August 11, 2021

Dear Chairman McDaniel:

We are proud to present to you the Report of the Temporary Committee on Election Integrity ("Committee"). We are both honored that you entrusted us to lead this crucial initiative. Over the past six months, the Committee and subcommittees met regularly to review our election processes and the Republican Party's role within them. We consulted numerous experts, tasked committee members with obtaining feedback from their states, conducted independent research, and deliberated over countless hours to develop this report. We hope our work on the Committee adds another chapter in our proud record as America's party of voting rights and trustworthy elections.

The Committee's work can be broken down into three main functions. One, we wanted to learn from the past, so a post-mortem of the 2020 election was needed to ensure we could digest the unprecedented challenges and changes to strategize for the future. Two, we studied best policies and practices for election administration in order to make sound recommendations for state legislatures and policymakers. Third, we studied and made recommendations for the RNC's and state parties' role in protecting and promoting election transparency and voter integrity.

We also want to ensure we recognize properly the work of the 24 Committee members who gave countless hours of their time and who made this report possible. We particularly want to thank our subcommittee chairs Jane Brady, Mark Kahrs, Debra Lamm, and Jason Thompson for their hard work drilling down into key topics. The subcommittees' work provides a treasure trove of useful and valuable information that the RNC can utilize moving forward. I also want to thank RNC Secretary Vicki Drummond who participated in virtually every Committee and subcommittee meeting as well as General Counsel Kyle Hupfer who provided valuable advice throughout.

We understand the RNC has a difficult challenge ahead and that millions of Republican voters nationwide demand the Committee to take action and lead on these important election integrity issues. We are hopeful that our work will leave a lasting impact and provide value to you, the party, and to all concerned Americans to help realize the goal of free, fair, and honest elections. We are at your service if we can be of any further assistance.
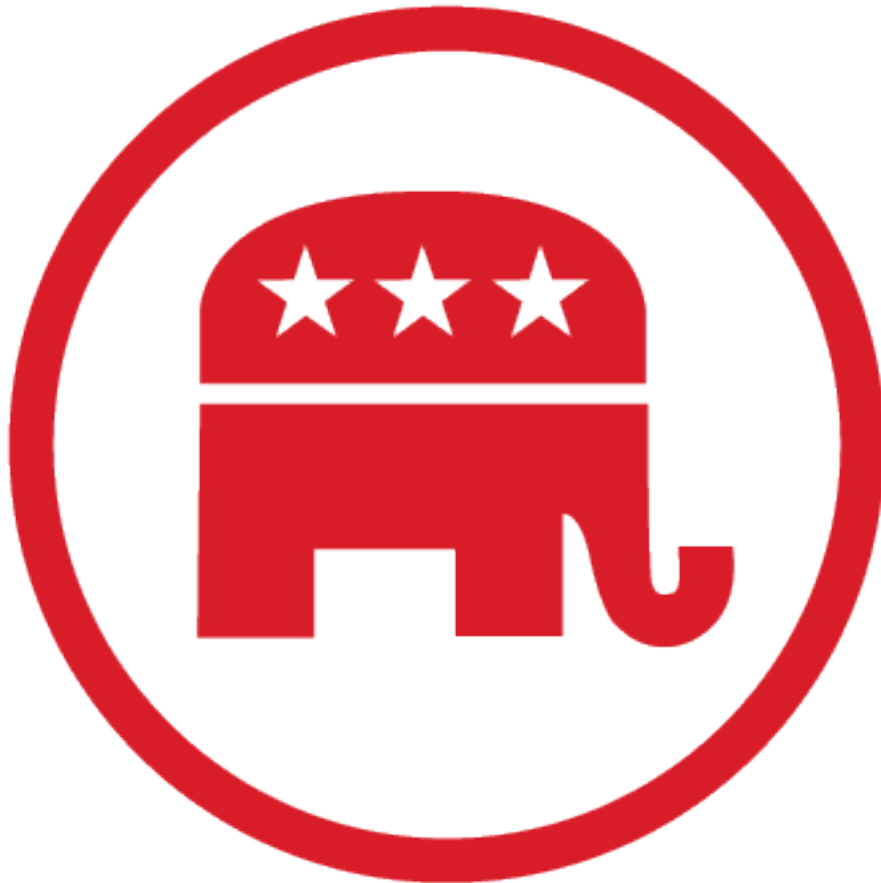
Appreciatively,

Joe Gruters
Chairman

Ashley MacLeay
Co-Chair

Republican National Committee
Report of the Temporary Committee on Election Integrity

Adopted on August 11, 2021

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Ashley MacLeay
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– Committee Co-Chairman –

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Jane Brady, Legislation
Debra Lamm, What Went Wrong, What Went Right
Mark Kahrs, Voting Systems and Technology
Nicolee Ambrose (Co-Chair), Voting Systems and Technology
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I.   Introduction

Republicans know the administration of the 2020 election had serious problems and failures regardless of what the press, Democrats, and so-called "experts" say. Laws were disregarded, election observer rights were restricted, and there are still many questions left unanswered. Some challenges were inevitable. The COVID-19 pandemic strained our elections system and most election officials did their best under trying circumstances. It's also true that Democrats and their liberal allies, including some elected officials, exploited the pandemic and used it as an excuse to haphazardly expand mail voting and loosen important integrity measures that are broadly supported by Americans and which prevent irregularities, boost confidence, and create a more secure elections process. Although these changes may have been well-intentioned, they were unnecessary, and were often enacted by courts that disregarded long-standing law, by Governors who abused their emergency powers, and by officials such as Secretaries of State who ignored state laws duly passed by their legislatures. Some officials also stonewalled access of Republican poll watchers and observers, and withheld access to basic election information the parties and public should reasonably expect to have. These attacks on transparency and the rule of law significantly undermined voter confidence in the election system. Not all the issues were COVID-related, but the attention to the election process created additional scrutiny of existing problems and weaknesses, including issues related to transparency and the security of voting systems.

There are also questions and criticisms from Republicans about the party's and candidates' efforts to protect election integrity in the last election. The Republican Party, led by the RNC, spent tens of millions of dollars on lawsuits, recounts, poll watching, and other activities and engaged more intensely in election integrity than ever before. Those efforts are ongoing as the RNC continues to litigate the issues in court, prepare an integrity plan for future elections, and fight and win the public debate over voter and election integrity.

The RNC also acknowledges the need to improve and develop its election integrity efforts. Because of the *DNC v. RNC* Consent Decree,[1] the RNC had been shut out of most election integrity efforts for nearly four decades, which led to a lack of institutional knowledge to conduct election integrity operations. Like any new undertaking, practice makes perfect, and listening to the concerns of voters and allies is absolutely necessary if the RNC is to lead on these issues. While any shortcomings in the party's 2020 efforts are not for a lack of effort, the RNC recognizes the tens of millions of Republican voters in the country need to be confident that the national party is working hard to protect elections and ensure the candidate with the most lawful votes wins.

The fate of the Republic rests on ensuring Americans have confidence in the integrity of elections. Unfortunately, the Democrat Party has long since abandoned any lip service to supporting policies that protect integrity, and instead have turned to lawsuits and fearmongering in attacking commonsense laws that states have passed to fix problems and shore up systemic weaknesses in our elections. Fortunately, the American people broadly

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[1] For nearly 40 years, the RNC was effectively prevented from engaging in election integrity activities due to a court-enforced consent decree from litigation the DNC filed against the RNC for allegations involving voter intimidation and other issues related to the 1981 New Jersey Gubernatorial election.

support these efforts: 63% of all voters report that election integrity is a top issue when deciding how to vote.[2] Poll after poll show that Americans overwhelmingly support integrity measures like voter ID, absentee ballot harvesting bans, and cleaning up the voter rolls. Ironically, even a majority of Democrat voters support many of the policies the Republican Party and this report advocate.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, RNC Chairwoman McDaniel established the Temporary Committee on Election Integrity ("Committee") to develop a plan for the RNC to lead the party forward and make policy recommendations that will protect and promote election integrity and restore confidence in America's elections. The RNC is proud of the party's tradition of protecting and promoting the voting rights of all American citizens and this report aims to build on that tradition.

## II.	Executive Summary

In February, through a vote of the Executive Committee, Chairwoman McDaniel established the Committee whose purpose was to study and make recommendations to restore election transparency and integrity and ensure voters have confidence in our election processes. The Committee represents a renewed focus on continuing the party's important work on election integrity and fighting unprecedented attempts to undermine important election integrity safeguards. The Committee worked closely with state parties and other allied stakeholders and experts across the country on the best practices and policies on voting issues and election integrity operations. From a policy perspective, the Committee's work spanned the entire elections process. The Committee studied transparency issues such as access for poll watchers and election information and the private funding of elections. It reviewed absentee voting and voter registration processes, integrity safeguards such as voter ID, and voting systems issues. The Committee makes policy recommendations for states on all these issues.

The Committee also focused intensely on the Republican Party's engagement in election issues. These efforts to protect and promote voter integrity extend through all components of the voting process: from the oversight and monitoring of elections and election officials, to tracking legislation and litigation, and how to communicate with the public and Republican voters.

The Committee established four subcommittees to help achieve its goals: Election Day Operations, Voting Systems and Technology, Legislation, and What Went Wrong, What Went Right. Each subcommittee worked diligently to identify key issues to study, research, draw conclusions, and finally make recommendations to the Committee in the form of official reports. The Committee also sought public input through a comment portal on the RNC's ProtecttheVote.com website; the Committee thanks the many concerned citizens who submitted recommendations to help inform the Committee's work.

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[2] Ronna McDaniel, *New RNC Polling Project, "Real America" Episode Featuring Kellyanne Conway*, GOP (July 8, 2021), https://www.gop.com/new-rnc-polling-project-real-america-episode-featuring-kellyanne-conway/.

The Committee's policy recommendations can best be grouped into two major categories. First, the Committee strongly advocates for policies that protect and promote transparency at all stages of the voting process. Second, the Committee emphasizes the need for states to enact policies that prevent, detect, and document problems, irregularities, and illegal voting at all stages of the election process but that are simultaneously minimally burdensome.

The Committee's recommendations include that the RNC refashion its internal election integrity efforts, which have been more focused on "Election Day," and transform it into a permanent and year-round effort that encompasses engaging in policymaking, litigation, ongoing oversight of election officials, monitoring the ever-expanding election calendar, and being prepared for critical post-election events like recounts and election contests. The recommendations also focus on the need to utilize all facets of the party's apparatus to promote election integrity, including the party's political, legal, data, and communications resources. Finally, the Committee recognizes the need to cooperate with and learn from other like-minded groups at the national level and grassroots organizations at the state and local levels.

The Committee's work is just the beginning, and it hopes that the research, findings, and recommendations in this report will play a meaningful part in the efforts to ensure trust, confidence, and integrity in the election process for years to come.

III. Summary of Committee Work and Findings

Chairwoman McDaniel tasked the Committee to study voting issues and make recommendations that will restore election transparency and integrity and ensure that voters have confidence in future elections. A major component of this was to evaluate what went right and what went wrong during the 2020 election in order to build on successes and improve in areas of weaknesses. While the full Committee itself held several meetings where it heard from experts in the field and policymakers, much of the work was done by the four subcommittees that the Committee established to focus on discrete topics. The subcommittees held frequent meetings, where they heard from additional experts and members shared their own research, and then issued final reports with recommendations on policy issues and actions for the party itself. The content of this report is largely comprised of the subcommittees' findings and recommendations. More details about the subcommittees' work and recommendations are listed in Section IV.

The Committee first met on February 26, 2021, during which it established its purpose, structure, goals, and objectives and made subcommittee assignments. Over the course of 20 weeks, the Committee and subcommittees met and engaged with outside organizations, heard from experts, and discussed individual members' research. The Committee and subcommittees heard from 30 experts in total who specialize in various aspects of the elections process. The experts presented on topics including current election integrity state and federal legislation, polling on election integrity issues, third parties' ongoing integrity efforts, the tools and resources available to state officials that are not widely known, proper state election administration practices, and how to best message election integrity issues to voters.

