

Pennsylvania, Nevada certify Biden victories as Trump repeats his vows to overturn the election

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President Donald Trump's quasi-legal options in his bid to overturn the presidential election continued to narrow Tuesday with the certification of Joe Biden's victories in two more swing states: Pennsylvania and Nevada. The Trump campaign has sought, without success to date, to block or delay certification of vote tallies in six states that put Biden well over the 270 electoral vote hurdle required to become president.

Biden won the popular vote by nearly six million ballots and secured 306 electoral votes, as compared to Trump's 232 (the same electoral vote margin by which Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in what he called a "landslide").

Five of these states—Pennsylvania (20 electoral votes), Michigan (16), Wisconsin (10), Arizona (11) and Georgia (16)—had voted for Trump in 2016 but flipped to Biden in an election that saw the biggest turnout since 1900, propelled by broad and intense opposition to Trump's fascistic politics. Of these, only Wisconsin and Arizona remain to be certified, following the certification in rapid succession of Georgia on Friday, Michigan on Monday and Pennsylvania on Tuesday. Nevada (six electoral votes), which is also being contested by the Trump campaign, went narrowly for Hillary Clinton four years ago.

On Monday, Michigan's Board of State Canvassers certified Biden's win by some 150,000 votes despite the direct intervention of Trump to pressure election officials and Republican lawmakers to block or delay the process. Trump's aim is to create conditions for Republican-led state legislatures such as Michigan's to disregard the popular vote and choose their own pro-Trump slate of electors.

Soon after the Michigan canvassers' vote to certify,

despite the abstention of one pro-Trump Republican, the head of the US General Services Administration (GSA) ended her blockade and acknowledged Biden as the "apparent winner," enabling Biden's transition team to receive federal funds, meet with Trump officials and gain access to classified intelligence briefings. Trump tweeted an endorsement of the decision while reiterating his refusal to concede and his determination to overturn the "fraudulent" vote and remain in power.

On Tuesday, besides the certifications by Pennsylvania and Nevada, Arizona Governor Doug Ducey, a Republican, conceded that the former vice president had won the vote in his state. Like most Republican officials, he has followed Trump's lead in refusing to acknowledge Biden as president-elect. But in an interview with a Phoenix radio station, Ducey said, "Joe Biden did win Arizona. I think it's a 10,300 vote margin or approximately three-tenths of a percent, and any legal challenges that are going to come, those go through the courts."

Ducey's statement virtually guarantees that Biden's win in Arizona will be certified when the official state canvass takes place on Monday.

This leaves only Wisconsin, which Biden won by some 21,000 votes. Its vote result is due to be certified on December 1. The Trump campaign has sought to stall the certification process by forcing recounts in the state's most populous and heavily Democratic counties—Milwaukee and Dane, which includes the state capital Madison.

Georgia is also conducting a machine re-scan of ballots at the behest of the Trump campaign, despite having already carried out a hand recount that did not

significantly reduce Biden's margin of victory. The re-scan began Tuesday and is scheduled to conclude December 2.

The campaign's strategy of bombarding the courts with baseless lawsuits demanding the discarding of millions of votes has thus far failed to produce results. Trump has to date prevailed in only one suit and lost 35. However, his campaign continues to file cases and appeals, hoping to throw the outcome of the election into the US Supreme Court, where Trump has a six-to-three majority of right-wingers, including his latest appointee, Amy Coney Barrett.

In recent days, a growing number of Republicans and Trump supporters, both in and out of Congress, have criticized his pseudo-legal campaign in the courts and efforts to undermine the electoral process, or directly called on him to concede. Statements by Senators Rob Portman (Ohio) and Shelley Moore Capito (West Virginia) issued Monday were followed Tuesday by a statement from former Speaker of the House Paul Ryan calling on Trump to "embrace the transfer of power" and concede to Biden.

The *Wall Street Journal* published an editorial Tuesday ("Trump's Campaign Runs Out of Road") that concluded, "There's wrangling yet to come, but as states certify and lawsuits get swatted down, Mr. Trump is running out of time and options."

Far-right commentator and Trump loyalist Laura Ingraham of Fox News told her viewers Monday night that recognizing the virtual certainty that Biden would be inaugurated on January 20 "constitutes living in reality."

Rush Limbaugh said on Monday of Trump's claims of massive vote fraud, "They promised blockbuster stuff, and then nothing happened... There better be something other than what we got."

However, Trump is making clear he has no intention of conceding. In the early morning hours of Tuesday, he tweeted: "What does GSA being allowed to preliminarily work with the Dems have to do with continuing to pursue our various cases on what will go down as the most corrupt election in American political history? We are moving full speed ahead. Will never concede to fake ballots & "Dominion." The latter is a reference to far-right conspiracy theorists who claim that voting machines made by Dominion Voting Systems were rigged in favor of Biden.

Later on Tuesday, he retweeted fascistic videos and messages by Randy Quaid, the actor and fanatical Trump supporter. In one video, Quaid declared, "Is this the way America goes? From George Washington to George Soros? From oceans white with foam to a socialist swamp." To which Trump added, "Are you listening, Republicans?"

Trump also made a bizarre appearance Tuesday in the White House briefing room. With Vice President Mike Pence standing silently at his side, Trump touted the fact that the Dow Jones Industrial Average had broken 30,000 for the first time ever, then turned and left the room without taking any questions. The entire "press conference" lasted 62 seconds.

Trump continues to incite his fascistic supporters. At the same time, he has carried out a purge at the top of the Pentagon and installed far-right loyalists on whom he can count to do his bidding. There are, moreover, ominous indications of plans to attack Iran before Inauguration Day, which could provide a pretext for invoking martial law.

Whether or not Biden's right-wing administration-in-waiting comes to power, Trump's election coup is a dire warning to the working class. American democracy is collapsing under the weight of staggering levels of social inequality, explosive class tensions and a relentless drive to war, all of which have been intensified by the coronavirus pandemic.

Trump is not some outlier. He is the personification of the most predatory sections of the corporate-financial oligarchy that controls both big-business parties. This oligarchy is moving toward fascism and dictatorship, a process that will only deepen after January 20.

The working class must intervene into this crisis as an independent force, using the methods of class struggle on the basis of a conscious fight to put an end to capitalism and establish socialism. That is the only basis for defending democratic rights.



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