

Received: from mercury.its.state.ms.us
by governor.state.ms.us; Fri, 01 Dec 2000 08:30:52 -0600
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Dec 2000 08:33:28 -0600
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by mx1.its.state.ms.us (8.10.0/8.10.0) with ESMTP id eB1EXIN26907
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Received: from HCoayne2026@aol.com
by imo-d10.mx.aol.com (mail_out_v28.34.) id f.c9.adcf845 (4588);
Fri, 1 Dec 2000 09:30:25 -0500 (EST)
From: HCoayne2026@aol.com
Message-ID: <c9.adcf845.27591000@aol.com>
Date: Fri, 1 Dec 2000 09:30:24 EST
Subject: Safeguarding the election
MIME-Version: 1.0
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Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
To: undisclosed-recipients;;
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To Religious Leaders, Members of Government, Anti-Hate Groups, the
Media, Law Schools, and Textbook Publishers
From: Hilda Coyne, 2026 Harman Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21230

Re: Safeguarding the election

The following is an open letter to the Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court,
with copies to those listed above, followed by requests to the members of the
media and to Secretary of Defense William Cohen

Every American thanks the honored Justices of the Supreme Court for their
valued time and dedication to addressing citizen concerns, this time about
some recent election related events.

To begin with, over thirty thousand votes of illegal design, missing or
uncountable in one county alone seems beyond the margin of error. It seems
an odd coincidence that the precincts with the tens of thousands of those
ballots were in predominantly Democratic precincts.

In addition, according to USA Today, NAACP officials conducted five hours of
hearings in Florida with some disturbing findings. For instance, Rev. Clyde
W. Jutson, Sr., pastor of Good News Little River Baptist Church in Miami,
testified that a ballot box was not picked up by election officials from his
church. He believes it could have contained as many as 1,400 ballots,
depriving those citizens of their Constitutional right to vote. His church
is in a predominantly African-American area.

Next, Andree Berkowitz of West Palm Beach testified that, despite published
reports, Palm Beach residents did not have a chance to approve the so called
butterfly ballot with an allegedly illegal design before the election.
Further, he said that officials in Riviera Beach, a largely African-American
community in Palm Beach County, openly denied many registered voters of their
Constitutional right to cast ballots.

Then, Kweisi Mfume, President of the NAACP, stated that, while there were
voting irregularities reported throughout the country, the situation in
Florida was so demanding that they had to deploy 200 additional people there.
Further, lawsuits the NAACP is preparing will allege that some Haitian
voters in Florida were denied assistance from translators. Moreover, the
lawsuits will allege that election officials purged a disproportionate number
of votes in predominantly African-American counties. Then, some
African-Americans aired claims of vote suppression in Duval and West Palm

Beach counties. Furthermore, some county law enforcement officers allegedly denied some African-Americans in Broward and Hillsboro counties access to the ballot box, and other voter intimidation reportedly occurred in those two Florida counties as well. These events allegedly took place in Fort Lauderdale in Broward County and in Tampa in Hillsborough County.

Most important, it seems if there were only one or two votes that were missing, of possible illegal design or uncounted, that might fall within the margin of error. However, with 19,000 ballots missing, 10,000 unreadable, and over 3,000 possibly illegal votes cast in one county alone, that county may benefit from a revote. In fact, an MSNBC journalist reported that thousands of citizens called him crying hysterically that they believed they voted for a candidate not of their choice because they were confused by the design of the ballot. Furthermore, the Reform Party candidate, Pat Buchanan, said that he felt the over three thousand votes he received belonged to Vice President Al Gore. In addition, voters in Palm Beach County may file lawsuits asking for a new election because the butterfly ballot there was confusing and misleading.

In addition, some overseas ballots did not meet the guidelines for acceptance because they did not have a date stamped on the envelope to ensure they met the time requirement for counting in the final tally of votes. Therefore, a copy of this letter is going to the Secretary of Defense, William Cohen. Perhaps he may be able to ensure that the postal offices which collect the military overseas ballots always have a date stamp and an ink pad. This may help to ensure that every citizen in the U.S. military who is of age and paying taxes can exercise his or her Constitutional right to vote and to have that vote counted.

Furthermore, the Baltimore Sun reported that this country has had votes not counted in elections before, along with people voting from cemeteries and districts they did not live in. However, U.S. citizens have never before had votes openly not counted. They also have never had a state official openly impede a vote counting process already under way, in the full view of the media. Similarly, Americans have never experienced nominal experts openly composing apologetics for throwing votes away instead of counting them, while being paid by major news outlets for doing so.

Additionally, both Texas and Florida laws include provisions for recounting votes, including manual recounts. Texas law is particularly clear on the preferability of hand recounts, and a hand recount was requested and received by Bill Hollowell, a Republican running for state representative in East Texas.

However, neither Florida law nor Texas law says that the deadline for a recount must be the same as for the initial vote count. In fact, some legal scholars have stated that the deadlines may extend until January 5. Yet, the Justices of the Supreme Court may find whatever time is necessary to have a fair and accurate count to determine the true will of the people. It seems more important that there is an accurate counting of the votes than any possible manipulation to prevent it.