A. Findings

Unsurprisingly, when evaluating the 2020 election, the Committee found that the COVID-19 pandemic was the most impactful issue. The pandemic brought chaos and comprehensive changes to voting processes beginning in the spring primaries and lasting through the post-election process. The Committee acknowledges that some changes and impacts to our voting processes were unavoidable because of the pandemic and applauds election officials and poll workers who risked their health and braved difficult conditions to perform their duties.

However, Democrats, including some public officials, used the pandemic as a pretense to achieve long-sought policy goals such as expanded mail voting and the elimination of key safeguards, specifically for absentee voting, such as witness and ID requirements. One of the worst examples is the automatic mailing of ballots to voters who did not request them, including in states such as New Jersey and Nevada that had no tradition of heavy absentee voting and were unprepared to scale up their processes. Another example was how state courts ignored laws enacted by their legislatures such as ballot delivery deadlines. Utilizing emergency powers and the courts, the Democrats attempted, with some success, to tear down these key safeguards that give Americans confidence in our elections.

The pandemic also impacted the ability to observe the elections process. The Committee understands the need for social distancing, but officials were often far too aggressive in restricting access of poll watchers and observers. Poll watcher access has been a longstanding issue, and COVID exacerbated it considerably. It is also clear that officials watered down verification processes in order to handle the influx of absentee ballots. This included lowering review standards for counting ballots and insufficient ballot duplication procedures. This easing of standards combined with a lack of observer access to the processing and counting of absentee ballots could not have coincided at a worse time.

The 2020 election also uncovered several festering problems and weaknesses in our electoral system that were not specifically attributable to COVID and need to be fixed. Chief among these are ongoing failures of states to clean up their voter rolls and security vulnerabilities in election voting systems and infrastructure. There continue to be ongoing problems with a lack of public access to important election records and data. This is information the public deserves and officials have no good reason to withhold.

It is clear there must not be a repeat of what happened in the 2020 election. While some of the problems were outside of the control of the Republican Party and its elected officials, the party needs to do everything in its power to ensure existing laws are protected and enforced by the courts, enact meaningful election reforms that will address problems, and vigorously monitor election processes.

It is not all bad news. Some states managed their elections extraordinarily well in light of the obstacles they faced. Among those are Florida, Iowa, and Ohio, where election officials fended off Democrat legal challenges, properly enacted reasonable accommodations in response to COVID, and maintained the integrity of their election processes. The Committee

is also encouraged to see some states enact election reforms following the 2020 election to improve election administration and bolster the integrity of their elections.

Lastly, the Committee found that proper messaging is key. The media does not portray election integrity issues fairly or accurately, so the RNC must look for opportunities to create the message and be on offense. It is abundantly clear that the American people, including many Democrats, agree with the Republican Party's policies on election integrity. A recent RNC poll conducted by the Election Integrity Polling Project found that more than 80% of voters are in favor of voter ID, 87% are against ballot harvesting, and 78% support a proposed voting plan with five principles: voter ID, signature verification, chain of custody controls, bipartisan election observers, and clean voter rolls.[3]

B. Previous RNC Efforts: Temporary Committee on Elections

The Committee wishes to recognize the work of the Temporary Committee on Elections established by Chairwoman McDaniel in 2019 and led by California National Committeewoman Harmeet Dhillon. The former Committee was charged with helping set the future course for the RNC on election integrity issues in the wake of the Consent Decree and its work provided a solid foundation and recommendations from which to build. The RNC can greatly attribute its successes in 2020 to the work of the former Temporary Committee, especially on matters related to litigation.

C. Public Comment

The Committee wanted to allow RNC members and the public to have the opportunity to offer feedback and recommendations, so the RNC created an online form to submit comments. The responses were categorized by the following subjects: voter registration and identification verification, voting machines and the use of paper ballots, state party leadership, government action and responsibility, the use of drop boxes and ballot harvesting practices, methods of voting, legislation and laws, polling sites and election officials, and miscellaneous suggestions and comments.

The majority of submissions addressed the need to eliminate fraud, secure voting machines, and ensure that voting equipment has no wireless connectivity. Individuals also commented in favor of photo ID requirements, increased standards for signature verification, and more robust voter roll maintenance. Individuals expressed their concerns on expanded absentee voting and vote-by-mail during the pandemic, emphasizing that these voting methods should be limited and require a voter to request a ballot and show proof of ID prior to being sent a ballot. Lastly, several comments advocated for an increase in post-election audits, highlighted poor election administration practices at the local level, and emphasized the need for states to improve their election laws. Interestingly, some commenters advocated for more secure drop boxes while others argued they should be eliminated altogether.

The Committee has worked to incorporate some of these recommendations into the report and thanks the public for their valuable input.

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[3] *Id.*

D. Policymaking and Legislative Recommendations

The Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. Respect for Federalism

The Committee opposes all efforts from Congress and the Executive Branch to displace the states' constitutional and traditional responsibility to administer their own elections and determine their election procedures and voter qualifications. First, the decentralization of our elections is a natural deterrent to a central point of attack on our systems which congressional overreach would endanger. Second, states are the laboratories of democracy for elections policy. They should be able to experiment with various processes to determine what works best. States do not need Congress mandating bad policies like ballot harvesting and election day registration, and prohibiting good ones such as voter ID requirements. Democrats should learn from their failures in trying to pass H.R. 1/ S. 1 that the American people prefer states to set their own election policies. The Republican Party will do everything in its power to prevent a federal takeover of our elections.

2. Voting Systems and Election Infrastructure

The Committee diligently researched the nation's election infrastructure and identified various strengths and weaknesses that led the Committee to make the following policy and legislative recommendations.

- ➤ Voting Systems, Counting, and Related Issues:
  - o Auditable Paper Record of All Ballots Cast: All ballots cast in the United States should be on voting systems that produce a paper record of a voter's selections that is reviewable by the voter before the ballot is tabulated and auditable post-election.
  - o Network and Internet Connectivity: Voting systems should not have any wireless, network, or internet connectivity capabilities. Disabling such equipment is not sufficient. States should use the VVSG 2.0 standards as a floor and move to ban the presence of any hardware with network capability from inside a voting system.[4]
  - o Secure and Restricted External Ports: States should have specific requirements in law for port security and access. External ports must be securely sealed, have unique serial numbers that can be tracked, and have proper chain-of-custody safeguards and requirements.[5] All devices used to administer the election must be securely stored when not in use.

