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## Challenging election results – a destructive political weapon

Steve Bakke  March 16, 2024



We've slipped noisily into a presidential election year, and the races appear to have settled on their nominees. I hope things go a little differently this year.

I'm fed up with the almost 25 years of foolish and futile "tilting at windmills" of "stolen elections." Election denial has become a bipartisan habit not limited to Trump's recent complaints. And sadly, it's another factor fueling voters' understandably cynical attitudes about our electoral process and election integrity.

First, let's understand that claiming election irregularities and invalid election results is legal. The Electoral Count Act of 1887 provided for official objections. But for the first time it's been growing in popularity as a political weapon of choice for both parties. It's part of the price we pay for the political division that's become embedded in our culture.

The popularity of using election result denial as a political weapon stands in the way of much needed efforts to improve election security and integrity.

Following every presidential election from 2000 forward, the aforementioned 1887 Act was used to pose democrat objections to certifying elections. In 2021, republican congressional objections were offered for the first time.

Following are examples of democrat challenges and dialogue from recent presidential elections.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters signed an objection to certifying the 2000 election. During that presidential election certification she stated: "Ohio's partisan Secretary of State, Mr. Kenneth Blackwell, I am ashamed to say [is] an African American man..." Again, years later, on January 6, 2017, she officially opposed the slate of 2016 electors.

"Mr. Speaker, the right to vote has been stolen..." claimed Congressman Jerry Nadler during the 2000 election certification.

Also at that same 2020 event, democrat Bennie Thompson, chair of the recently dissolved J-6 Committee, joined with 30 other House Democrats and Senator Boxer attempting to decertify Ohio's presidential results.

In 2005, prominent democrat Representative James Clyburn, along with many still prominent democrats, again supported removing Ohio republican electors in favor of a democrat slate.

The current democrat House Minority Leader, Hakeem Jeffries, tweeted in 2018: "The more we learn about 2016 the more illegitimate it becomes. America deserves to know whether we have a fake President..."

On January 6, 2017, Democrat Congressman Jamie Raskin officially objected to Florida electors: "...because they violated Florida's prohibition against dual office holding."

During that same certification, Democrat Congresswoman Barbara Lee officially objected to Michigan electors stating: "people are horrified by the overwhelming evidence of Russian interference..."

Hillary Clinton, continues to call the 2016 election "stolen" and describes then-President Trump as "illegitimate."

"I think a full investigation would show that Trump didn't actually win the election in 2016...Russians interfered on his behalf" – so proclaimed former-President Carter in 2019.

Demonstrating their refusal to accept the 2016 election, almost 70 congressional democrats boycotted Trump's inauguration claiming the election was fraudulent. That group was led by the late Congressman John Lewis who declared: "I don't see this president-elect as a legitimate president...Russians participated in helping this man..."

In addition to that 2017 inauguration boycott, riots erupted in Washington, D.C. and around the U.S. Mollie Hemingway wrote about the riots on inauguration day 2017 in "Rigged," her chronicle of the 2020 election: "Hundreds were arrested as black-clad rioters set cars on fire, threw bricks, and injured police."

That same year, Biden's current press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre, appeared on Joy Reid's show and complained: Trump "now sits behind the Resolute desk in the Oval Office essentially defecating on women."

Democrat objections to the 2016 election led to the Mueller investigation of now debunked Trump/Russian collusion. And don't forget that investigation's impact on promoting the first futile Trump impeachment.

In spite of all of this, President Biden confirmed his own hypocrisy when he recently stated: "democracy cannot survive" if republicans continue questioning election results.

Moving to January 6, 2021, there wasn't just a riot on that day. There was also a presidential vote certification in progress, along with legal electoral challenges. Republicans supporting those challenges have been met with unsuccessful efforts to ban them from public office for merely participating in an official, legal electoral process. They were repeating the bad habits of democrats in earlier elections.

I've listed here a small slice of democrat presidential election challenges occurring during the last few decades. Donald Trump and republicans may have been "late to the party," but Trump certainly added outrageous twists to the challenge process. His reckless conduct may yet result in serious personal ramifications.

I'm fed-up with the hypocrisy of the democrats for sure, but ugly presidential election warfare coming from both parties is the source of so much of our unnecessary political division.