FACTS ABOUT VOTING BY MAIL

May 27, 2020

The week, I posted 66 tweets setting forth some facts about the safety and integrity of voting by mail. For ease of reading, I have compiled them into this document.

https://twitter.com/EllenLWeintraub/status/1265841303012638725

Thread! Buckle up.

1/ It’s been claimed that voting by mail leads to massive corruption and fraud. But what are the facts?

2/ U.S. citizens will vote by mail this year in record numbers. In the face of a global health emergency, election officials across the country from both parties are working heroically to ensure that voting by mail is accurate, accessible, safe & secure.

3/ There’s simply no basis for the conspiracy theory that voting by mail causes fraud. None.

@CNN & @washingtonpost fact-checks show this. But many others have examined the issue and arrived at the same conclusion. Still others have provided some key context. Take a look!
Here is @CNN's fact-check, cited by @Twitter:

https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/26/politics/mail-in-ballot-vote-by-mail-trump/index.html

And here is @washingtonpost's fact-check, also cited by @Twitter:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/05/26/review-trumps-many-unsubstantiated-allegations-voter-fraud/

And here are a few more:

@CBSNews political reporter @Grace_Segers:

https://twitter.com/Grace_Segers/status/1265264320860114946
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Commissioner Ellen L. Weintraub
May 27, 2020

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

7/ @NBCNews:

https://twitter.com/NBCNews/status/1249661161693462529

President Trump pushes false claims about mail-in vote fraud. Here are the facts.

Trump pushes false claims about mail-in vote fraud. Here are the facts.
The pandemic has ignited a partisan battle around the voting method, with Democrats increasingly embracing the idea as way to ensure a safe election.

7:30 AM · Apr 13, 2020 · SocialFlow

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

8/ @MichaelSteele & @elilehrerd for @WashTimes:

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May 27, 2020

Conservatives need to get behind vote-by-mail options in 2020 election
Systems save money, don’t require waiting in line and are immune from large-scale fraud

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

9/ @atrupar for @voxdotcom:

https://twitter.com/atrupar/status/1265266762079186946

Aaron Rupar
@atrupar

Five states, including deep red Utah, already conduct elections almost entirely by mail, and only evidence of mail-in election fraud Trump has been able to cite is a "pants on fire" lie vox.com/2020/4/8/21213...

Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

There is NO WAY (ZERO!) that Mail-In Ballots will be anything less than substantially fraudulent. Mail boxes will be robbed, ballots will be forged & even illegally printed out & fraudulently signed. The Governor of California is sending Ballots to millions of people, anyone.....

Show this thread

9:01 AM · May 26, 2020 · Twitter Web Client

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

10/ @RSchallom for @FortuneMagazine:

https://twitter.com/rschallom/status/1265261179347353600
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This is false. Over the last two decades, about 0.00006% of total vote-by-mail votes cast were fraudulent.

fortune.com/2020/05/25/vot...

8:39 AM - May 26, 2020 - Tweetbot for iOS

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

11/ @byjlee fact-check for @snopes:


Claim

In U.S. elections, mail-in voting systems "substantially" increase the risk of voter fraud compared to in-person voting.

Rating

Mostly False

12/ @JBendery for @huffpost:
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https://twitter.com/jbendery/status/1265263129887457280

Jennifer Bendery
@jbendery

Oregon has been voting *entirely* by mail since 1998. Gov. Kate Brown said it makes her blood boil to hear Trump's fearmongering about fraud as it is "virtually nonexistent."

"He doesn't know what he's talking about."
https://huffpost.com/entry/oregon-g...

Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump · May 26

There is NO WAY (ZERO!) that Mail-In Ballots will be anything less than substantially fraudulent. Mail boxes will be robbed, ballots will be forged & even illegally printed out & fraudulently signed. The Governor of California is sending Ballots to millions of people, anyone.....
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8:46 AM · May 26, 2020 · Twitter Web App

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

13/ @ACLUofNE:

https://twitter.com/ACLUofNE/status/1265262029159497730

ACLU of Nebraska
@ACLUofNE

80% of Nebraskans who voted in our May primary voted by mail. Voting by mail is secure. It's effective. It led to record turnout.

Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump · May 26

There is NO WAY (ZERO!) that Mail-In Ballots will be anything less than substantially fraudulent. Mail boxes will be robbed, ballots will be forged & even illegally printed out & fraudulently signed. The Governor of California is sending Ballots to millions of people, anyone.....
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8:42 AM · May 26, 2020 · Twitter Web App
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May 27, 2020


15/ @srl for @GuardianUS:

https://twitter.com/srl/status/1265277183272062976

This is false. California is not mailing a ballot to "anyone living in the state, no matter who they are or how they got there." The state is sending ballots to voters who are registered in California: gov.ca.gov/2020/05/08/gov...

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump - May 26

There is NO WAY (ZERO!) that Mail-In Ballots will be anything less than substantially fraudulent. Mail boxes will be robbed, ballots will be forged & even illegally printed out & fraudulently signed. The Governor of California is sending Ballots to millions of people, anyone....

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9:42 AM - May 26, 2020 - TweetDeck
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May 27, 2020

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

16/ Thread from @brennancenter & @NYULaw Professor Michael Li (@mcpli):

https://twitter.com/mcpli/status/1264583397864808455

Bless his heart. He has no idea how mail ballots work (though he should since he votes by mail). There are a couple of key layers of security. 1/

Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

The United States cannot have all Mail In Ballots. It will be the greatest Rigged Election in history. People grab them from mailboxes, print thousands of forgeries and “force” people to sign. Also, forge names. Some absentee OK, when necessary. Trying to use Covid for this Scam!

10:08 AM · 5/24/20 · Twitter for iPhone

11:45 AM · May 24, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

17/ All types of voter fraud in U.S. elections are minuscule in comparison to the number of ballots cast, according to elections experts (@brennancenter):

https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/false-narrative-vote-mail-fraud
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The False Narrative of Vote-by-Mail Fraud

Mail ballots are essential for holding a safe election amid Covid-19, and security concerns can be easily addressed.

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

18. @Reuters poll finds that 72% of all U.S. adults, including 65% of Republicans, support a requirement for mail-in ballots to protect voters (@Cmkahn):

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-poll/most-americans-unlike-trump-want-mail-in-ballots-for-november-if-coronavirus-threatens-reuters-ipsos-poll-idUSKBN21P3G0

Most Americans, unlike Trump, want mail-in ballots for November if coronavirus threatens: Reuters/Ipsos poll

Chris Kahn
3 MIN READ

19. @IssueOneReform Co-Chair @IOWamp (Former Rep. R-TN):

https://twitter.com/IOWamp/status/1265608087265857536
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In 2016, roughly 1 in 4 voters cast their votes via mail-in ballot (@voteathome):

https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/ef45f5_81a3affd554e4b5b9b5852f8fb3c10fd.pdf

Debunking the absentee / vote by mail fraud and abuse argument

One of the most puzzling, frustrating things we run into at the National Vote at Home Coalition is the accusation that making absentee ballots far more accessible, much less allowing “Vote at Home” elections in which every voter receives a mailed-out ballot will result in material fraud or abuse. So, let’s set the record straight, with data rather than fear.

“Oregon has mailed out more than 100 million ballots since 2000, with about a dozen cases of proven fraud; a 0.000012 percent rate” (@drvox for @voxdotcom):

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The simple voting reform that works wherever it’s tried
Recent experiments in Alaska and Nebraska show voting by mail dramatically boosts turnout.
By David Roberts | @davro | davidsro.com | Updated May 24, 2018, 11:07am EDT

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

President disbanded his own commission charged with investigating voter fraud in 2018, without producing any systemic evidence of fraud. @miwine & @tackettdc for @NYTimes:


Trump Disbands Commission on Voter Fraud

President Trump in 2018 with Kris Kobach, the Kansas secretary of state who went on to become a member of the White House voter fraud commission. Carolyn Kaster/Associated Press
23/ “Deeply conservative Utah has moved almost entirely to vote-by-mail in recent years” (@aseitzwald & @sahilkapur for @NBCNews):

https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/coronavirus-has-ignited-battle-over-voting-my-mail-here-s-n1178531

24/ President requests vote-by-mail ballot for Florida Republican presidential primary (@mannahhorse for @pbpost):

