throw the results of the 2020 presidential election into question and spark deep distrust in the results — without the attackers hacking any voting machines or changing any votes.

[TRUMP ADMIN PUSHING FORWARD WITH PLAN TO ENABLE ANTI-IMMIGRANT REDISTRICTING](#)

TALKING POINTS MEMO

The Census Bureau offered new details this week on how it will try to implement President Trump's plan to help states diminish the political power of immigrant communities. The disclosures came in the form of a regulatory notice posted

Monday that was tough to decipher unless you're steeped in the mechanics of the Census Bureau's role in determining how political power is doled out across the country. In it, the Census Bureau gave new information about how it will release citizenship data that Trump ordered it to produce. After he lost the legal fight to add a citizenship question to the census, President Trump directed the Census Bureau to collect the data based on existing government records — a project Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross had already put in motion. In doing so, Trump made clear what was long believed to be the endgame of a census citizenship question: to produce data that states can use to draw districts that have an equal number of citizens, rather than an equal total population. Such a change to redistricting — while wonky — would have enormous electoral consequences by allowing GOP-controlled states to shift political representation away from growing immigrant communities and towards whiter, more conservative parts regions. There are still many questions about how that plan will unfold and whether it will be successful, given the concerns that have been raised about the accuracy of the citizenship data that will be gleaned from the existing government records.

**Related Story: [Trump Wants Citizenship Data Released, But States Haven't Asked Census for That.](#)*

[THE SECRET FILES OF THE MASTER OF MODERN REPUBLICAN GERRYMANDERING](#)

THE NEW YORKER

Thomas Hofeller preached secrecy as he remapped American politics from the shadows. The Republican Party operative, known as the master of the modern gerrymander, trained other G.O.P. operatives and legislators nationwide to secure their computer networks, guard access to their maps, and never send e-mails that they didn't want to see published by the news media. In training sessions for state legislators and junior line drawers, he used a PowerPoint presentation that urged them to “avoid recklessness” and “always be discreet,” and warned that “emails are the tool of the devil.” Hofeller did not follow his own advice. Before his death, in August, 2018, he saved at least seventy thousand files and several years of e-mails. A review of those records and e-mails—which were recently obtained first by *The New Yorker*—raises new questions about whether Hofeller unconstitutionally used race data to draw North Carolina's congressional districts, in 2016. They also suggest that Hofeller was deeply involved in G.O.P. mapmaking

nationwide, and include new trails for more potential lawsuits challenging Hofeller's work, similar to the one on Wednesday which led to the overturning of his state legislative maps in North Carolina.... Other files provide new details about Hofeller's work for Republicans across the country. Hofeller collected data on the citizen voting-age population in North Carolina, Texas, and Arizona, among other states, as far back as 2011. Hofeller was part of a Republican effort to add a citizenship question to the census, which would have allowed political parties to obtain more precise citizenship data ahead of the 2020 redistricting cycle. State legislative lines could then have been drawn based on the number of citizen voters, which Hofeller believed would make it easier to pack Democrats and minorities into fewer districts, giving an advantage to Republicans.

[MORE THAN 1600 POLLING PLACES HAVE CLOSED SINCE THE SUPREME COURT GUTTED THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT](#)

MOTHER JONES

In 2013, the Supreme Court gutted a core provision of the Voting Rights Act: The requirement for certain states with a history of voter discrimination to “preclear” changes in their election rules with the federal government. For decades, the 1965 law helped secure the right to vote for hundreds of thousands of people in nine states, as well as certain jurisdictions in six other states, which had such a history of discrimination against minority voters. But in the 5-4 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, the court ruled that the coverage formula for determining those jurisdictions subject to preclearance was outdated and therefore unconstitutional. The consequences of the *Shelby County* decision were immediate: States that had previously fallen under the jurisdiction of the VRA immediately passed tough voter restriction laws and restructured election systems. But a new report released today by the civil rights coalition The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights adds another dimension to the picture of how this 2013 ruling has undermined voter access by analyzing the number of polling place that have been closed since the ruling. According to the report, entitled “Democracy Diverted: Polling Place Closures and the Right to Vote,” 1,688 polling places are now shuttered in those areas. The report, which is a follow-up to a 2016 analysis, looked at 757 counties and found that 298 of them, or 39 percent, reduced their number of polling places between 2012 and 2018.... But The Leadership Conference Education Fund's new report concludes that taking a closer look at where polling places are located and how simple access is to the ballot box—and

the often unjustified reasons for these closures—illustrates how profoundly these decisions can severely impact the right to vote in communities of color.

