

To: Interested Parties

From: Jessica Floyd, President, American Bridge

RE: American Bridge 21st Century Launches Eight-Figure Effort to Safeguard Democratic Elections

THE NEED

Our democracy is under attack. It's as simple as that. While the battle for control of Congress, and governorships, will be in full force the next 11 months, there is a larger battle playing out across the nation—a battle for the backstop of our democracy.

At the core of America is the ability to have free and fair elections. That one person, with their one vote, can change the course of leadership and chart a vision for our country. Yet, Republicans - in their fealty to Donald Trump - are waging an assault against free and fair elections. On January 6, 2021, following the deadly and horrific insurrection, eight Republican Senators and 147 Congressional Republicans opposed certifying the 2020 Presidential Elections.

And it has only gotten worse. At the state level, more than 60 lawsuits and audits have been run seeking any justification to overturn the election. Every week a new development or story breaks detailing Donald Trump's singular mission to steal the election. We cannot sit idle any longer.

2020 could have ended very differently. While President Biden prevailed with a commanding win in the popular vote and the electoral college, the former president, his Republican allies, and their media outlets launched an unprecedented campaign against the mechanisms of democracy itself. From corrupt efforts to pressure the Republican Secretary of State in Georgia to the Wayne County Election Board in Michigan, this assault was more than a short-term effort to overturn a single election. It continues as an ongoing campaign to seize power within the systems of vote counting and administration that underpin our democracy – with the stated endgame being the ability to overturn unfavorable election results entirely.

While much attention has been paid to the Republicans who refused to certify Joe Biden as the rightful winner of the election, and the sham audits and lawsuits pursued by Donald Trump and his allies, few have grappled with just how close state and local officials who run our elections came to overturning the election in the states. For example, in Wayne County, which includes the city of Detroit, two Republican members of the four-person Board of Canvassers originally refused to certify the county's vote based on non-existent allegations of fraud, only to reverse course last-minute. Their switch not only was essential to certifying Michigan's 16 electoral votes cast for Joe Biden, but also to the potential ripple effect to many states who certified after Michigan, including Wisconsin, Arizona, and Nevada.

The threat is real and the fight is ongoing. Today, Donald Trump has effectively convinced 68 percent of Republicans that the 2020 election was stolen. Barton Gellman's blockbuster analysis of the threat, [published in *The Atlantic*](#) lays it out: "In nearly every battle space of the war to control the count of the next election - statehouses, state election authorities, courthouses, Congress, and the Republican Party apparatus - Trump's position has improved since a year ago." Additionally, in over a dozen states, Republicans have advanced new laws that will provide their state legislatures with authority over elections. In November 2021, seven Republican candidates who were at the January 6th insurrection were elected to local office. At the same time, Republican primaries have made election denial a litmus test and the Republican National Committee has made it clear that it will further the Trump orthodoxy over the 2020 election and January 6th rather than support members of its own party trying to preserve democratic institutions.

To date, the Republican State Legislative Committee - which supports GOP candidates in Secretary of State and other local races - raised \$33.3 million in 2021, a whopping \$14 million increase over their annual haul two years ago. On top of all of this, Republican operatives recently announced that they are expanding their tracking programs in hopes of winning more state and local races - and their efforts are paying off. To compete with Republicans, we must fight back against these efforts, and help Democrats win the state and local races that will be crucial in preserving our democracy.

OUR PLAN

Today, American Bridge 21st Century is announcing we will be launching an eight-figure effort to safeguard our elections. By holding Republican democracy-deniers accountable and spending to elect Democrats who will respect the will of the voters in 2022, we are fighting to keep the 2024 election free and fair - and we are starting right now.

American Bridge is an unparalleled organization within the Democratic campaign infrastructure. We specialize in a long-term approach to investigative opposition research and candidate tracking, and on strategically weaponizing our findings to have the biggest possible impact on winning elections - whether through traditional media, social media, sharing with allies, paid media, or other tactics.