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[4] Press Release, U.S. Election Assistance Comm'n, U.S. Election Assistance Commission Adopts New Voluntary Voting System Guidelines 2.0 (Feb. 10, 2021), https://www.eac.gov/news/2021/02/10/us-election-assistance-commission-adopts-new-voluntary-voting-system-guidelines-20.

[5] In 2019 the Texas Secretary of State's office denied certification for a ballot marking device partly on the basis of port vulnerability. *Voting System Examination Dominion Voting Systems Democracy Suite 5.5-A*, TEXAS SECRETARY OF STATE (Nov. 3, 2019), https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/forms/sysexam/oct2019-sneeringer.pdf.

o Software and Servers: Only certified software should be installed on each voting system. All software or hardware configurations must be thoroughly tested.

o Administrative Access: States should limit election systems administrative access to only a select few local election officials.

o Voting Machine Logs: Machine logs should be publicly available and should not be deleted or destroyed, especially in the period immediately after an election.

o Certification Processes: States should implement voting systems certification standards that exceed EAC standards.

o Logic and Accuracy Testing: States should require local election boards to perform a logic and accuracy test on all voting equipment that will be used to process ballots.

o Transparency and Access to Records: States and local election jurisdictions should be required to provide public notice of any voting system activity or process. Additionally, all electronic records of configurations, software, logs, security devices, ballot images, hardware, and voting system firmware must be preserved for the same amount of time that state or federal law requires for all election related materials.

o Ballot Adjudication: Election officials should provide adequate instructions to voters on how to mark their ballots properly. States should publicly report statistics on machine error rates and numbers of adjudicated ballots that are broken down by category. Any adjudication of ballots should be done with bipartisan involvement.

o Voting systems must meet the minimum error rate established by federal law and localities should repair or replace any voting systems with high numbers of untabulatable ballots due to unknown or unexplained reasons.[6]

➢ Statewide Voter Registration Databases:

o Cybersecurity Protections: State and local election jurisdictions must take all possible measures to harden their registration systems from cyberattacks and other mischief.

o Reporting: State voter registration systems should be upgraded to allow for real-time reporting of detailed voter registration statistics, absentee/mail ballot information such as the number of ballots sent, returned, rejected, and

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[6] HAVA requires that federally certified voting systems "achieve a target error rate of no more than one in 10,000,000 ballot positions. *See Voting Systems Standards,* FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION (Dec. 13, 2001), https://www.fec.gov/resources/updates/agendas/2001/mtgdoc01-62/v1/v1s3.pdf; *see also Voluntary Voting System Guidelines 2.0,* ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION (Feb. 10, 2021). Final version is available here: https://web.archive.org/web/20041012103500/http://www.fec.gov/pages/vssfinal/vss.html (*See* Volume 1, section 3). https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/TestingCertification/Voluntary_Voting_System_Guidelines_Version_2_0.pdf ("A minimum of 10,000,000 ballot positions must be read by the voting system and tabulated accurately.").

accepted, the check-in of early voters, provisional voting information, and other data.

- o Please see "Voter Registration: List Maintenance" below for additional recommendations related to registration databases.

- ➢ Electronic Poll Books:
  - o Electronic poll books (EPBs) can be valuable tools to improve election administration and integrity. However, states should take steps to minimize risks.
  - o EPBs should never be connected to a voting system, especially if the EPB has network connectivity.
  - o Local election officials should have paper pollbooks at each voting location in case the EPBs fail. Local election officials should evaluate whether they have the resources and infrastructure to adequately utilize EPBs effectively.
  - o Any local election worker who will be operating an EPB should receive ample training and demonstrate competency in operating a EPB prior to working in at a polling location. Election officials should also work to first pilot the use of EPBs in low-turnout elections and avoid introducing their use in a high-turnout election.
  - o States using EPBs should also make enhancements to provide for more integrity features. For example, states could use digital photos stored in a government database that can be displayed on the pollbook screen when a voter checks in. This could be an added failsafe to normal photo ID requirements which states should also have in place.

- ➢ Other Recommendations:
  - o Whenever possible, states and localities should only use voting infrastructure hardware, software, and other products that are designed and manufactured in the United States by American-owned and operated companies.
  - o Election results reporting platforms must be protected from any potential cyber threats.
  - o States should also require jurisdictions to post publicly any changes to vote totals that take place after the initial unofficial reporting of results and to provide an explanation for the changes.

3. *Voter Registration Issues*
   - ➢ Same Day Voter Registration:
     - o The Committee does not recommend same day voter registration. However, if a state allows for it there should be strict identification requirements in order to confirm the identity of individuals and that they are eligible to vote.

   - ➢ Deadline to Register to Vote:
     - o The Committee recommends states have a "close of books" deadline prior to election day. The deadline should provide the state with enough time to update and reconcile the voter registration list for accuracy. The NRVA

allows states to set a voter registration deadline for federal elections no more than 30 days before an election.[7]

- ➢ Automatic Voter Registration and Non-Citizen Voting:
  - o The Committee opposes automatic voter registration, particularly when it automatically registers the voter instead of allowing the voter to opt-in. A purely automatic voter registration process adds individuals to states' voter rolls without asking individuals whether they want to be registered.
  - o The Committee opposes allowing non-citizens to vote in any elections. However, any state that does allow for non-citizens to vote in local elections should ensure it separates and removes any non-citizen voters from its statewide voter registration list and takes other steps to ensure non-citizens are unable to vote in other elections. States should require localities to use separate ballots for races that allow non-citizen voting and ensure bipartisan observers are eligible to be present to ensure the separation of citizens' and non-citizens' votes.