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25) Fox News Anchor Chris Wallace: “I've done some deep dive into it, there really is no record of massive fraud or even serious fraud from mail-in voting.” “It's being carried out in Republican states, it's being carried out in Democratic states.”

https://twitter.com/kylegriffin1/status/1264896497268768768

26) From more than a billion votes cast between 2000 and 2012, there were only 491 cases of absentee-voter fraud (@news21 Voting Rights Project):

https://votingrights.news21.com/article/about/
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27/ Parties are virtually equal in percentages of who votes by mail (@cstewartiii for @caltech):

https://electionupdates.caltech.edu/2020/03/20/some-demographics-on-voting-by-mail/

28/ @NBCNews White House Correspondent @GeoffRBennet:

https://twitter.com/GeoffRBennett/status/1265620820208029702
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NEW: Trump insists there's "NO WAY" an election with increased mail-in voting will be legitimate. But both Democratic and Republican officials overseeing that process say he's dead wrong.

Trump rants about fraud. But here's the secret to keeping voting by mail secure. Election officials in both parties have put in place safeguards. And they work. 📰 nbcnews.com

8:28 AM · May 27, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

29/ Author and @UCL Professor @brianklaas:

https://twitter.com/brianklaas/status/1265260640039587842

Brian Klaas
@brianklaas

I study election rigging. I co-authored a book called How to Rig an Election. These tweets are lies. The purpose of these tweets is to lay the groundwork to reject or dispute election results if he loses.

Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump · May 26

There is NO WAY (ZERO!) that Mail-In Ballots will be anything less than substantially fraudulent. Mail boxes will be robbed, ballots will be forged & even illegally printed out & fraudulently signed. The Governor of California is sending Ballots to millions of people, anyone.....

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Commissioner Ellen L. Weintraub
May 27, 2020

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**30:** GOP state officials warming to vote-by-mail (NE, OH, WV, IA); Iowa Republican SoS Paul Pate: "sowing doubt about the integrity of the process is as dangerous as vote fraud" (@NickRiccardi for @AP):

https://apnews.com/4cf54df2ab65b4f7d0ee6d4aed774428

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**31:** Mistake, not fraud: “Fraud by individual voters is almost nonexistent; mistakes in a confusing system are the real issue” (@Rutgers_Camden Professor Lorraine C. Minnite):

https://scholars.org/sites/scholars/files/ssn_key_findings_minnite_on_the_myth_of_voter_fraud.pdf

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**THE MISLEADING MYTH OF VOTER FRAUD IN AMERICAN ELECTIONS**

*by Lorraine C. Minnite, Rutgers University-Camden*

Are fraudulent voters undermining U.S. elections? The simple answer is no. Rather, the threat comes from the *myth* of voter fraud used to justify rules that restrict full and equal voting rights.

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**32:** @BrennanCenter’s “The Truth About Voter Fraud” found that even among the small number of reported incidents of ‘fraud,’ most turn out to be traceable to other causes:
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May 27, 2020


BRENNA N C E N T E R
FOR JUSTICE
TWENTY YEARS
at New York University School of Law

Debunking the Voter Fraud Myth

Sensationalist claims have circulated this election season about the extent of voter fraud, with some politicians going so far as to tell voters to fear that this November’s election will be “rigged.” Because electoral integrity is one of the elements necessary to making America the greatest democracy in the world, claims like this garner media attention, and frighten and concern voters. But putting rhetoric aside to look at the facts makes clear that fraud by voters at the polls is vanishingly rare, and does not happen on a scale even close to that necessary to “rig” an election.

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

33/ @NaveedAJamali for @Newsweek:

https://twitter.com/NaveedAJamali/status/1265426007692992512

Naveed Jamali
@NaveedAJamali

Washington State has successfully used mail-in voting since 2005. In 2018 the only 142 cases of improper voting out of 3.1 million ballots, or just 0.004% of all votes, were designated “improper voting.” So, Washington State shows mail-in ballots work.

Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

There is NO WAY (ZERO!) that Mail-in Ballots will be anything less than substantially fraudulent. Mail boxes will be robbed, ballots will be forged & even illegally printed out & fraudulently signed. The Governor of California is sending Ballots to millions of people, anyone.....

7:34 PM · May 26, 2020 from Seattle, WA · Twitter for iPhone

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

34/ @MarshallCohen for @CNN:

https://twitter.com/MarshallCohen/status/1265428400656744454
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This tweet is false too — and should be labeled as such, like the earlier tweet about mail-in voting. (Because he says mail-in ballots “lead to massive corruption and fraud,” which is a debunked lie.)

@kirstenfrankly (Chief of Staff, UT GOP Lt. Gov. @SpencerJCox): “there is very little evidence of voter fraud within our mail-in system” (@NBCNews):

https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/trump-pushes-false-claims-about-mail-vote-fraud-here-are-n1180566

Trump pushes false claims about mail-in vote fraud. Here are the facts.
The pandemic has ignited a partisan battle around the voting method, with Democrats increasingly embracing the idea as way to ensure a safe election.

GOP leaders have long urged their supporters to vote by mail. GOP governors are sounding the call for easy access to mail-in ballots (@DoyleMcManus for @LATimes):

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Column: Trump doesn’t like mail-in voting, but it’s not his call

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

37/ @MSNBC quoting Michigan @LtGovGilchrist:

https://twitter.com/MSNBC/status/1265213623611383808

“More people are killed by deer in a year than have ever been proven to commit voter fraud at a given time,” Michigan Lt. Gov. Gilchrist says about claims that mail-in voting will lead to fraud.

Michigan Lt. Gov.: Trump is ‘dead wrong’ on mail-in voting
As President Trump continues to make baseless claims about mail-in voting leading to fraud, Michigan Lt Governor Garlin Gilchrist notes that ‘more ...
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May 27, 2020

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

38. @realDonaldTrump votes by mail (@Yamiche for @PBS):
https://twitter.com/Yamiche/status/1263198640044195840

Yamiche Alcindor
@Yamiche

So today, Pres Trump, who regularly votes by mail, threatened to hold up federal funds for two battleground states--Michigan & Nevada-- bc they are trying to make it easier & safer to vote during the coronavirus pandemic.

Then, @PressSec referred Qs about it to Trump campaign.
4:03 PM · May 20, 2020 · Twitter Web App

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

39. @Heritage election fraud database reports just 143 convictions involving fraudulent use of absentee ballots over the past 20 years (approx. 0.00006% of total votes cast):
https://www.heritage.org/voterfraud

A Sampling of Recent Election Fraud Cases from Across the United States

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

40. @SenatorRomney says 90% of Utah Republicans vote by mail (@BudrykZack for @thehill):
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https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/498916-romney-counters-trump-90-percent-of-very-republican-utah-votes-by-mail

Romney counters Trump: 90 percent of 'very Republican' Utah votes by mail

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

41/ “There is no evidence that mail balloting results in rampant voter fraud” (@AmberMcReynolds & @cstewartiii for @thehill):

https://thehill.com/opinion/campaign/494189-lets-put-the-vote-by-mail-fraud-myth-to-rest

Let's put the vote-by-mail 'fraud' myth to rest

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

42/ Former Republican campaign strategist compares president to “the boy who cried wolf” in spreading panic and undermining faith in the electoral process, to the detriment of his own base. (@grace_panetta for @businessinsider):

https://www.businessinsider.com/trumps-crusade-against-vote-by-mail-could-backfire-on-republicans-2020-5
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Why Trump's crusade against voting by mail could backfire on Republicans and hurt the president's own voters

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

43/ @KimWyman12, Republican @secstatewa, supports vote by mail. (@llerer for @NYTimes):


ON POLITICS WITH LISA LERER

Washington: Where Everyone Votes by Mail

We spoke to the secretary of state to get her take on voting by mail and whether she thinks the balloting option could be implemented across the country.

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

44/ Research on vote by mail shows neutral partisan effects. (May Wong, @SIEPR):

https://siepr.stanford.edu/news/new-research-voting-mail-shows-neutral-partisan-effects
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New research on voting by mail shows neutral partisan effects
By May Wong

APR 16 2020
The coronavirus has disrupted state primaries and forced the prospect of major reforms for the 2020 election. Election officials across the nation are mulling expansions or transitions to mail-in voting while Congress is fielding calls for a nationwide vote-by-mail program.