Anti-democracy activists rely on a level of anonymity to receive the benefit of the doubt from voters, and are especially vulnerable to investigation into their public stances, beliefs, and actions. To counter the growing threat from the authoritarian right wing, Democrats need a comprehensive opposition research program that can investigate these local and state-level Republicans who seek power over our election system, and use this information to win key elections.

While protecting democracy is our goal, our tactics are always to win elections and build Democratic electoral power. Almost by definition, anti-democracy activists are tied to views, opinions, and actions that are out of step with the views of the majority of voters. These

leverage points are our focus. American Bridge will find these candidates' vulnerabilities, highlight them in earned media, and eventually add paid media in key races. Far too many of these candidates are likely to benefit from years of underinvestment in local elections. American Bridge has always existed in part to catch candidates as they rose through the ranks of the Republican party. In the past, that has been an electoral and power-building strategy. Now, it is an existential one.

No organization is better positioned to counter this insurgency from conservatives than American Bridge. We are the largest opposition research organization on the progressive and Democratic side, and have already begun expanding our staffing capacity, with over 20 staffers dedicated to this project. We've tracked hundreds of candidates, monitored dozens of races a cycle, and are constantly producing hard-hitting and factual reports to hold Republicans accountable. We share our research with over 200 national and state-level partners to ensure our message gets across, and we've already launched a [\\$100 million paid media campaign](#) supporting the Democratic agenda.

As we grow our team and build towards paid media, we have launched the SuperPAC "Bridge to Democracy" to support this work.

Our announcement comes just days after [the Independent reported](#) that 72 people who rejected the outcome of the 2020 presidential election — including Arizona GOP gubernatorial candidate Kari Lake, Arizona GOP Secretary of State candidate Mark Finchem, Michigan GOP gubernatorial candidate Ryan Kelley, and a number of Trump allies in Pennsylvania — are running for offices across the country that have the power to oversee and overturn elections.

OUR TARGETS

We have identified the positions in key states most essential to election administration and certification in 2024, determined which of those positions are winnable by Democratic and progressive candidates in 2022 and 2023 elections, and started finding the Republicans' vulnerabilities. Our core targets for this project include Secretaries of State, Attorneys General, Governors, county boards of supervisors and boards of canvassers, state supreme courts and judicial races, and state legislators across 12 states where a fair election is vital for a democratic and legitimate 2024 presidential fight.

For example, Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson (D) faces four Republican candidates in her re-election this November. Her Trump-backed challenger Kristina Karamo is a believer in the Big Lie, having stated that she has witnessed "irregularities" in the processing of absentee ballots. More recently though, [she was quoted](#) spewing extreme anti-sex rhetoric, stating "men and women honor their crotches, people honor their crotch, their crotch is their God."

Kari Lake, the Republican frontrunner for Arizona Governor – a vital position for certification of the 2024 [election results](#) – is among the largest promoters of election lies and would present a serious barrier to the certification of a legitimate Democratic win in Arizona in 2024. At the same

time, her policy-lite campaign has come under [sustained fire for her position insisting that video cameras be placed in classrooms to monitor teachers.](#)

In other states, where the state legislatures set the election laws, there are numerous candidates who [attended](#) the January 6th riot, and others who are [working on the legal defense](#) for attendees.

And on the county level, the electoral system is especially vulnerable to Republican officials who oversee the vote certification process for blue-leaning cities within those counties. In places like Pennsylvania's York County, a red county surrounds the city of York, which is more Democratic and contains a significant minority population, at particular risk for disenfranchisement through bad-faith election administration. The county commission is up for reelection in 2023.

Over the course of the cycle, we will continue to update our target list. In the years ahead, as Republicans fight to erode the Constitutional foundation of our democracy, this initial eight-figure program will become a core component of our work here at American Bridge.

We are sounding the alarm for Democrats that the decades-long fight by Republicans to restrict the right to vote has shifted. No longer is Republican orthodoxy content to systematically and unconstitutionally deny minorities and young people access to the ballot box - the test for their candidates is whether Democrats should be allowed to win elections at all.

American Bridge is stepping into the breach to stop them.