- ➢ Online Voter Registration:
  - o States offering online voter registration should implement vigorous identification requirements for applicants at the time of registration and heightened cybersecurity mechanisms to prevent any threats to the system. Any online registration system should require individuals to provide their driver's license or other state or federal government-provided unique identifying number or credential when applying to register online. This will allow online voter registration systems to interact with government databases such as a state's Department of Motor Vehicles or social services agency to verify the individual's information at the time of registration. State laws enacting online voter registration should require these other agencies to cooperate with state election officials in order to verify the information submitted through an online voter registration system.
  - o Any online voter registration system should utilize the existing voter registration deadlines applicable in the state and still allow a local election official to make the ultimate determination for voter registration eligibility versus automatically registering the individual. Legislative oversight and reporting should be required to ensure the system is functioning as required by law.
  - o States should also ensure their online voter registration systems are protected from cybersecurity threats and are prepared to handle spikes in voter registration activity in the days leading up to the voter registration deadline.

- ➢ Third-Party Registration:
  - o The Committee recommends states require third-party organizations who engage in voter registration efforts to register with the Secretary of State or other appropriate local election officials.

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[7] 52 U.S.C. § 20501.

- o States that provide paper voter registration applications to third-party groups should require training as a pre-requisite to obtaining applications.
- ➤ Voter Registration Reporting: The Committee recommends states report daily voter registration data on the Secretary of State's or other appropriate local election official's website. This will increase transparency in the voter registration process.
- ➤ Voter Registration: List Maintenance:
  - o The Committee recommends states enact statutes and rules that ensure compliance with the NVRA while also building on those minimum federal requirements to make reasonable efforts to remove ineligible voters from voter rolls in a uniform and nondiscriminatory manner.
  - o State election officials should work with other state agencies to ensure the voter list is accurate and that only eligible voters are registered to vote.
    - ▪ States should codify the obligation to require other state agencies to cooperate with state and local election officials on their list maintenance efforts.
    - ▪ States should ensure compliance with HAVA's requirements that their databases have the required interoperability with other state databases (e.g. department of vital records). This will ensure the removal of dead voters, ineligible felons, those who have moved to another jurisdiction, and others who should not be registered.
  - o States should enact laws requiring legislative oversight of a state's voter registration list maintenance program to ensure state election officials are prioritizing the issue. This would include requiring state officials to provide legislators with an annual report on their list maintenance activities, including the number of ineligible voters removed, new initiatives, and any weaknesses or needed improvements. State officials should provide any evidence of double or fraudulent voting to oversight committees and appropriate law enforcement agencies.

4. *Voter Identification Recommendations*
   - ➤ In-Person Voting: States should require voters to provide a government-issued photo ID while voting in person either during early voting or at a polling location on election day. States should also consider requiring the photo ID to display a signature, and if the ID does not, then the voter should provide a secondary form of ID that does.
   - ➤ Absentee Voting: States should enact reasonable voter ID requirements for absentee voting. These may include requiring the voter to provide a unique identifying number such as a driver's license number, social security number, or voter ID number when requesting and returning an absentee ballot. Election officials can match this number with the information on record to help confirm the voter's identity.
   - ➤ Outreach Campaigns: States should implement education and outreach campaigns to educate voters about ID requirements and to identify voters who do not have a

photo ID. Any strict photo ID requirements must provide voters without an acceptable ID a free and convenient method to obtain one.

5. *In-Person Voting Recommendations*

➢ Provisional Ballots: Voters that appear to vote without an acceptable ID should be permitted to vote with a provisional ballot and have the opportunity to cure their ballot by providing officials with their ID (or a copy thereof) within a set number of days after voting in order to have their provisional ballot count.

➢ Early Voting and Election Day In-Person Voting: States should provide in-person voting opportunities for a reasonable time before election day. The same identification requirements should apply to early and election day voting.

➢ Early Voting and Election Day Locations: Election officials should set and publicly post early voting and election day polling locations at least 30 days prior to the start of early voting and election day.

6. *Absentee Voting Recommendations*

➢ Universal Mail Voting: The Committee opposes a universal mail voting system that automatically mails ballots out to voters who do not request one. Such a system opens up a state's elections to much uncertainty, risks that ballots will be delivered to households where the intended voter no longer resides, and at best only marginally impacts voter turnout. It is simply a solution in search of a problem.

➢ Early Voting or Absentee Ballot Lists:[8] Some states allow voters to sign up to automatically receive an absentee ballot on an ongoing basis (i.e. for multiple elections without a new application).

o States with such a system should require the voter to make a written request to officials prior to being placed on such a list.

o This request should be renewed every one or two election cycles as opposed to the voter remaining on the list permanently. If the voter does not vote in an election in the set number of cycles, then officials should mail the voter a notice of removal from the absentee voting list. If the voter does not respond to the notice, then officials should remove the voter from the absentee voting list, but not the voter rolls.

➢ Overseas and Military Voters: States should do everything they can to enable their UOCAVA voters to receive their ballots quickly and within enough time to return them by election day.

➢ Absentee Ballot Request Deadline: States should impose a deadline to request an absentee ballot that provides the voter enough time to receive and return their ballot by the receipt deadline. Creating a request deadline further in advance from the election may be preferable so voters are not misled into thinking they have enough time to request, receive, and return a ballot by the return deadline.

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[8] Also known as Vote by Mail or Active Early Voting lists.

- ➢ Absentee Ballot Receipt Deadline: States should require all absentee ballots be received by the time polls close on election day, regardless of when they were postmarked. This is the rule in most states and it should be the standard.[9]

- ➢ Pre-processing of Absentee Ballots: States may consider allowing local election officials to begin pre-processing absentee ballots prior to election day, especially in jurisdictions that receive more absentee ballots than they can reasonably process on election day. The number of days for pre-processing should be reasonable and set by statute. Under no circumstances should any pre-processing occur without first properly notifying the public, political parties, and each candidate on the ballot at least 48 to 72 hours prior to the start of any pre-possessing activities. Members of the public and credentialed poll watchers must be allowed to have reasonable access to observe the entire pre-processing process. The Committee opposes any pre-processing activities that take place without the opportunity for party observers to be present.