[TRUMP’S CRITICS ARE TARGETING HIS DONORS, SPARKING FEARS OF A BACKLASH AGAINST DISCLOSURE](#)

THE WASHINGTON POST

Organized campaigns to publicly attack President Trump’s political donors have sparked growing concern among conservatives and advocates of greater transparency in political giving, who say donor information is being weaponized ahead of the presidential election. The efforts — along with the increasingly available information online about donors giving as little as \$1 — have reignited questions about how much transparency is too much and whether the laws governing the balance between transparency and privacy are adequate and relevant.... Some advocates for transparency worry that the increasing attacks on political donors could spark a backlash against the disclosure of donor information required under federal law. The advocates fear the attacks will discourage voters from political giving or steer them into contributing to political nonprofits — called “dark money” groups by critics — which are not required to disclose their donors and often collect millions from hidden sources.

[DEMOCRATS FACE INTERNAL RANCOR OVER DEEP FAKES, DISINFORMATION](#)

POLITICO

Democrats are at war over disinformation. As illegitimate tactics like manipulated videos, troll farms, and fake social media accounts spread, state Democratic officials are demanding an official policy disavowing disinformation warfare. But the Democratic National Committee so far is refusing to go along. Earlier this year, all Democratic state party chairs sought to draw a sharp contrast with Republicans by backing a pledge to rule out the use of such tactics. Supporters viewed it as a basic first step to shape the tone of political discourse in the primary and guard against manipulation and online disinformation. But party leaders did not bring the proposal to a vote at a meeting of the full DNC in San Francisco late last month, despite the pleas of the state chairs. Among the sprawling Democratic presidential field, only frontrunner Joe Biden has signed the pledge. The pact

also calls on campaigns to publicly implore their supporters not to use disinformation and call them out if necessary.... Earlier this year, all Democratic state party chairs sought to draw a sharp contrast with Republicans by backing a pledge to rule out the use of such tactics. Supporters viewed it as a basic first step to shape the tone of political discourse in the primary and guard against manipulation and online disinformation. But party leaders did not bring the proposal to a vote at a meeting of the full DNC in San Francisco late last month, despite the pleas of the state chairs.

[THE CONSTITUENT-ENGAGEMENT EFFECT OF SMALL DONOR PUBLIC FINANCING](#)

BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE

This spring New York enacted an historic law committing to establish voluntary public financing for state elections. The governor and legislative leaders appointed nine commissioners to design the system by December 1. The Commission's goals are to incentivize candidates to seek small donations, reduce pressure on them to solicit large gifts, and encourage qualified candidates to run for office. Its work could fundamentally transform a political process dominated by big checks and infamous for undermining the public's trust. This study adds new evidence to a body of research that demonstrates small donor public financing is the most effective, proven policy solution to meet the Commission's goals. In addition to known benefits, this study shows that a small donor public financing system, of the kind New York City has offered candidates for city office for decades, incentivizes candidates to engage many more *in-district donors* for campaign support, and gives these in-district donors (including small donors) significantly greater financial influence, compared to campaigns where candidates do not use small donor public financing.

[YOU DONATED TO KIDS WITH CANCER. THIS VEGAS TELEMARKETER CASHED IN.](#)

THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEGRITY

During the last four years, the U.S. saw a significant spike in the number of PACs that raise most of their money from small-dollar donors before plowing much of it back into salaries, administrative costs and raising more cash,

according to a Center for Public Integrity analysis of more than 68.7 million campaign finance records compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics. PACs that contract with Zeitlin account for about half of that spike, making him a major player in the political world. For more than two decades, he raised tens of millions of dollars in the name of nonprofits before shifting to PACs. By and large, nonprofits and political committees are allowed to spend almost everything they collect on fundraising. What's not legal: lying to prospective donors about how their money will be used. It is up to a patchwork of federal and state investigators, each with different jurisdictions and responsibilities, to police solicitors. This is often difficult for agencies with limited resources.... Since 2006, Zeitlin's telemarketing companies have raised at least \$121.3 million for nonprofits, according to a Public Integrity review of hundreds of state disclosures. More recently, political committees that contract with his companies have raised more than \$31.8 million, according to financial disclosures filed with federal regulators. Of the combined \$153.1 million, Zeitlin's companies were paid about \$133.1 million, Public Integrity's analysis shows.... One nonprofit watchdog says the most effective organizations spend no more than 25 percent of their expenses on fundraising and overhead.

IN THE STATES

[HOW STATE ELECTION OFFICIALS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO WEAK SECURITY IN 2020](#)

THE WASHINGTON POST

It's not just a question of paper ballots. The offices charged with administering elections across the country are falling short on a slew of basic cybersecurity measures that could make the 2020 contest far more vulnerable to hacking, according to a report out this morning. Numerous state election offices aren't patching their computer systems against known digital attacks and rely heavily on outdated, weak software, the report from the cybersecurity company NormShield found. They're not fully protecting their websites against attacks or taking technical steps that would help prevent hackers from impersonating employees over email. And employee emails and passwords have leaked online. Any one of those vulnerabilities could be the weak spot that allows hackers to compromise a swath

of election systems — especially since several states with the worst security practices were swing states, the company's Chief Security Officer Bob Maley told me. He declined to disclose how specific states fared at this time. The report could be ammunition for Democrats — and states who want more cash — in the election security debate in Washington. Democrats are pushing to commit \$1 billion in additional money to help state officials ensure Russia or another U.S. adversary does not disrupt the election, but face staunch opposition from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) who has balked at the idea of imposing security mandates on states. Much of the election security debate so far has focused on the security of voting machines and election night infrastructure, such as electronic poll books and voter registration databases. The NormShield report's findings, however, shed light on how there's a broader ecosystem of computer systems and digital accounts that could put elections at risk.

[HOW COUNTIES ARE WAR-GAMING ELECTION DAY CYBERATTACKS](#)

THE WASHINGTON POST

If Russian hackers seek to disrupt the 2020 election, it will be county election officials on the front lines. And some are diving in to war games so they can be ready for anything Moscow or another U.S. adversary can throw at them.... How the U.S. fares during an Election Day hack is likely to rest on the response of local election administrators in the first few hours, state and federal officials told me.... The war-games are a sign of how drastically local politics has changed in this new era of cyberwar — preparing responses to attacks by a powerful nation-state is a far cry from more ordinary tasks of getting poll workers to voting locations on time and planning contingency operations for storms or other physical disasters. And there's no turning back, as federal officials have warned Russia is likely to try to repeat its hacking and disinformation campaign in 2020 and other U.S. adversaries, including China, Iran and North Korea, may try as well. More than a dozen states have held election hacking war games for county officials during the past two years — many of them with help from the Department of Homeland Security. But the vast majority of those exercises have been done behind closed doors.

IMMIGRATION, HEALTHCARE, TOPICS OF TOWN HALL MEETING

HUNTERDON REVIEW

Immigration, gun control and healthcare were among the many topics U.S. Rep. Tom Malinowski, D-7, addressed during the town hall he held at Clinton Public School on Saturday, Sept. 7. More than 300 people crowded into the school gym to hear Malinowski, who was holding his seventh meeting since Congress recessed last month. But Malinowski was also there to listen to them, and the following were among the many topics tackled during the meeting.... Asked how he felt about getting "dark money" — monetary contributions given to politicians or groups by undisclosed donors — out of politics, Malinowski said he was all for it. While the U.S. Supreme Court asserted that that large political action groups had the right under the First Amendment to contribute as much as they wanted for political campaigns, Malinowski wants full disclosure from them. Because of the Supreme Court ruling, it would take a Constitutional amendment to change how business is done, although other ways can be achieved. Meanwhile, there are other ways. Malinowski said the first bill the House passed this year, H.R. 1, was in part designed to ensure all contributions from corporations to even Russian oligarchs are transparent. "Any Russian oligarchs in the room? It's OK," he joked. The bill, however, has yet to be adopted by the Senate and sits on the desk of Senate leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.