Furthermore, the Associated Press reported that in Martin County, election supervisor Peggy Robbins said she had given permission for a Republican Party official to remove from her office "several hundred" incomplete absentee ballot applications sent by GOP voters. The official returned them, filled out with corrected voter identification numbers and other information, said Robbins, a Republican.

In a similar case in Seminole County, a Democratic supporter has sued over the GOP handling of absentee ballot applications. The Democrats would like to disqualify 15,000 ballots. As Gore said on CNN, "If the ballots for one party were illegally changed and fixed, and the ballots from the other party that didn't have that information were rejected and thrown away, that doesn't seem fair to me."

In fact, it is important to determine the correct results of this election as quickly as it is realistically possible to do so. Yet, it is equally important not to overlook the Constitutional right of each citizen to vote and to have that vote accurately counted.

For example, Florida Governor Jeb Bush of Florida supports the unprecedented legislation to award the 25 electoral votes from his state directly to his brother, G.W. Bush. Jeb Bush stated that, "If there is uncertainty, the [Florida] Legislature has clear, delegated authority from the U.S. Constitution to seek the electors." However, it is the Justices of the Supreme Court who make Constitutional decisions. In fact, it seems it is not up to a brother to decide the will of the people, any more than it is up to the Florida Secretary of State Kathleen Harris, the Republican co-chair of the Bush campaign. It appears that it is the electorate that decides the outcome of this election. Further, it seems as if every decent United States citizen who is of legal age and pays taxes has the Constitutional right to vote and for that vote to count.

That is why all Americans appreciate that the honored Justices of the Supreme Court are doing all that they can to see that the will of the people is clearly expressed and carried out. Therefore, the Justices have the hearts and prayers of all Americans as they proceed in a demanding and thoughtful procedure.

Note to the members of the media:

It is a privilege to live in a democracy that allows its citizens to vote. Further, it is an equal privilege that they may express their concerns to the honored members of government and to the hardworking journalists who have helped Americans to remain as patient as possible under challenging and unprecedented circumstances.

Please continue to assist Americans, especially the young, to understand in clear and simple language the value of care in these circumstances. Please also aid them to be aware that there is no easy solution. For instance, if the wealthiest one percent of the people take almost half of the surplus for themselves, there will not be enough of the tax dollars remaining to pay for the basic needs of the citizens of this country. This will then result in a cutting of services and an increase in taxes as was enacted by President Bush. For another example, G.W. Bush pushed through \$2.8 billion in property tax relief in Texas, from which he benefited, then cut services to learning disabled students and raised taxes to cover that loss in revenues. However, the most recent studies in learning differences may help citizens to understand the seriousness of these acts. At the International Dyslexia Association conference in November, Dr. Gordon Sherman, a former Harvard neuroscientist and now Executive Director of the Newgrange School and Educational Outreach Center, made the following comments. Fifteen percent of the population has a learning difference. There is a brain difference in the brain architecture of dyslexics, and that architecture responsible for the dyslexias may be responsible for their talents as well. The learning difference in the wrong environment becomes a learning disability. Conversely, the learning difference in the appropriate environment becomes a learning ability.

Further, please help Americans to understand that if G.W. Bush or anyone takes the Title I monies from failing schools for vouchers for private schools, he or she may be acting illegally. Private schools generally do not provide services for students with learning differences, who, if untreated, may then be illiterate, dysfunctional and delinquent. However, with appropriate care, they may become well educated citizens that contribute to society in a positive way. In fact, all young Americans are legally entitled to a free and appropriate public education.

In addition, it is unconscionable that young children in recent times tell

their teachers they are afraid of bomb threats, and teachers and others fear the increase in school shootings and hate crimes in America today. It is therefore incumbent upon leaders to value safety more than gun lobby money, and to enact the anti hate legislation and close gun law loopholes to provide every American with a safe society. If all Americans work together, these goals may be accomplished.

Further, all Americans will abide by the will of the people, but they must first know with the greatest of accuracy what that is. Moreover, although some may believe that these illegal actions may have transpired for centuries, many may wish to prevent a recurrence of this type of apparently manipulated election. Therefore, in the future, it may be advisable to have a member of each party ensure that all absentee ballot applications are administered with equal care. Then, on election night, members of each party might be at all of the doors of every polling place in the country. Members of each party may also be present to ensure that no corrupt deputy or other appointed or elected official is ever again able to deprive African Americans or others of their Constitutional right to vote. Further, a member of each party may ensure the collection of all ballots from every precinct. Next, licensed, bonded and insured security guards might protect those ballots in locked settings. Additionally, post offices that process the ballots of military personnel overseas may date those envelopes if the U.S. government provides them with a simple date stamp and ink pad.

For now, Americans across the country who appreciate the beauty of the land and the opportunities within it may be determined to see this election safeguarded, and appreciate the opportunity to do so. The efforts exerted today may someday benefit Americans by strengthening the democracy, so that every decent citizen may maintain his or her Constitutional right to vote and to have that vote counted.