- ➢ Ballot Rejection:
  - o States should establish specific criteria for which errors are material on a ballot or ballot return envelope (i.e. result in the official rejecting a ballot) and which errors are immaterial.
  - o States should codify that these criteria are not discretionary and need to be adhered to by both local election officials and state courts.
  - o Local election officials should promptly notify a voter if their ballot has been rejected and provide a reason for the rejection.
  - o The voter should be allowed to cure at least some deficiencies regarding the rejected ballot within a reasonable amount of time.

- ➢ Data Collection and Transparency:
  - o State and local election officials should report daily the total numbers of absentee ballots sent, those returned and marked as accepted, those returned as undeliverable, those ballots needing to be cured, and any outstanding ballots. In addition, once early voting begins, state and local election officials should report the total number of early voting ballots cast each day. States should post these numbers on the websites of the Secretary of State and local election office.

- ➢ Ballot Harvesting/Trafficking:
  - o All states should prohibit ballot harvesting/trafficking, which is defined as the collection and return of absentee ballots by third party groups, including political parties.
  - o States should provide limited exceptions such as allowing a voter's family member or caretaker to return or possess a voter's absentee ballot if the voter is unable to return it.

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[9] VOPP: Table 11: Receipt and Postmark Deadlines for Absentee Ballots, National Conference of State Legislatures (Sept. 29, 2020), https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/vopp-table-11-receipt-and-postmark-deadlines-for-absentee-ballots.aspx.

- An individual should only be in possession of a limited number of absentee ballots (e.g. a maximum of three) for the purposes of returning it on behalf of a voter.
- Some states may insist on ballot harvesting and Republicans in those places should work to match the Democrats' efforts instead of not engaging out of principle.
- States that allow ballot harvesting should heavily regulate the practice and require registration and identification by ballot couriers and impose severe criminal penalties for those who manipulate, destroy, or fail to return ballots.
- Drop Boxes:
  - If a state allows ballots to be returned at drop boxes, it should require they be located at a government facility, preferably at early voting locations and/or at permanent election offices, are open only during early voting hours or when the local elections office is open, and require monitoring by a local election worker.
  - Drop box locations should be set at least 30 days prior to the start of early voting and election day.
  - Drop boxes should be emptied daily by a bipartisan team of at least two election workers and on election day immediately after polls close.
  - The hours and locations of all drop boxes within the local election jurisdiction should be published on the local election official's website.
  - All ballots returned at drop boxes should be separated from the rest of the ballots received.
  - While the Committee does not recommend it, drop boxes that are available 24-hours a day must be under in-person or 24-hour video surveillance. Video recordings should be preserved and readily available for the public to review.

7. *Election Transparency*
   - The public and political parties need increased transparency and expanded observation rights during various parts of the elections process, including during ballot design and approval, voting equipment logic and accuracy testing, during all voting (early, absentee, and election day voting), polling place opening and closing activities, ballot adjudication processes, absentee ballot processing, canvassing of results, post-election recount or audit procedures, and the election certification process. For an extra layer of transparency, states may consider installing video monitoring equipment in all areas where election activities occur while ensuring the use of any cameras does not inhibit voter privacy and the right to a secret ballot.
   - Poll Watchers: The Committee recommends states establish clear requirements and processes for political parties and campaigns to designate poll watchers to observe election activities, especially at polling locations, absentee ballot counting and processing locations, and at canvassing.

- o Poll watchers should be permitted to observe at any polling place regardless of whether they reside in the county where they are poll watching.
  - o States should provide clear avenues for parties and candidates to appeal denials of access to observe.
- ➤ Ballot Duplication: A bipartisan team or board should handle all ballot duplication activities. Members of the public and credentialed poll watchers should be allowed to observe the duplication of any ballot to ensure the process is performed correctly.
- ➤ Ballot Challenges: States should establish a process for poll watchers to challenge unlawful ballots. Laws should be specific about who may challenge a ballot, the grounds for a challenge, when a ballot may be challenged, and how to submit a challenge.

8. *Standing/Process Issues*
  - ➤ The Committee recommends states allow state legislatures and political parties to have standing to bring or intervene in litigation related to election issues.

9. *Post-Election Verification Processes*
  - ➤ The Committee recommends states establish post-election verification processes and procedures such as risk-limiting audits. Post-election audits and recounts provide voters confidence that the election was conducted properly.
  - ➤ All post-election activities must be transparent and allow for the public and credentialed watchers to observe the process.
  - ➤ States should have clear procedures for how ballot challenges can be made during post-election activities.
  - ➤ States should have post-election audits after every election to verify that voting systems operated properly during the election. A post-election audit should be conducted on a specific race on a specific percentage of ballots from the chosen race. Selected ballots should then be manually counted and compared to the existing results.
  - ➤ States should have an automatic recount margin in addition to a candidate recount request margin. States should outline a specific timeline in which an automatic or candidate request recount must be initiated and completed.

10. *Third-Party Funding and Local Election Administration Accountability*
  - ➤ Third-Party Influence
    - o States should prohibit the acceptance or the use of any nongovernmental, third-party, or private money, grants, or gifts from outside sources to assist in the administration of an election.

- ➢ Accountability
  - o States should emulate reforms like those recently enacted in Georgia and Iowa that hold local election officials accountable for failing to competently administer their elections or who willfully disregard the law.
  - o State authorities should have the authority to remove underperforming local election officials who consistently fail to meet specific criteria for managing the locality's election processes.

11. Third-Party Recommendations
  - ➢ Many groups from across the ideological spectrum have made recommendations to improve election administration and fix problems encountered during the 2020 election. The Committee would like to acknowledge their contributions which helped inspire this report and applaud those groups that are working to ensure elections are secure and transparent.

E. Recommendations to the Party

The Committee reflected deeply on the Republican Party's past election integrity efforts, specifically as they relate to the 2020 election. Members also consulted with experts, outside groups, and stakeholders at the state level to receive recommendations and input on what the RNC should be doing. With the expiration of the Consent Decree, the RNC has a unique opportunity to take the lead on election integrity and guide, support, and assist states in these efforts. Below are a few high-level recommendations:

- ➢ The RNC should assist states to create, develop, and execute a robust election integrity plan that includes the recruitment, training, and organization of volunteers at every phase of the election process.