PUBLIC FINANCING HEARING OVERSHADOWED BY CONTROVERSY OVER FUTURE OF FUSION VOTING

NORTH COUNTY PUBLIC RADIO

The first hearing of a state commission to implement a public campaign finance system for New York's elections was overshadowed by the issue of whether to end fusion voting, which allows candidates to run on multiple ballot lines. Critics of the proposal say Gov. Andrew Cuomo wants to strike against a left-leaning party that he's been feuding with, something the governor denies. Advocates of public campaign financing who spoke at the commission hearing Tuesday say the state should adopt New York City's largely successful matching small-donor program, where modest contributions are matched by public funds at a 6-to-1 ratio. But they also say the commission should not be looking at whether to end fusion voting.

[SMALL DONATIONS WOULD PACK BIGGER PUNCH UNDER LOCAL ELECTION REFORM](#)

SF WEEKLY

In less than two decades, San Francisco went from having a cutting-edge public financing system approved by voters in 2000 to one of the nation's weakest. That could soon change, should supervisors approve a major overhaul that boosts the power of small-dollar donations. Under the current system, candidates for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors may receive matching funds from the city, with initial spending limits up to \$250,000 and to \$1.5 million for mayoral candidates. The amount depends on a couple factors, but for the most part, this means candidates can receive \$2 from the city for every \$1 individual contribution that doesn't surpass \$500. A proposed update put forward by Supervisor Gordon Mar would triple the maximum matching rate to 6 to 1 but it would lower the maximum contribution to \$150. The spending limit would increase to \$350,000 per supervisorial candidate and to \$1.7 million per mayoral candidate. The goal is to disincentivize candidates from chasing big-dollar supporters and to reach more voters, which they would have more time to do by not fundraising as much.

[MAINE WILL USE RANKED-CHOICE VOTING IN NEXT YEAR'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION — BUT NOT THE 2020 PRIMARIES](#)

BANGOR DAILY NEWS

Gov. Janet Mills said Friday she would delay action on a bill passed by Maine lawmakers last month to expand ranked-choice voting to presidential elections and allow it to go into law in January, allowing its use in the 2020 general elections but not next year's primaries. The move still amounts to a historic expansion of the method that Maine became the first state to use after voters authorized ranked-choice voting in a 2016 referendum. Conflicts with the Maine Constitution limited its use in 2018 to congressional elections and state primaries. The method decided the race in Maine's 2nd Congressional District won by U.S. Rep. Jared Golden.

[INSTEAD OF FIXING THEIR GERRYMANDER, NORTH CAROLINA REPUBLICANS ARE TROLLING THE COURT SLATE](#)

SLATE

When a North Carolina court struck down the state’s legislative gerrymander on Sept. 3, it gave the General Assembly two weeks to draw new maps uninfected by partisanship. Republican lawmakers decided not to appeal that decision to the liberal North Carolina Supreme Court. Instead, they appear determined to violate the court’s order and produce tainted maps that dilute Democratic votes. It’s a scheme that will clearly anger the court. That may be the point. In directing the General Assembly to redraw North Carolina’s house and senate districts, the court laid down a few rules.... The first indication that legislative leaders might not comply in good faith with the order came on Sept. 6. That day, GOP legislators filed a recommendation that the court appoint two “co-referees”: Art Pope and Gerry Cohen. This suggestion is, to put it mildly, absurd. Pope is the conservative multimillionaire who masterminded North Carolina’s Republican gerrymander. He bankrolled REDMAP, the GOP’s gerrymandering program, and helped to draw the state’s Republican gerrymander. After essentially flipping off the court, Republican legislators got to work drawing the new districts. They quickly settled on a plan to get around the ban on partisan gerrymandering. Lawmakers announced that they would work off maps created by Jowei Chen, a political scientist who served as an expert for the plaintiffs in this case. Their stated plan is to identify which if Chen’s maps best comports to the court’s guidelines and adopt them with minimal alterations.... Ultimately, the court may be forced to appoint a special master to draw genuinely nonpartisan maps now that the General Assembly’s process has been tainted.