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

45/ Trump casts doubt on mail voting. His campaign promotes it. (@NickRiccardi for @AP):
https://apnews.com/6416231367cfa0bd213796149f3cee26

Ellen L Weintraub
@EllenLWeintraub

46/ In 2017, the risk of mail-in vote fraud was 0.0004% to 0.0009% (@HopeYen1 & Calvin Woodward for @AP Fact Check, quoting @BrennanCenter):
https://apnews.com/e45b0fd875cd2bf8be2b92330f37300f

AP FACT CHECK: Trump misfires on watchdogs, mail-in voting
By HOPE YEN and CALVIN WOODWARD
April 12, 2020
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May 27, 2020

47/ Former Assistant Secretary of Defense under President Reagan, @LarryKorb: “U.S. troops routinely vote by mail. Why can't the rest of America do the same?” (@MilitaryTimes):

https://www.militarytimes.com/opinion/commentary/2020/05/18/us-troops-routinely-vote-by-mail-why-cant-the-rest-of-america-do-the-same/

Commentary
US troops routinely vote by mail. Why can’t the rest of America do the same?
Lawrence J. Korb

48/ @LeeDrutman for @FiveThirtyEight: “There is no evidence that vote by mail gives one party an advantage.”:

https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/there-is-no-evidence-that-voting-by-mail-gives-one-party-an-advantage/

There Is No Evidence That Voting By Mail Gives One Party An Advantage
Could that change this fall?

by Lee Drutman
Filed under: First Election

• • •
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49/ Justin Levitt (@_justinlevitt_): “Each act of voter fraud in connection with a federal election risks 5 years in prison....a single extra vote is simply not worth the price.” (@brennancenter @NYULaw):

https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/The%20Truth%20About%20Voter%20Fraud.pdf

50/ Oh, and I (@EllenLWeintraub) have also spoken on the topic: “Democrats have studied this, Republicans have studied this, and no one can find any evidence of rampant voter fraud either historically or particularly in the 2016 elections.”

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51/ To sum up:

Many Americans will be voting by mail this year. In the 2016 general election, 139 million people voted overall; even more could do so this year.

52/ With that many voters, could a few instances of illegal voting activity crop up? Perhaps. But there is no basis to claim that it will be anything other than exceedingly rare.

53/ Facts matter. Data matters. When Prof. @justinlevitt researched in-person voter fraud between 2000 and 2014, he found just 31 credible allegations – just allegations! – out of more than a *billion* ballots cast.


54/ Research by U. of Wisconsin & Stanford political scientists “indicate[d] that the proportion of the population reporting voter impersonation is indistinguishable from that reporting abduction by extraterrestrials.”

The numbers are similarly tiny for voting by mail. Even the Heritage Foundation’s voter-fraud database contains only 13 instances of absentee voter fraud across the 5 states that had all-mail balloting going into this year: CO, HI, OR, UT, & WA.

https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/18/opinion/2020-election-results-delay.html

Voting by mail will not make the 2020 election substantially fraudulent or massively corrupt.

There is no basis for that claim.

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Specifically:

There is no basis for the claim that the election will be substantially fraudulent or massively corrupt due to mailbox robbery.

There is no basis for the claim that the election will be substantially fraudulent or massively corrupt due to ballot forgery.

There is no basis for the claim that the election will be substantially fraudulent or massively corrupt due to illegal ballot printing.

There is no basis for the claim that the election will be substantially fraudulent or massively corrupt due to fraudulently signed ballots.

There is no basis for the claim that the election will be substantially fraudulent or massively corrupt due to voters being told for whom to vote.

There is no basis for the claim that the election will be substantially fraudulent or massively corrupt due to a cheating free-for-all.
There is no basis for the claim that the election will be substantially fraudulent or massively corrupt due to a forgery free-for-all.

There is no basis for the claim that the election will be substantially fraudulent or massively corrupt due to a ballot theft free-for-all.

Claims that voter fraud is widespread are, as shown above, “dead wrong,” “crying ‘wolf,’” “false,” “a debunked lie.”

Such falsehoods are not mere words. These falsehoods may well undermine the American people’s faith in our democracy. And the “real” fraud would be if U.S. citizens were deterred from voting and our government reflected the consent of fewer of the governed.

True leaders speak truth. Especially in an election season plagued by pandemic, economic uncertainty, and death, the American people deserve nothing less than the truth from our leaders.