

Michigan Republicans Debunk Voter Fraud Claims in Unsparing Report

[nytimes.com/2021/06/23/us/politics/michigan-2020-election.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/23/us/politics/michigan-2020-election.html)

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A committee led by Michigan Republicans on Wednesday published an extraordinary debunking of voter fraud claims in the state, delivering a comprehensive rebuke to a litany of accusations about improprieties in the 2020 election and its aftermath.

The 55-page report, produced by a Michigan State Senate committee of three Republicans and one Democrat, is a systematic rebuttal to an array of false claims about the election from supporters of former President Donald J. Trump. The authors focus overwhelmingly on Michigan, but they also expose lies perpetuated about the vote-counting process in Georgia.

The report is unsparing in its criticism of those who have promoted false theories about the election. It debunks claims from Trump allies including Mike Lindell, the chief executive of MyPillow; Rudolph W. Giuliani, the former president's lawyer; and Mr. Trump himself.

Yet while the report eviscerates claims about election fraud, its authors also use the allegations to urge their legislative colleagues to change Michigan's voting laws to make absentee voting harder and limit the availability of drop boxes for absentee ballots, as Republicans have done in other swing states as they try to limit voting.

"This committee found no evidence of widespread or systematic fraud in Michigan's prosecution of the 2020 election," the authors wrote, before adding: "It is the opinion of this committee that the Legislature has a duty to make statutory improvements to our elections system."

Michigan Republicans, who control the state's Legislature, have for weeks debated a series of new voting restrictions. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, has said she will veto the legislation, but Michigan law allows citizens to circumvent the governor by collecting 340,047 signatures.

Michigan's secretary of state, Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat, said on Wednesday that she hoped Republican lawmakers would use the report to "cease their attempts to deceive citizens with misinformation and abandon legislation based on the lies that undermine our democracy."

Here are some of the conclusions from the Michigan report that debunked Trump allies' claims about the election:

Referring to Antrim County in Northern Michigan — where local election officials briefly and inadvertently transposed voting numbers before correcting them, leading to false conspiracy theories about voting machines — the report suggests that Michigan’s attorney general, Dana Nessel, a Democrat, should “consider investigating those who have been utilizing misleading and false information about Antrim County to raise money or publicity for their own ends.” It adds that anyone who promoted the Antrim County theories as the prime evidence of a nationwide conspiracy to steal the election had left “all other statements and actions they make in a position of zero credibility.”

- The Voter Integrity Project, a right-wing group, has said that 289,866 “illegal votes” were cast in Michigan. The report’s authors called 40 people from the group’s list of supposed voters who received absentee ballots without requesting them and found just two who said they had been sent unrequested ballots. One was on the state’s permanent absentee voter list. The other voted absentee in the 2020 primary election and may have forgotten about checking a box then to request an absentee ballot in the general election.
- The report found that the chaos that unfolded after Election Day as votes were counted at the TCF Center in Detroit was the fault of Republican operatives who called on supporters to protest the count. “The Wayne County Republican Party and other, independent organizations, ought to issue a repudiation of the actions of certain individuals that created a panic and had untrained and unnumbered persons descend on the TCF Center,” the report states.
- Claims that Dominion Voting Systems machines in Michigan and other states had been hacked to change results were false, the report said. The committee’s chairman, State Senator Ed McBroom, a Republican, called Georgia officials to investigate claims made by Jovan Pulitzer, who said he had access to manipulate vote counts. Mr. Pulitzer’s testimony “has been demonstrated to be untrue and a complete fabrication,” the report said. “He did not, at any time, have access to data or votes, let alone have the ability to manipulate the counts directly or by the introduction of malicious software to the tabulators. Nor could he spot fraudulent ballots from non-fraudulent ones.”
- Of Mr. Lindell’s wide-ranging claims of fraud and impropriety in vote-counting systems, the report states that “this narrative is ignorant of multiple levels of the actual election process,” before embarking on a lengthy debunking of his claims.
- While Mr. Trump claimed that more votes had been cast in Detroit than people who live there, the report found that turnout in the city was under 50 percent of eligible voters and about 37 percent of its population.

- No ballots were secretly “dumped” at the Detroit vote-counting center. “A widely circulated picture in media and online reports allegedly showed ballots secretly being delivered late at night but, in reality, it was a photo of a WXYZ-TV photographer hauling his equipment,” the report states.