

Prepared Statement by U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa)
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
Hearing on the Right to Vote
Tuesday, April 20, 2021

This is supposed to be a hearing about voting rights. Unfortunately it's just the latest attack on one of our States for enacting election-integrity laws. National Democrats and big business have colluded to bully Georgia in retaliation for its new voting laws. But we'd be naïve to think that they'll stop with the Peach State. Indeed many of Georgia's new provisions are similar to those we have in Iowa, where we've experienced record turnout recently and no instances of anyone being hindered from voting.

I want to start by saying that I object to the title of this hearing. Like others on this Committee I am a fan of history. I try to learn from it. I don't use it to insult my opponents.

As I said, the title of this hearing is offensive. And as a student of history, this title diminishes the very real challenges and unfairness that minorities endured in the Jim Crow south at the hands of Southern Democrats.

We should all agree that participating in American democracy at the ballot box is a fundamental right. It's a right we should want to protect, and it should not become a political football.

At a time when voters on both sides of the aisle have doubts about the integrity of our elections, polarizing rhetoric that distorts history is not helpful.

I'm eager to hear from Congressman Owens what he thinks about these comparisons of voter ID requirements to the evil system of legalized racial oppression in which he grew up.

There's a lot of falsehood being peddled about the new Georgia laws. When President Biden repeatedly said that Georgia ended voting "hours early," the liberal Washington Post gave him four Pinocchios in its fact-check. Their fact-checker was shocked that, after this, Biden kept repeating the same false claims. It goes to show that these claims about Georgia aren't about the truth; they're about politics.

And it goes beyond politics. The concerted effort by liberals and their allies to mislead about Georgia's voting laws have had terrible effects on Georgia itself. An organized campaign was started to make big business punish the people of Georgia for their political choices.

Most infamously, Major League Baseball moved the All Star Game from Atlanta, a move that is likely to cost the city's economy \$100 million. A state senator lost his job at a prominent law firm after political activists took a break from fleecing their donors to get him fired for his work as a citizen legislator. When partisans and companies collude to ruin the livelihoods of their opponents, there's a term for that: economic terrorism.

The American people don't like this. A recent NPR poll asked whether people support or oppose professional sports using their public role, position, or events to influence politics. 55% opposed it and only 40% supported it.

On the other hand, the American people **do** like secure elections:

- One recent poll showed that 77% of Americans support Voter ID laws, including 74% of independents.
- 66% even support Voter ID for absentee ballots.
- 80% agreed that States need to balance no-excuse voting with election-integrity safeguards.
- 93% said that voter registration rolls should be accurately maintained with 83% saying States should remove old registrations.

In 2021 I'm not sure that apple pie would poll as well as common-sense election integrity.

I can tell you the people of Iowa, who I represent, like secure elections. That's why we've recently passed laws to do just that. I have a statement for the record from our Secretary of State explaining how we work to make elections easy and honest.

This last election showed why secure elections are necessary. We'll be hearing from our Democratic friends that voter fraud is so rare that we don't need to take steps to prevent it. But in Iowa's Second District, Representative Marianne Miller-Meeks, won her race last fall by six votes. *Six*. Every vote counts in Iowa, which means they better be legitimate.

In fact, during each election in Iowa we find numerous instances of double voting. It's not a big number but it happens. And with congressional races being decided by only six votes, it matters.

At the same time, I want to be clear: there's no evidence of anyone being unable to vote in Iowa due to our voting security provisions.

All this talk about the importance of voting from Democrats is less than amusing. Just last month Speaker Pelosi tried to use the power of her majority to throw Dr. Miller-Meeks out of the House even though her election was fully certified by both Republicans and Democrats. Her opponent didn't want to admit that she lost. But she skipped the courts and the Democrats' "super lawyer"—who, by the way, is facing sanctions in Texas—tried to change the results in the House instead. When people will stop at nothing to win races, it's more important than ever that our elections be secure.

Sadly, my friends on the other side seem to disagree. Election and voting legislation that's been proposed in Congress will take away the ability of States to establish their own voting rules.

I hope to hear from Secretary Gardner why it's so important for States—like Iowa or New Hampshire or Georgia—to manage their own elections and why federalized election rules are bad for election integrity *and* voter participation.

I hope to hear from President Pro Tempore Jones about what *really* happened in Georgia. Not the made-for-CNN headlines about Jim Crow 2021, but the sensible, fair, and common-sense efforts they have made to increase confidence in their elections.

Baseless claims of voter suppression are just as corrosive to our democracy as baseless claims of voter fraud. We should all be committed to making elections **accessible and secure** to maintain the confidence of voters.

