

# Virginia Thomas, wife of far-right Supreme Court justice, pushed Wisconsin legislators to overturn election in November 2020

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Last Wednesday the *Washington Post* reported that additional emails had been uncovered which were sent after the 2020 election by Virginia “Ginni” Thomas, wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, to legislators in Wisconsin, advocating that they overthrow the election of President-elect Joe Biden based on nonexistent voter fraud.

“Please do your Constitutional duty!” read the subject line of the emails sent to Wisconsin state Sen. Kathy Bernier and Wisconsin state Rep. Gary Tauchen. The emails—sent using the FreeRoots platform—were carbon copies of emails sent by Thomas to 29 different Republican state lawmakers in Arizona. She sent the emails on November 9, 2020, two days after Joe Biden had been declared the winner of the election.

In the emails to both the Wisconsin and Arizona Republicans, Thomas claimed falsely that Republican-dominated legislatures had the “awesome responsibility: to choose our state’s Electors.” The lifelong right-wing operative called on the lawmakers to “take action to ensure that clean slate of Electors is chosen.”

Speaking to the *Post*, Wisconsin state Sen. Bernier claimed that she had not realized that Thomas had emailed her about the election at the time, but that Thomas was well within her rights to “speak her mind.” Bernier said that if there was massive voter fraud, she was open to decertifying the election. However, “there was nothing proven as far as actual voter fraud.”

In an interview with the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Bernier said it was likely that Thomas sent emails to the every Wisconsin lawmaker but that she and Tauchen were the only two who retained them.

Representative Tauchen, who is retiring this year, did not reply to the questions from the *Washington Post*. When Thomas sent the emails, Wisconsin courts were embroiled in lawsuits filed by Republicans challenging the election results and demanding recounts in majority-Democratic counties, such as Dane

(Madison) and Milwaukee.

The alternate elector conspiracy devised by fascist ex-President Trump and his Republican accomplices involved submitting a slate of “alternate” electors for seven states Trump lost to Biden, including Wisconsin, Georgia, Nevada, Arizona, Michigan, New Mexico and Pennsylvania. The plan called for Vice President Mike Pence to use the bogus electors as a pretext for delaying the certification of the 2020 election on January 6, 2021.

On December 14, 2020, while the genuine electors met in each state capital and in Washington D.C. to formalize Biden’s 306-232 Electoral College victory, pro-Trump Republican officials in the aforementioned seven states met and signed bogus elector certificates, which they sent to the National Archives and to Congress.

The scheme was headed by Trump’s personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, who worked in close coordination with conservative lawyer John Eastman and Virginia Thomas. Both Giuliani and Eastman spoke outside the White House before Trump addressed the “Save America” rally on January 6 and called for the participants to march on Congress. Virginia Thomas has admitted to attending that same rally.

Despite Ginni Thomas’ prominent role in the failed coup, she has yet to be charged by the Justice Department or even subpoenaed by the January 6 House Select Committee, which has been investigating the attack on the Capitol for over a year.

The House committee asked Thomas to provide documents and sit for a voluntary interview in June. At first, she indicated she would testify before the committee, saying she looked forward to “talking to them” and that she could not “wait to clear up misconceptions.” But less than two weeks later, Thomas recanted. In a June 28 statement to the committee, a lawyer for Thomas said there was not “sufficient basis” for her to testify.

Over two months later Thomas has yet to be subpoenaed by the Select Committee.

In an interview on CBS's *Face the Nation* on September 4, Maryland Democrat Jamie Raskin, a Select Committee member, was asked by host Major Garrett if the committee still had an "interest" in obtaining testimony from Thomas.

Raskin, deflecting, said, "We're interested in getting testimony from anyone who has relevant evidence about the attempt to overthrow the 2020 election." Pressed again by Garrett, Raskin said that he thought she had "relevant testimony to render" but that he did not "want to overstate her role."

In the interview, the topic of the committee seeking testimony from former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich was also broached. The day after the *Post* reported on Ginni Thomas' efforts to overturn the election in Wisconsin, the Select Committee released a letter it had sent to Gingrich requesting his testimony. Raskin likewise indicated that the committee would like to speak to Gingrich, but again, refused to say if a subpoena would be issued if he refused to cooperate.

In his letter to Gingrich, chairman of the select committee Mississippi Democrat Bennie Thompson said that Gingrich had "knowledge about former President Donald J. Trump's efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election," and the committee was in possession of emails exchanged between Gingrich and "senior advisers" to Trump, including his son-in-law Jared Kushner and his communications director Jason Miller.

In the emails, Gingrich "provided detailed input into television advertisements that repeated and relied upon false claims about fraud in the 2020 election," wrote Thompson. The emails sent by Gingrich did not encourage voting for a particular candidate but instead attempted to cast doubt over the results as a whole, after the fact.

One email allegedly sent by Gingrich on December 8, 2020, according to Thompson, called on the Trump campaign to air ads promoting the fascist lie that African American election workers in Atlanta, Georgia, had smuggled suitcases of fake ballots. Thompson wrote that Gingrich called for national advertisements regarding the "suitcase scandal."

Quoting from an email Gingrich sent to Kushner, Miller and Larry Weitzner, CEO of Jamestown Associates, the lead ad maker for Trump's 2016 and 2020 campaigns, Gingrich wrote:

"The goal is to arouse the country's anger through new verifiable information the American people have never seen before ... if we inform the American people in a way they find

convincing and it arouses their anger[,] they will then bring pressure on legislators and governors."

In addition to Gingrich pushing Trump's Big Lie, Thompson also noted that the committee has obtained information demonstrating that Gingrich was heavily involved in the bogus elector scheme. This underscores that the January 6 coup, unlike the narrative advanced by the Select Committee, was not the result of Trump and a few outlier Republicans but a multifaceted conspiracy that was embraced by a majority of the Republican Party and key sections of the state apparatus, including elements of the police, military, intelligence agencies and the Supreme Court.

Citing documents obtained by the Select Committee, Thompson wrote: "On November 12, 2020 you wrote the following to Mr. [Mark] Meadows [Trump's White House chief of staff] and Mr. [Pat] Cipollone [White House Legal Counsel]: "Is someone in charge of coordinating all the electors? Evans makes the point that all the contested electors must meet on [D]ecember 14 and send in ballots to force contests which the house would have to settle."

Even after the violent attack on Congress failed, Gingrich was still pushing high-level Trump co-conspirators to continue their efforts to overturn the election and establish a dictatorship. Thompson wrote that on January 6, at 10:42 p.m., Gingrich emailed Meadows and asked, "[a]re there letters from state legislators about decertifying electors[?]"

"Accordingly," Thompson wrote, "you appear to have been involved with President Trump's efforts to stop the certification of the election results, even after the attack on the Capitol." This sentence applies, not only to Gingrich but to a majority of those that the Democratic Party to this day calls our "Republican colleagues."



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