Final election figures show Clinton won popular vote by nearly three million

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22 December 2016

Final certified election results from all 50 states and the District of Columbia show that Democrat Hillary Clinton won the popular vote over Republican Donald Trump by a margin of nearly three million votes: 2,864,974 to be exact. The final figures, tabulated and reported by Cook Political Report Wednesday, showed Clinton with 65,844,610, 48.2 percent of the total vote, and Trump with 62,979,636, 46.1 percent of the total votes.

Third-party candidates won 7,804,213 votes, or 5.7 percent of the total, with the bulk of that going to Libertarian Gary Johnson (4.5 million) and Green Party candidate Jill Stein (nearly 1.5 million). This was the largest third-party vote since 1996, when H. Ross Perot won nearly 8.1 million votes in his second campaign as an independent. It was more than double the third-party vote in 2000, when Green Party candidate Ralph Nader won 2.3 million votes.

Clinton's vote was the third highest ever received by a US presidential candidate, below only the 69.5 million won by Barack Obama in 2008 and the 65.9 million Obama won in his 2012 reelection campaign. Trump's total is the highest popular vote ever received by a Republican, nearly one million votes more than George W. Bush won in his 2004 reelection.

Even though she won the popular vote by a substantial margin, Clinton's showing marked a distinct decline in the Democratic vote in the industrial Midwest, only partially offset by an increase in the Pacific Coast states as well as in heavily Hispanic areas of Arizona and Texas. As a result, she lost Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania by narrow margins, posting vote totals well below those of Obama in 2008 and 2012, and lost the Electoral College.

Despite winning the presidency, Trump has demonstrated considerable defensiveness about his sizable defeat in the popular vote. He tweeted Wednesday after the latest figures were released, "Campaigning to win the Electoral College is much more difficult & sophisticated than the popular vote. Hillary focused on the wrong states!"

He added a few minutes later, "I would have done even better in the election, if that is possible, if the winner was based on popular vote—but would campaign differently."

In a tweet in late November, Trump wrote, "In addition to winning the Electoral College in a landslide, I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally."

This was a double lie, since there is no evidence whatsoever of millions voting illegally, and since Trump's Electoral College margin was hardly a landslide. When the votes were tallied in Washington, D.C. and 50 state capitals Monday, Trump won 304 electoral votes to Clinton's 227, with seven votes scattered among other candidates. His margin in the Electoral College ranks 46th out of 58 US presidential elections.

It is striking, however, that neither prominent Democrats nor the corporate media have cited Trump's loss of the popular vote as significantly undermining his political authority to install an ultra-right cabinet and embark on policies that are widely opposed by the majority of the American people.

There have been occasional statements by Democrats, like incoming Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, that Trump lacks a mandate, but these are almost incidental compared to the high-volume shrieking about alleged Russian hacking and the impact of FBI Director James Comey's intervention in the election campaign 11 days before the vote.

Typical were the comments of former president Bill

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Clinton Monday, in an interview with a local newspaper in Albany, New York. Clinton said his wife "fought through everything, and she prevailed against it all." But at the end, he said, "we had the Russians and the FBI deal. But she couldn't prevail against that."

These complaints were reinforced by the release Tuesday of the text of the application for a search warrant sought by the FBI on October 31, eight days before the election, targeting a laptop computer shared by Clinton aide Huma Abedin and her estranged husband, former Representative Anthony Weiner.

The request for a search warrant is legally questionable, essentially arguing that any email between Hillary Clinton and Huma Abedin was potentially incriminating because some emails between the two—a few dozen out of thousands previously examined by the FBI—had contained confidential or secret information.

While legal experts were divided about the propriety of the judge's decision to grant the search warrant on this basis, there is no disputing that the public release of a letter by FBI Director James Comey, two days before the search warrant was sought, was an unprecedented intervention by the FBI into a presidential campaign, in defiance of precedents barring any public investigatory step within 90 days of an election.

Clinton's lawyer David Kendall declared in a statement Tuesday that the FBI affidavit requesting the search warrant, "highlights the extraordinary impropriety of Director Comey's October 28 letter, publicized two days before the affidavit, which produced devastating but predictable damage politically and which was both legally unauthorized and factually unnecessary."

Neither the Democrats nor the media choose to address the more fundamental question of how Clinton could have been running so closely contested a race against Trump—the most unpopular individual ever to run for president—that a last minute scandal could tip the election against her.

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