- ➢ The RNC should do everything possible to ensure states are complying with state and federal election laws. This begins by submitting public information requests to gauge compliance, raising examples of non-compliance with officials, and litigating when issues cannot be resolved informally.

- ➢ In coordination with the state party, the RNC should actively submit public information requests to states and localities to ensure they comply with the minimum federal requirements of the NVRA and applicable state laws to make reasonable efforts to remove ineligible voters from the voter rolls in a uniform and nondiscriminatory manner. The RNC should litigate against states and localities that are not fulfilling these obligations or who fail to disclose information about their practices.

- ➢ The RNC should look for offensive litigation opportunities whenever possible.

- ➢ States should create their own Election Integrity Committee that will focus on election integrity issues within their state.

➢ Election Integrity Operations:
  o Each state operation should have an Election Integrity Operations (EIO) Director in place early in the cycle in order to better recruit, train, and organize volunteers.

  o The state party should encourage individuals who are able and interested to apply to be a poll worker in their local election office.

  o Each state operation should have an Election Integrity Counsel who has a defined role to track state election law changes, flag and elevate issues, comment on rulemakings, communicate with state and local election officials, make litigation recommendations to the RNC, and provide guidance to the EIO Director.

  o The state party should develop an issue spotting and reporting software and documentation system for election integrity volunteers that allows for the escalation of issues to attorneys who can take immediate action.

➢ Communications/Messaging
  o Each state should have staff dedicated to communications to ensure they are targeting audiences, creating the narrative, and responding adequately when messaging on state-specific election integrity efforts.
  o Execute an aggressive communication and messaging strategy focusing on promoting election integrity through a positive lens by creating the message instead of responding to it.
  o Provide surrogates with talking points on current election integrity efforts, state and national legislation, and any related litigation.

IV. Summaries of Subcommittee Reports

As mentioned above, the Committee established four subcommittees: Election Day Operations, Voting Systems and Technology, Legislation, and What Went Wrong, What Went Right. In addition to meeting as the full Committee, each subcommittee met regularly to hear from subject matter experts, discuss members' research with one another, and formulate findings and recommendations.

A. Election Day Operations

The purpose of the Subcommittee on Election Day Operations was to study election integrity from the perspective of state Republican Party committees and campaigns and the various activities in which they need to engage in to protect and promote election integrity. The Subcommittee evaluated the efforts from the 2020 election and proposed solutions and recommendations for a nationwide operation for 2022 and beyond. The Subcommittee focused on several topics including the party's existing terminology usage of "EDO", the structure of a nationwide integrity program, needed training materials, the creation of an issue spotting and reporting system, the role of state parties, and legal strategies and resources.

The Subcommittee analyzed the phrase "Election Day Operations" (EDO) and what it means (or should mean) in today's political environment. The Subcommittee concluded that the term "Election Day Operations" should be retired from the lexicon of Republican vocabulary because it implies both a limited time period (election day) and scope of activities. Election activities and processes begin weeks and even months before election day and extend beyond election day to include post-election activities. Additionally, legislative and administrative rulemaking processes and election administration activities of state and county election officials also occur year-round and have a direct impact on election integrity and, therefore, need to be included in the party's efforts. Finally, there needs to be a year-round effort to recruit, train, and organize volunteers with whom the party can engage at every step of the election administration process. Therefore, the initiative should be named "Election Integrity Operations" (EIO).

To create a successful EIO operation there must be a robust recruitment, training, and organizational program. Training must ensure that every volunteer in the election process (poll watcher, tabulation/scanning observer, and attorney) be adequately trained and given training guides, manuals, and lanyards to be used as tools and resources. The EIO program must encompass a ballot chain of custody program and absentee/provisional ballot chase program. There must be an efficient, sufficient, and organized process to document and report issues observed by volunteers. The war room must be adequately staffed with attorneys who are trained and able to quickly identify and discern which issues are ripe to take legal action. Information from the reporting system must be readily available to provide these attorneys with the necessary documentation to file a lawsuit. Attorneys play an indispensable role in the EIO, and therefore must have the specialized training and knowledge of election law and/or be trial lawyers who can discern and identify potential litigation opportunities. Lastly, there needs to be full-time staff and resources dedicated to election integrity in states earlier in the cycle to implement the EIO program earlier. Special elections and primaries should be used as opportunities to test-run the operation.

This must be a joint effort between the RNC, national campaigns, and state parties. This will require cooperation and initiative by all involved. While the state parties will be largely responsible for the implementation of these programs, the Republican National Committee can and should assist state parties with their creation, development, and implementation.

B. Voting Systems and Technology

The purpose of the Subcommittee on Voting Systems and Technology was to research and evaluate voting systems and technology used in the United States to identify potential vulnerabilities and make recommendations that will improve election administration and bolster Americans' confidence in our elections. In evaluating election infrastructure, the Subcommittee's main takeaway was that cybersecurity vulnerabilities present a serious challenge for election administration and voter confidence in the United States. America's election infrastructure has become increasingly reliant on technology, which commensurately increases the risks of asymmetrical cybersecurity threats, constant obsolescence, and the risk for operator-driven problems such as neglected maintenance and programming mistakes.

States and localities need to enact necessary reforms to harden the nation's voting infrastructure from the myriad security threats it faces at home and abroad. A common security vulnerability among different voting systems is their ability to connect to an external network and have wireless connectivity. Some systems can also produce high adjudication rates. Regardless of the type of machine being used, election experts agree that the most resilient voting systems use paper ballots, either marked by hand or with an assistive device, and are verified by the voter before tabulation. States should not use a system that lacks a paper record. Reforms should also extend to the design and certification process for voting systems, an accurate and transparent scanning and tabulation process, extensive evaluation of each voting system used, and comprehensive post-election procedures to verify the election results, including audits. Any post-election procedures must extend beyond the ability to manually audit and recount paper ballots, but also allow access to electronic information and data from state and local election offices.

The Subcommittee believes any federal role in a state's election process should be minimal, while acknowledging that current federal law imposes minimum voting system standards for use in federal elections and charges the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) with administering voluntary voting systems certification standards. States and localities need to utilize outside experts and available resources to fortify their infrastructure and software, improve election administration processes, and procure the most secure voting systems. Further, federal and state certification programs need to be impervious to industry lobbying and political partisan influence.

