

DEMOCRATS NEED A PLAN FOR NATIONAL VOTER PROTECTION

Even as three different committees in Congress investigate how Russia tampered with our election last year, the Trump Administration *and Congress* are taking steps to tamper with the next election themselves.

The House Appropriations Committee just defunded the Election Assistance Commission, which is the only federal entity to help states prevent getting hacked.

The head of Trump's "Election Integrity" Commission, Kris Kobach – fresh off court sanctions for lying to a court – sent a letter to all the Secretaries of State, asking them for their voting rolls (including party affiliation).

And then Trump named the loathsome Hans Van Spaskovsky, who has a history of suppressing the vote of people of color, to the Commission.

It's probably no accident all this is happening as Trump and Mitch McConnell try to force through a massively unpopular change to ObamaCare. By making showy plans to cheat on a national scale, the Administration may be reassuring Republicans they can keep their job even by selling out their constituents in favor of a tax cut for the wealthy. They'll just do it by cheating even more obviously than they have in the past.

Whatever the logic, though, Democrats are thus far responding to this obvious effort to cheat with half measures. While Democratic Secretaries of State are announcing they're refuse to comply with Kobach's request, that's it. No discussion of anything more, not even an organized effort to point out that Pence didn't mention cybersecurity in his statement the other day on "Election Integrity" even as Congress

investigates the effect of hacks on the election last year. [This has been corrected to note it was Pence who didn't mention cyber; Kobach does actually ask about technology in his letter.]

Just nine months after Democrats pushed for a national effort to protect the vote as it was being hacked by Russians only to have Republicans balk, Republicans are now embracing such a national effort. Yet Democrats are unprepared for what a nation-wide effort to ensure all Americans get to vote would look like.

This is an opportunity to lay out standards, within the framework permitted by federalism, for real election integrity. That might include things like:

- Cybersecurity standards for both machines and electoral rolls
- Standards for a paper trail on voting
- Rules limiting how and when purges may happen
- Affirmative restrictions on identity requirements that impose financial and time costs

Two noted racists are about to try to rebrand cheating as "integrity." It's time for the Democrats to do more than simply resist, but instead to lay out what real election integrity would look like in this country.

That's all the more true given the investment Democrats have made in the Russian narrative. If Russia tampering with our vote is so important, then why is Republicans doing the same, much more aggressively and effectively, not worth the same effort?