



By now, the Trump story of a “stolen” election is old news. Trump’s own conduct during the campaign was likely the most significant factor in his defeat. So, no, I don’t believe the election was “stolen.” However, it is undeniable that Trump’s defeat was the result of a preponderance of absentee ballots in key states that were recorded as votes for Biden.

Thus, the subject of absentee ballots deserves significantly greater scrutiny than has been the case, not necessarily because there was fraud in the tallying of them, but because the whole absentee process may be suspect.

First, let’s return to the scenario of an election being conducted during the throws of COVID. As a result of lockdowns and the general panic surrounding this terrible pandemic, numerous jurisdictions temporarily revised their election laws concerning absentee ballots.

In the past, to qualify for an absentee ballot, one needed a reason why one could not cast a vote in person at the poles, such as not being in the district on Election Day or being ill or disabled to the extent

that an in-person vote was impossible. In addition, one had to apply for an absentee ballot to be sent one. During that application process, election officials would verify that the person applying for the absentee ballot was actually on the voter rolls and, if that was confirmed, the absentee ballot would be sent to the mailing address of the registered voters. The person would then complete the ballot including signing a certification, put the ballot in a sealed envelope and then put it in another envelope that was to be mailed to the election official.

With the advent of the COVID pandemic, this strict procedure was thrown out the window.



A Time-out is Called

At this point in the story, I need to point out a few salient points:

- Despite being a right, voting is also a duty of every citizen of a democracy. That right does not mean that voting should be easy or necessarily convenient, but, of course, reasonably accessible.
- During COVID lockdowns, commercial establishments such as Walmart and Apple stores remained open even though they were not essential to the well-being of citizens. In fact, when I went to an Apple store in an essentially closed shopping mall to get a replacement battery for my iPhone, there were almost one hundred people in line waiting to get in.
- **So tell me, was going to vote in person a hardship that prevented people from voting when going to Walmart to purchase a video game was not?**

The Time-out Has Expired

During the pandemic, absentee ballots were mailed to basically everyone. Because registered voter lists in many jurisdictions had not been purged of ineligible (deceased people or those who have moved), they, too, received ballots. When election day arrived, election officials were completely unprepared for the deluge of absentee ballots. As a result of the immense pressure to complete the count, shortcuts were taken and statutory due diligence was skipped. The reporting of election results in key states was significantly delayed.

Of particular concern was the fact that political operatives routinely visited public housing projects and nursing homes “encouraging,” and in some cases “assisting,” ballot recipients to fill them out, even offering to put them in ubiquitous unmonitored ballot boxes. This was highly problematic, encouraging vulnerable folks who normally wouldn’t vote to vote absentee as well as influencing those voters. If you think that didn’t happen, please fast forward to a recent instance in the city of Bridgeport, Connecticut.

During a highly contested Democratic primary for mayor, the incumbent won as a result of a highly unusual, by historic vote tallies, high number of absentee ballots.

In Connecticut, partisans (typically members of town committees) are allowed to distribute applications for absentee ballots to citizens and assist them in filling out the applications. (It has been reported that the incumbent’s partisans were allowed access to senior and public housing while the challenger’s partisans were refused access to those facilities.) This, in itself, is a highly suspect practice. As you might expect, and mentioned earlier, these partisans distributed and assisted the citizens in filling them out.

The law strictly prohibits the partisans from assisting the voter in filling out the ballot itself and requires the voter to personally deliver the ballot or have it delivered by an immediate family member or police officer. As you might expect, partisans likely followed up with these people, “helping” them fill them out, and “harvesting” the completed ballots to deliver them. Think that’s farfetched? Well, read on.

A concerned staffer at the Bridgeport city hall leaked a surveillance tape from a camera that was monitoring the absentee ballot box outside of the town hall. In the wee hours of the morning, the video clearly revealed that a member of the Democratic Town Committee was stuffing absentee ballots that she retrieved from shopping bags into the ballot box on more than one occasion.

Search for “Bridgeport Voter Fraud Video” on [utube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and see for yourself.

This tape was forwarded to the state’s election watchdog, the Connecticut State Elections Enforcement Commission. It turns out, that in addition to this incident, this same person has been charged with election law violations from the previous mayoralty election. The Commission has forwarded its findings to the Connecticut Attorney General (a Democrat), and low and behold after months from the most recent infraction and two years after the original infraction, no criminal charges have been forthcoming. According to the Attorney General’s office, “the investigation is ongoing.”

This particular incident was so egregious, a judge ordered a re-do of the primary.

If this one election incident is a microcosm of even a small portion of the national election scene, it is not a great leap to believe the outcome of critical elections can be unduly influenced by nefarious absentee ballot practices that are actually encouraged by ineffective rules and non-existent monitoring and enforcement.

This is not a partisan issue, as it is likely Republicans in some districts employ the same tactics.

In my not-so-humble opinion, people (unless prohibited from in-person voting by illness, disability or absence from the district) who are too lazy to get their collective asses to the polling place, should be disenfranchised. Those people show the ultimate disrespect for those who sacrificed their lives to preserve our democracy.

Roger

Just a footnote: This month the Democratic controlled Connecticut legislature enacted “election reforms,” but specifically omitted a Republican proposal that all absentee ballot boxes be monitored by video cameras.