

Trump prepares to rig—or cancel—the 2026 elections

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President Donald Trump's declaration Monday on a right-wing podcast that the Republican Party should "nationalize" elections and "take over the voting" in Democratic-controlled cities and states is the signal for an intensified effort to rig the 2026 elections or cancel them outright.

Trump repeated his demands in remarks to the press on Tuesday in the Oval Office and then at greater length in an interview with Tom Llamas of NBC News, with excerpts broadcast by the network on Wednesday night. In unmistakably racist terms, Trump singled out Detroit, Philadelphia and Atlanta, all majority-minority cities with African American mayors, for vilification as "corrupt."

Significantly, Llamas expressed no disagreement with Trump's nonstop lies about the 2020 election, nor did he point out that Trump's effort to seize control of the electoral process in selected states and cities is a blatant violation of the Constitution. As billionaires tighten their grip on the corporate media—the purges at CBS and the *Washington Post* are current examples—the multi-millionaire "journalists" are accommodating themselves to the new order.

Trump's threats are the latest step in a steadily escalating campaign to suppress the democratic rights of the American people, including the right to vote. This has included systematic mid-decade gerrymandering of congressional district lines, passage by the House of legislation to require voter ID and ban mail-in voting, and demands by the Department of Justice for states to turn over their voter rolls, so that federal officials can intervene to disqualify voters.

Most recently, FBI agents raided the election office in Fulton County, Georgia (Atlanta), an action supervised on the spot by FBI Deputy Director Tom Bailey and Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard. Trump himself spoke directly to the FBI agents through a connection established by Gabbard, who has been suggesting that

China interfered in the 2020 vote.

All of these actions have been in support of Trump's false claims that he lost the 2020 election because of the votes of "illegal immigrants" brought into the country by the Biden administration, although non-citizens cannot vote, and very few attempt to do so. This is invariably linked to some form of the fascist "Great Replacement Theory," which claims that immigrants from Africa, Asia and Latin America are being brought into the United States by the millions in a deliberate effort to "replace" the white population.

In the openly neo-Nazi version, the perpetrators of this supposed campaign are Jewish billionaires. In Trump's slightly sanitized version, it is the Democratic Party. "So they've sent all of their people, millions and millions of people," he said Monday, referring to immigrants. "We have to get them out. And by the way, if Republicans don't get them out, you will never win another election as a Republican."

Trump's campaign against the 2026 elections thus combines his "stolen election" lies from 2020, which were the basis for the attempted coup of January 6, 2021, and the ongoing campaign of state terror against immigrants, being waged by masked, heavily armed agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

The end result would be an election rigged by the use of police terror to intimidate anti-Trump and particularly minority voters. Fascist former aide Steve Bannon hailed Trump's comments, calling for ICE agents to "surround" polling places in November.

Alternatively, should such methods prove unworkable, Trump might simply declare that the vote results in certain areas of the country should be disregarded. Or, as he told an interviewer last month, the elections should be cancelled altogether due to the supposed "great success" of his administration.

The United States has held elections every two years for Congress and every four years for president without interruption since the adoption of the Constitution in 1789. The Great Depression, foreign wars and even the Civil War did not prevent voting from taking place. If Trump now openly muses about putting an end to elections—in the year which marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence—it is because American capitalism faces a crisis of even greater dimensions.

Trump acts not as an individual but as the representative of a class. As the WSWS wrote last week:

Trump's conspiracy for dictatorship—of which the events in Minneapolis are only one component—is continuing. The president speaks and acts as the representative of the capitalist oligarchy, which, confronted with an escalating series of economic, political and social crises, is breaking with all democratic and legal norms. The Democrats' role is to conceal this fact, to chloroform the population and to block the emergence of any independent movement from below.

Trump's rampage in Minneapolis was only possible because of the complicity, silence and cowardice of Democratic officials in state after state, and above all in Washington. Only hours after Trump's remarks about "taking control" of the elections, the Democratic leadership in the House of Representatives supplied just enough votes to pass \$1.2 trillion in funding for the Pentagon and other US government departments, including a short-term extension for the Department of Homeland Security, which includes both ICE and CBP.

No doubt Trump fears that a heavy defeat of the Republicans in the 2026 elections would weaken his administration. But he is not principally concerned about the Democratic Party gaining seats in the House and Senate. He has long since taken the measure of the Democrats. It was Barack Obama who first welcomed him to the White House after his victory in 2016, declaring that after the "intramural scrimmage," the Democrats and Republicans were "on the same team." It was Biden who declared, after Trump's failed coup of January 6, that he wanted a "strong Republican Party." And the Democratic response to the violence of ICE and

CBP has been to file lawsuits and wring their hands.

The *New York Times* demonstrated the prostration of the Democrats before Trump with an editorial raising his threat to the 2026 election, but beginning with a rebuke of Democrats who criticized voter ID requirements as an effort to suppress minority turnout. The editorial noted that Trump himself told the *Times* that he "regretted not sending the National Guard to seize voting machines after the 2020 presidential election." Yet in response to this implied threat of military force, the *Times* could only appeal for more people to serve as poll workers and watchers.

Trump does not command a mass fascist movement. He seeks to carry out what the coup failed to accomplish five years ago by using the armed forces of the executive branch to establish a presidential dictatorship. The obstacle to this is not the Democratic Party but the working class, the vast majority of the American population.

The would-be dictator fears the mass movement that erupted in Minneapolis against the murderous invasion by ICE and CBP agents, and the intensification of the class struggle shown in the coast-to-coast wave of nurses' strikes and the impact of mass layoffs and falling living standards on working class consciousness.

The threat of dictatorship cannot be fought through the Democratic Party, which like the Republicans upholds the interests of the financial oligarchy and American imperialism. It requires the independent political mobilization of the working class.

The growing strikes, mass protests and calls for a general strike point the way forward. Preparations must be consciously made to unite workers across industries, regions and national lines in a general strike aimed at defeating Trump's drive to dictatorship. The working class must build an independent political movement whose goal is to break the power of the financial oligarchy and overturn the capitalist system that is driving society toward dictatorship and war.



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