

Michigan attorney general requests criminal charges against multiple Republican politicians, far-right sheriff for tampering with voting machines

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Last Friday, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel requested a special prosecutor be named to investigate her Trump-endorsed opponent, Matthew DePerno and eight other people she said were party to a conspiracy to “unlawfully obtain access to voting machines used in the 2020 General Election.”

The petition alleges that the accused illegally obtained voting machines, under false pretenses, from three different counties in rural Michigan. After obtaining the machines Nessel’s petition claims that they broke into the machines and performed “tests” before returning the machines damaged back to the election clerks. It is a felony crime to conspire with another person to obtain access to voting machines used in an election.

In addition to DePerno, Nessel is requesting the special prosecutor levy charges against current state Republican Rep. Daire Rendon, Barry County Sheriff Dar Leaf, lawyer Stefanie Lambert Juntilla, Ben Cotton, Ann Howard, Jeff Lenberg, QAnon fascist Douglas Logan and James Penrose.

In her petition Nessel alleged that the Michigan State Police (MSP) and special agents at the Michigan Department of Attorney General (MDAG) found evidence of charges “that include but are not limited to ... conspiracy, using a computer system to commit a crime, willfully damaging a voting machine, malicious destruction of property, fraudulent access to a computer or computer system and false pretenses.”

In the August 5 petition Nessel revealed that on February 10, 2022 Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson

requested that MDAG and MSP launch an investigation after her office became aware of the fact that unidentified people had gained access to “vote tabulators, components and technology in Roscommon, Michigan.”

Nessel, the current Democratic attorney general, noted that “when the investigation began there was not a conflict of interest. However, during the course of the investigation, facts were developed that DePerno was one of the prime instigators of the conspiracy.”

DePerno is Nessel’s likely opponent in the 2022 midterm attorney general election after he secured, thanks to a Trump endorsement, the Republican nomination on April 23.

This “conflict of interest” is why Nessel is requesting the Michigan Prosecuting Attorneys Coordinating Council appoint a special prosecutor to charge the aforementioned.

The petition alleges that “DePerno, Lambert Juntilla and Rendon orchestrated a coordinated plan to gain access to voting tabulators that had been used in Roscommon County and Richfield Township (Roscommon County), Irving Township (Barry County) and Lake City Township (Missaukee County).”

In all, the petition alleges that five “voting tabulators” from those three counties were taken to “hotels and/or Airbnb’s in Oakland county,” where Lenberg, Cotton, Penrose and Logan “broke into the tabulators and performed ‘tests’ on the equipment.”

The petition notes that during the course of the investigation, DePerno was “present at a hotel room during such ‘testing.’”

The petition claims that in order to obtain a voting machine in Roscommon County, “the clerk stated she was told by Rep. Rendon that the House of Representatives was conducting an investigation in election fraud.”

Last October, Rep. Rendon and DePerno participated in a pro-Trump rally outside the Michigan State Capitol, where they both gave speeches claiming the election was stolen. At the rally Rendon wore an American flag pin with a gold “Q” on it, a reference to the fascist conspiracy theory that posits Trump is a Christ-like figure charged by God with leading a righteous purge of “deep state Democratic pedophiles” and “Satan worshipers.”

In her speech in front of the Capitol last October, Rendon claimed (perhaps due to some experience) that electronic voting machines were “accessible” and susceptible to hacking and that there was “evidence” of fraud in the 2020 election.

Douglas Logan is the CEO of Cyber Ninjas, a pro-Trump company that led the dubious “forensic audit” of the Arizona vote following the 2020 election. Logan is a far-right conspiracy theorist and an adherent to the QAnon conspiracy.

Barry County Sheriff Dar Leaf is a leading member of the fascistic Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association and is accused of convincing an election clerk to turn over the machine to him as part of a rogue investigation headed by him and his co-conspirators into nonexistent election fraud.

Last month, local Michigan station WOODTV 8 reported that Barry County Clerk Pam Palmer had witnessed the Irving Township clerk, Sharon Olson, allow an “investigator” with Leaf’s Barry County Sheriff’s office take one of the township’s three Dominion voting machine tabulators in June 2021.

Palmer said when the machine was returned it had a broken seal.

In April this year, Michigan State police raided the clerk’s office in Barry County’s Irving Township and

confiscated a vote tabulator suspected of being taken by one of Leaf’s “investigators.” Olson told the Michigan State Police, according to police documents viewed by Reuters, that the investigator working with Leaf told her he needed to “forensically” examine the tabulator.

An article in the *Detroit News* noted that “Cotton, Lenberg, Logan and Penrose had all been involved in efforts to question the 2020 election... Cotton, Lenberg and Penrose have been cited as experts by DePerno previously in a lawsuit he’s led against the election in Antrim County.”

DePerno’s lawsuit against Antrim County was frequently cited by Trump in the lead-up to and on January 6, as evidence that the 2020 election was stolen. A human error made by a Republican voting clerk, temporarily caused votes to be miscounted for Biden as opposed to Trump.

Despite the fact that the error was quickly corrected and Biden won Michigan by roughly 10 times more votes than the roughly 15,000 that were cast in all of Antrim County, Trump and his coup lawyers have cited this temporary error and the fact that the voting machines used in Antrim County were manufactured by Dominion Voting Systems, to claim the entire election was “rigged.”

For over two years Trump and his right-wing supporters have claimed without a shred of evidence that some combination of “Democrats,” “communists,” “Chinese spies,” “Italian military satellites,” and the deceased Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez have tampered with Dominion Voting Machines to cheat Trump out of the presidency. However, it now appears that the only people who have actually interfered with Dominion Voting Machines in order to change the results of future elections, are Republican-aligned lawyers, businessmen, politicians and cops.



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