

While Trump continues to deny election defeat

Biden, Democrats prepare right-wing administration

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Vote counting in a half dozen states is continuing into Monday, adding to the lead in both the Electoral College and the popular vote that compelled all of the major media organizations to announce Saturday that Democratic candidate Joe Biden had won the 2020 US presidential election. Donald Trump is the first US president in 28 years to be defeated for reelection.

Biden's lead continued to grow in Pennsylvania, the state that put him over the top in the Electoral College, as well as in Nevada and Georgia. As of this writing, the former vice president's lead is 43,194 votes in Pennsylvania, 31,464 in Nevada, and 10,353 in Georgia. The first two states were called for Biden on Saturday, while the final outcome in Georgia awaits the counting of some provisional and military ballots, followed by a recount.

Biden leads in Arizona by 16,952 votes, a number that has dwindled from 60,000 over the past four days. Fox News and the Associated Press have called Arizona for Biden, but other media organizations have not. Trump leads in North Carolina by a margin of 75,387 votes, pending the processing of more than 110,000 provisional and mail-in ballots that will not begin until November 10.

In the Electoral College, which meets December 14 to formally choose the next president, Biden leads in states with 306 electoral votes, compared to 232 for Trump, the same margin by which Trump prevailed over Hillary Clinton in 2016. At the time, Trump called his electoral vote win a "landslide."

But while Clinton quickly conceded and even opposed recounts in states that Trump narrowly won, such as Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, Trump has refused to concede and continues to declare himself the winner of the election. He has raised millions of dollars to fund legal challenges in many of the closely contested states.

Statements issued by Trump's spokesmen and leading congressional Republicans were vitriolic in their intensity, with wild and unsubstantiated claims of electoral violations ranging from dead people voting, to computer programs switching Republican votes to the Democrats, to the outright manufacture of tens of thousands of Democratic ballots.

In every case, the vote counting was being overseen by bipartisan teams of observers, and there have been no reports of significant discrepancies. Those errors that have emerged were mainly self-reported by election officials and then grossly exaggerated and distorted on social media by Trump and his acolytes.

In several of the contested states, Republican Party officials control the electoral machinery, including Georgia, Arizona and Nevada, making Trump's claims of fraud particularly implausible. In Pennsylvania, where Democrats control the state executive, most counties are under Republican control, and these are the jurisdictions actually counting masses of mail-in ballots cast mainly by Democrats.

The Trump administration is also dragging its feet on legally mandated steps to facilitate the transition to a new, Democratic Party administration. The key step is for the federal General Services Administration (GSA), which runs most civilian government infrastructure, to rule that the election results are final and thereby enable the Biden transition team to gain access to security clearances, internal government information and additional funding. The Trump appointee who heads the GSA, Emily Murphy, has not yet taken that step, and this delay could also become the subject of a lengthy legal battle.

The purpose of the Republican campaign over vote "fraud" seems less to shift the election outcome—although that still remains a possibility—than to extract a political price from Biden, in the form of concessions on policy and personnel in the formation of a new administration. There is every indication that Biden and the congressional Democratic leadership are willing, even eager, to make such concessions.

"Joe Biden has spent his career uniting Republicans and Democrats across the political spectrum in times of crisis," Biden national spokesman Jamal Brown said Sunday. And Biden himself made bipartisanship the focus of his victory speech on Saturday night.

Lists of prospective cabinet nominations leaked to the media from Biden campaign sources are loaded with figures from the right wing of the Democratic Party or the national security establishment, such as Michele Flournoy for Secretary of

Defense, Lael Brainard for Secretary of the Treasury, and Susan Rice or Chris Coons for Secretary of State. These lists generally include more Republicans than figures from the Sanders-Warren wing of the Democratic Party.

If anything, congressional Democrats have taken the lead in what amounts to a campaign to purge the left wing of the Democratic Party in a preemptive effort to appease the Republicans. Senator Joe Manchin, a notorious right winger in the Democratic caucus, blamed the poor performance of Democrats in races for Senate and House seats on “socialism,” which he claimed, without a shred of evidence, was the reason for most people in his state of West Virginia voting for the Republicans.

A McCarthyite statement by Representative Abigail Spanberger of Virginia, a former CIA agent who narrowly won reelection November 3, has been given widespread support in the Democratic caucus and considerable media publicity. On a conference call of House Democrats after the election, Spanberger blamed the loss of Democratic seats in the House on calls to “defund the police” and establish “Medicare for all.”

“We need to not ever use the word ‘socialist’ or ‘socialism’ ever again,” Spanberger said on the call. “We lost good members because of that.” The audiotape of the call was leaked to the press in order to advance this right-wing narrative.

The claim that the Democratic Party ran too far to the left is ludicrous. This is a right-wing capitalist party, whose most significant influx over the past two years, in terms of leading personnel, has been the entry of a layer of former CIA and Special Forces operatives, along with former military commanders and top civilian advisers from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They now account for as many as 15 members of the House Democratic Caucus and will hold the balance of power in the next Congress.

In the Senate races, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer succeeded in imposing right-wing nominees, including three from military-intelligence backgrounds in three key races in Kentucky, North Carolina and Texas. All three lost, two by wide margins, as did other more conservative, pro-business nominees in Iowa, Alaska, Kansas and Maine. The Democrats did not nominate a single candidate from the Sanders’ wing of the party for any Senate seat considered competitive, but there is no hue and cry blaming the failure to win back the Senate on the dominant right wing of the party.

On the Sunday television interview programs, besides Manchin’s anti-socialist rant, House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn, a key figure in Biden’s winning the Democratic nomination, rebuffed claims by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders that the party had to offer progressive economic policies to maintain its credibility in the eyes of working people. Labels don’t matter, he said, adding that as the party moved on to the runoff election for two Senate seats from Georgia, which will determine control of the Senate, the

Democrats should avoid any association with what he called “radical” policies relating to climate change, health care or police violence.

Neither the Biden campaign nor the congressional Democratic leadership has offered any significant proposals for action on the coronavirus pandemic, in which more than 240,000 have already died in the United States, and 10 million have taken ill. Instead, Biden is to unveil a task force Monday headed by two former US health care officials, David Kessler and Vivek Murthy, to promote mask wearing and other measures on a purely voluntary basis.

Biden has not called for the passage of emergency legislation on the unemployment crisis in the lame duck session of Congress that will be convened soon to adopt appropriations bills for the remainder of the current fiscal year, which runs through September 30, 2021. These bills will set the spending framework for the first eight months of a Biden administration, but the basic outlines will be set by Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell in negotiations with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Biden has avoided any discussion of broader lockdown measures to deal with the skyrocketing number of coronavirus cases, even though the Public Health Service Act of 1944 grants the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention authority to “make and enforce such regulations as in [its] judgment are necessary to prevent the introduction, transmission, or spread of communicable diseases...”

The extremely tentative steps taken by Biden, and his conciliatory approach to the obstructionist response of the Trump administration, are in sharp contrast to how an incoming Republican president-elect would conduct himself.

When George W. Bush was installed as president in December 2000 by the Supreme Court, in its notorious *Bush v. Gore* decision, the new president proceeded as though he had won a landslide electoral mandate. This was despite trailing Democrat Al Gore by 500,000 votes, having a 50-50 Senate, and a narrow four-vote majority in the House, considerably smaller than the Democratic majority will be in 2021.

Bush immediately rammed through a massive tax cut for the wealthy and other reactionary measures, with considerable Democratic support. Even with control of the House of Representatives, and with a majority of at least five million in the popular vote, Biden is conducting himself as though the Republicans had won the election.



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