[NORTH CAROLINA REPUBLICANS VOTE TO OVERRIDE A BUDGET VETO IN HALF-EMPTY ASSEMBLY DURING 9/11 REMEMBRANCE](#)

THE WASHINGTON POST

While most North Carolinians were remembering the lives lost on Sept. 11, 2001, the Republican leaders in the General Assembly took advantage of a half-empty House and voted to override the governor’s budget veto Wednesday morning. Gov. Roy Cooper (D) said in a news conference that House Republicans called for

a “surprise vote” while he and House members were honoring first responders on the anniversary of 9/11. “Republicans called a deceptive surprise override of my budget veto,” Cooper said. “Unfortunately, it’s the people of North Carolina who lose.” House Minority Leader Darren Jackson (D) said he told his caucus members that they did not need to be in attendance and that state Rep. David Lewis (R), chairman of the Rules, Calendar and Operations Committee, gave Jackson his word that there would be no votes.

OPIOID FIRMS KEPT DONATING TO STATE AGS WHILE NEGOTIATING SETTLEMENTS

NBC NEWS

The top legal officials in dozens of states are suing drug companies and retailers for their role in the opioid crisis, but as of June both the Republican Attorneys General Association and its Democratic counterpart were still taking hundreds of thousands of dollars from some of those companies. RAGA, which represents 24 GOP state attorneys general, got a total of \$385,000 from defendants and the pharmaceutical trade association PhRMA between Jan. 1, 2019 and June 30, 2019, according to late June filings. Walmart and PhRMA gave \$130,000 apiece, Johnson & Johnson and CVS each donated \$50,000 apiece, and Cardinal Health gave \$25,000. DAGA, which represents 27 officials, got a total of \$365,000 from defendants and PhRMA during the same time period. The Democratic group received \$125,000 from Walmart, \$100,000 from Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals, \$50,000 from PhRMA and CVS, \$25,000 from Cardinal Health, and \$15,000 from Walgreens. The state attorneys general are currently negotiating multi-billion dollar settlements with the drug makers and distributors. Three attorneys general have also sued retailers, as have most of the cities and counties that have filed opioid suits.... In the past, opioid defendants have attended private events held by both RAGA and DAGA. Top RAGA donors are provided invitations to the association’s most exclusive events including its annual spring Edmund Randolph Club Retreat that was held this year in Sea Island, Georgia according to multiple people familiar with the organization’s events. The Democratic group also permits access by donors to the attorneys general at these events, but does not have a specific contribution level for access.

KEY OPINION

[WE NEED OUR ELECTIONS PROTECTED. A WEAKENED FEC ONLY INVITES ATTACK](#)

THE WASHINGTON POST (EDITORIAL)

If the Securities and Exchange Commission stopped acting, the nation would feel vulnerable to securities fraud. If the Federal Trade Commission were paralyzed, or the Federal Communications Commission, there would be a crisis of confidence in fields they regulate. Why, then, are the nation's political leaders so complacent about the Federal Election Commission, the independent regulatory agency charged with being the watchdog over the political process and protecting the integrity of U.S. democracy? As of this month, the six-member commission is down to three commissioners, although it needs four for a quorum. Without a quorum, the FEC cannot hold hearings, make rules, initiate litigation, issue advisory opinions, launch investigations or approve enforcement actions and audits, among other things. The FEC chairwoman, Ellen L. Weintraub, has put on a brave face, noting that the commission's "most important duties will continue unimpeded," such as shining a spotlight on campaign finance and performing the staff work when it receives complaints.... But this is a precarious time for the commissioners to lack a quorum. The 2016 presidential election was undermined by interference from Russia, and the upcoming campaign seems equally vulnerable to mischief and meddling. Moreover, the need is greater than ever to police the torrents of cash flowing into campaign coffers, much of it in dark money from shady interest groups. The lack of a quorum at the FEC is an open invitation to those who want to skirt the law to gamble that they won't be caught until later, if at all... Even before the current loss of a quorum, the FEC was beset by partisan deadlock. Meanwhile, all three current serving commissioners are holdovers first appointed in the presidency of George Bush. It looks as though politicians have done their best to weaken the FEC just as the nation heads into an election cycle.

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