

Arizona Republicans begin “recount” of presidential election

Patrick Martin
26 April 2021

A recount of 2.1 million ballots cast in Maricopa County, Arizona began on Friday, as ordered by the Republican-controlled Arizona state Senate. Dozens of people hired by a subcontractor of a pro-Trump consulting firm began going through the physical ballots at the Arizona Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Phoenix, the state capital.

The exercise can have no legal effect on the outcome of the 2020 elections. Arizona’s 11 electoral votes went to Democrat Joe Biden by a margin of 10,457 votes, and this result was certified by state officials, including the Republican governor and lieutenant-governor. It was certified by the US Congress on January 6. Even if Arizona’s results were somehow to be overturned, it would not affect the overall result, as Biden defeated Trump by 306 electoral votes to 232.

Biden won Maricopa County by 45,000 votes, his second-largest margin in the state, after 100,000 in Pima County (Tucson). The results in these two counties, where Arizona’s two largest cities are located, offset Trump’s margin in rural areas.

The purpose of the recount is to provide grist for the mill of ultraright propaganda claims that Trump was the actual winner, as well as to mobilize support behind election changes introduced by Republican legislators in dozens of states, making it more difficult for voters to cast their ballots on the purported ground of fighting “vote fraud.”

The Arizona state Senate, narrowly controlled by the Republicans, 16-14, has taken the lead among all state legislative bodies in the country in seeking to validate Trump’s baseless claims of a stolen election. It subpoenaed all 2.1 million ballots cast in Maricopa County, the state’s largest, on the pretext that these were pertinent to a legislative purpose, i.e., proposed changes in the state’s election laws.

Trump himself has been duly appreciative, issuing a statement Friday that said: “Thank you State Senators and others in Arizona for commencing this full forensic audit.” He added, “I predict the results will be startling.” He followed this up on Saturday with multiple statements of support, including a demand that Governor Doug Ducey, a Republican whom Trump has repeatedly vilified, call out the National Guard to protect the recount from attack.

The state Democratic Party filed a lawsuit to halt the recount, but an Arizona judge required that the party post a \$1 million bond to cover the costs of a delay. The state party declined to do this and refused to send monitors to observe the recount, denouncing it as a fraudulent operation.

The identity of the company overseeing the recount speaks volumes about its reactionary and antidemocratic character. Cyber Ninjas is a Florida-based consultancy that has never conducted any election-related professional activity. It is run by a Trump loyalist, Doug Logan, who is associated with attorneys Lin Wood and Sidney Powell.

The *Arizona Republic* reported that Logan had retweeted a post “suggesting that Dominion Voting Systems, a favorite target of the right, had robbed Mr. Trump of 200,000 votes in Arizona.” Dominion told the newspaper that Cyber Ninjas is “led by conspiracy theorists and QAnon supporters who have helped spread the ‘Big Lie’ of a rigged election.”

The state Senate has appropriated only \$150,000 for the recount, far less than the actual expense of the effort. Right-wing donors are funding the rest. The pro-Trump One America News Network (OAN) is raising money from unidentified contributors, and others are sending money directly to Cyber Ninjas.

The recount is closed to the press, although the nine

recount stations set up inside the arena are being live-streamed by OAN. Only the presidential election and the US Senate contest, won narrowly by Democrat Mark Kelly over the incumbent, Republican Martha McSally, are being recounted.

This sets up an obvious contradiction: Democrats won five of the nine congressional seats in 2020, and the presidential and Senate votes generally correspond to the votes for the House of Representatives. But the recount does not challenge the outcome of the House elections, where the Democrats had a narrow cumulative statewide margin of 23,000 votes.

According to a report by the *New York Times*, one of the 16 Republicans in the state Senate majority “claims lifetime membership in the Oath Keepers, the extremist group that helped lead the assault on the US Capitol on Jan. 6.” Another participant in the recount is a former state legislator, ousted in the same election in which Trump was defeated, who was actually at the Capitol on January 6, although he denies going in.

This demonstrates that the core constituency of Trump and his supporters in the Republican Party consists of fascist elements such as those who stormed the US Capitol on January 6 and sought to block certification of the 2020 election and maintain Trump in power as a president-dictator.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact