

TUCSON OPINION

Citizens must act to halt autocracy

The following is the opinion and analysis of the writer:

We know that Donald J. Trump will utilize legal, illegal and even violent means to stay in power. In 2020, he tried to use fake electors. On Jan. 6, 2021, he incited a mob to attack Congress in an attempt to delay the certification of election results. He failed, particularly in court, where all of his 62 election cases arguing fraud were dismissed, except one minor case.



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Trump knows if he loses the midterm elections this coming November, his march towards authoritarianism will be stymied. Even more important to him, he will likely be impeached by the House. Should the Democrats win both chambers, he will be removed from office. Therefore, he will use every means to rig the midterms in his favor.

Note: if Trump invokes the 1792 Insurrection Act, it does not legally prevent the election from happening.

Trump started by intimidating prominent law firms involved in cases upholding voting rights, by threatening to prohibit the federal government from hiring them. Nine unprincipled major law firms capitulated and did not fight. Their partners placed personal wealth above helping to preserve the integrity of our elections. Those firms have agreed to do nearly a billion dollars of pro bono work for causes that Trump approves. Extortion. Other law firms, who did fight, won.

Trump then promoted mid-census (very rare) congressional redistricting in Red States, like Texas, to gain more House seats for Republicans. Gerrymandering is a more accurate word. Predominantly black and brown districts were particularly targeted.

Through an Executive Order, Trump attempted to impose the requirement that those wanting

to register to vote must show proof of citizenship with a passport or similar document. He has no authority to make such a requirement. Registration and elections are run by the States according to the U.S. Constitution. Research has shown that voter fraud is basically non-existent. Yet, because Trump denied the 2020 election result, saying it was stolen with absolutely no proof, some States run by Republicans are falling in line and making it more difficult for people to register to vote.

Have you asked yourself why the Department of Justice (DOJ) is suing 23 States (all blue or purple) for their sensitive voter registration data? Trump wants to keep the big lie alive, since it is the cornerstone of the MAGA movement – denying that Trump lost in 2020. DOJ, previously the upholder of free and fair elections, is now a tool of Trump. It most likely would weaponize such data by finding ways to disenfranchise segments of the voting population, suppress votes,

spread lies and false information about the 2026 election, and use the data to litigate and delay the certification of election results.

Other initiatives that Trump and Republicans in Red States will likely attempt to undermine free and fair elections include: arguing to overturn the Voting Rights Act, seizing voting equipment, making it harder to vote by stopping early voting and voting by mail, and prolonging wait times by reducing polling places in Democratic districts.

How do we combat Trump's efforts to rig the 2026 midterms?

The U.S. District Courts and U.S. Courts of Appeal have stymied Trump. But more lawyers are needed to join this fight. Retired lawyers and judges, law school deans and professors, law school students (to do important legal research) and law firms in general need to devote pro bono time to maintain our voting rights through initiatives in state Legislatures and state courts.

Republicans and independents, who voted for Trump and now

are offended by his actions to undermine free and fair elections might consider, as Americans who believe in our democracy, that Trump no longer deserves their support.

Local activists must continue to expose and protest Trump-inspired actions that move our country away from democracy and toward autocracy, as well as actions that are damaging, if not cruel, to those among us who are particularly vulnerable.

Every concerned citizen needs to join nationally announced mass protests and boycotts to show strength in numbers. Every concerned citizen needs to help get out the vote by knocking on doors, leaving literature, donating, writing postcards, and then vote out of office those members of Congress who support a president who rigs elections.

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