In assessing infrastructure beyond voting systems, states must fully maximize technology to ensure only eligible voters are able to register and vote in elections. This is particularly relevant for statewide voter registrations systems and electronic poll books. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA), enacted in 2002, required states to implement statewide electronic voter registration systems to consolidate their localities' voting records in one central location and to interact with other state and federal government databases. These databases make voter registration easier, make voter rolls more accurate, and prevent fraudulent registration and voting. Now, nearly two decades since HAVA's enactment, states need to enhance their registration systems beyond those basic requirements to provide for enhanced list maintenance, features that detect irregularities, and other technologies to ensure all eligible voter registrations are timely processed.

The election process and access to election infrastructure data must be more transparent. The public must have timely access to public records and information, and the ability to observe and participate in the entire election administration process is imperative. Election officials need to understand that the parties represent tens of millions of voters and rightfully should access to observe all election processes and to obtain records and election information without unnecessary hurdles. Simultaneously, the Committee recognizes that election officials must be able to do their jobs in administering the election, and voters must have the secrecy of their ballot protected.

Lastly, many questions remain concerning the integrity of the election infrastructure in the United States, especially related to voting systems and ballot counting processes used in

key states. This is a concern not only shared by Republicans but by voters across the ideological spectrum and it is not a partisan issue. States and localities could have answered many of these questions by being more transparent and communicative about processes that are complex and difficult to understand yet are incredibly important for confidence in our election process. Due to a lack of transparency during the 2020 elections, Americans are understandably skeptical about aspects of our voting process and will continue to be unless transparency improves. To give Americans faith in the value of each individual's vote, it is critical that the counting of ballots be a secure, observable, and transparent process. Americans have every right to expect that every legal ballot is counted accurately.

C. Legislation

The purpose of the Subcommittee on Legislation was to research and recommend various election-related policies that will strengthen the integrity and confidence in the election process. The Subcommittee supports active efforts by state legislatures to engage in policymaking to ensure the election process has integrity, is transparent, and is worthy of the electorate's trust. The Subcommittee made the policy recommendations found in *Section III. Subsection D - Policymaking and Legislative Recommendations* on specific issues related to voter registration, list maintenance, voting methods, drop boxes, poll watching, ballot harvesting, laws enabling legislatures and parties to intervene in litigation, and post-election verification methods. In sum, states should enact election-related policies that will strengthen the integrity, confidence, and transparency in the election process. It is vital that states continuously review their laws to ensure there is transparency and efficiency throughout the entire election process. Now more than ever, voters need their confidence in the election process restored. States can help achieve this by adopting the specific policy recommendations addressed in this report. Them doing so will lead to a more transparent, fair, and efficient election process.

D. What Went Wrong, What Went Right

The purpose of the What Went Wrong, What Went Right Subcommittee is self-explanatory: to identify what went wrong and what went right during the 2020 election cycle. While the three other subcommittees focused on assessing specific subject-matter areas, this subcommittee was more retrospective in focus and made recommendations in response to the weaknesses and successes identified.

First, it is imperative that states clean up their voter rolls. This has been an ongoing problem for decades. States taking this seriously will reduce risks of illegal voting, improve election administration, and restore confidence that there is no double voting and only legal votes are counted. Additionally, due to the last-minute and executive overreach that occurred during the 2020 election, legislation must be enacted to ensure that the overreach of executive power by Governors and Secretary of State's is not repeated. The RNC must learn from previous election integrity operations and develop an operation that is year-round, robust, and well-funded, focusing on recruiting, training, and organizing volunteers. The party must also create an issue reporting system that will allow volunteers to easily report election-related irregularities and violations during all phases of the election. These reports will create potential offensive litigation opportunities by providing organized and

documented facts. While being mindful of potential legal restrictions, there should be engagement with like-minded outside organizations on election integrity issues.

It is important for the RNC to implement an aggressive communications strategy focusing on election integrity and opposing bad state and federal legislation. This strategy includes efforts to ensure the grassroots understands all the RNC is doing to promote election integrity. The majority of Americans support photo ID requirements, are against ballot harvesting, and agree that ballots should not be accepted after election day or sent to individuals who are unregistered or non-citizens.[10] These types of facts and messaging points should be provided to surrogates (including RNC members) with encouragement to amplify the message by writing op-eds and sharing information at the state and local level.

A messaging expert explained that the message and response should be tailored to the specific audience with the goal of creating a positive and actionable reaction. It should also recognize that individuals will respond and determine the importance of an issue by how often they hear it or how it connects with them emotionally. When engaging on an election integrity issue, it is important to be on the offense and create the message instead of being on defense and responding to it. Each message should be simple and easy to process by using evocative moral words to convey why voters should care about the issue and how it will affect their lives.

Much was learned from the review of the 2020 election and these lessons can lead to a more successful Election Integrity Operation in the future by learning from mistakes, building on successes, and continuing to broaden efforts into 2022 and beyond.

V.   Conclusion

The Committee recognizes that Republican voters across the country reasonably demand much from the RNC and look to the national party and its leaders to take the lead in protecting America's election process and promoting voting rights and voter integrity. The Committee has now spent over six months studying, drawing conclusions, and making recommendations that will hopefully make a lasting impact and help achieve that mission. This is just the beginning, but the Committee is confident this report will provide the blueprint to avoid another election like 2020.

The Republican Party must look ahead. The RNC and its leaders look forward to promoting the policies endorsed in this report nationwide and implementing the recommendations specific to the RNC in 2022 and beyond. States like Florida, Georgia, and Iowa are already adopting policies like those recommended in this report, and the Committee hopes others follow their lead. It is clear that much of the work is already underway, and the RNC will do its part to continue the mission to ensure all Americans have confidence that our elections are secure and transparent.

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[10] Ronna McDaniel, *New RNC Polling Project, "Real America" Episode Featuring Kellyanne Conway*, GOP (July 8, 2021) https://www.gop.com/new-rnc-polling-project-real-america-episode-featuring-kellyanne-conway/.