

Trump, attorneys step up efforts to reverse election's outcome

President Trump and his legal team on Thursday stepped up their campaign to shift the outcome of the presidential election, with the president reaching out directly to Michigan officials and Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani holding a combative press conference.

Trump has invited some of Michigan's top Republicans to the White House in a sign he may be seeking a way around the results. President-elect Joe Biden is projected to win 306 electoral votes to Trump's 232 and has leads of tens of thousands of votes in several key states.

The president also reached out to officials in Wayne County who had sought to block the certification of votes there. The effort by those officials brought calls of racism from Detroit's mayor given the number of votes by Black Americans that might have been overturned. Biden is ahead in Michigan by more than 140,000 votes.

Separately, Giuliani and a team of attorneys overseeing Trump's legal challenges to the vote count in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Georgia, and elsewhere levied various claims of fraud at a press conference Thursday that levied various claims of fraud.

Giuliani alleged that the president was a victim of a scheme by dozens of Democratic election officials from Detroit, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and other major cities that contributed to Biden getting more votes, even though Trump also improved over his 2016 performance in those traditionally Democratic areas.

"This was not an individual idea of 10 or 12 Democrat bosses. This was a plan. You would have to be a fool not to realize that," Giuliani said at the presser from the Republican National Committee headquarters.

Giuliani and attorney Sidney Powell, a fixture on Fox News prime-time programming who represents former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn, made clear that their goal was to overturn the results in several states Biden is leading or has been projected as the winner.

Giuliani and Powell failed to produce evidence of their claims beyond holding up sworn affidavits from citizens who alleged they witnessed suspicious behavior. Giuliani did not commit to sharing his evidence with the press so they could fully vet his claims, and one reporter noted the Trump campaign is not asking for a recount in Wisconsin counties where the Dominion Voting Systems machines were used.

Dominion Voting Systems has been a popular target among Trump and his supporters who have spread claims of election fraud.

Powell alleged that the Denver-based company that supplies voting machines across the United States used technology developed by Hugo Chavez, who died in 2013. She claimed votes were manipulated while being tabulated overseas to favor Joe Biden.

These claims have been disputed or debunked by numerous sources, including conservative media.

The company has disputed the assertions, the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency has said there is no evidence of foreign adversaries changing vote tallies, and The Wall Street Journal editorial board published a piece on Tuesday debunking claims that Dominion was part of widespread fraud.

The contents of the press conference, during which Giuliani, who referenced the movie "My Cousin Vinny" and battled black water-streaks running down the side of his face, appeared to astonish even many conservatives who urged Giuliani and Powell to produce hard evidence of their claims or risk casting doubt on the country's democratic systems.

Fox News broadcast much of the press conference, while other major cable news networks did not.

"You cannot make an accusation like that without following it through by going to court and trying to prove it," Karl Rove, a former aide to George W. Bush, said on Fox News. "If it's left out there it will be both unfair to the president if it's true, and unfair to the American people if it's false."

Kristin Fisher, a Fox News White House correspondent, said on the network that

the press conference was “light on facts” and noted some of the allegations had already been dismissed in the courts.

Trump appears set on throwing into question the result of his defeat, or even making a last-ditch attempt to overturn it entirely.

The president on Tuesday night contacted a GOP member of the canvassing board in Wayne County, Mich., after she and another Republican on the board initially refused to certify election results. Wayne County, which is home to Detroit, is a Democratic stronghold.

Monica Palmer confirmed to The Washington Post that Trump called her Tuesday night after she and William Hartmann balked at approving the election results. The two eventually relented and certified the results, but on Wednesday both Palmer and Hartmann sought to rescind their certification.

Trump is poised to take things a step further in Michigan by inviting State Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey to the White House. The invite was seen as yet another breach of norms by Trump as observers wondered whether the president would ask Shirkey to subvert the will of the voters by appointing pro-Trump electors for Michigan.

Shirkey’s office did not respond to a request for comment.

Trump’s efforts are unlikely to change the outcome of the election, but they have led to serious concerns about damage to the nation’s democratic system.

Democrats have seized on Trump’s actions to argue his post-election efforts are doing harm to the country, and have sought to pressure GOP lawmakers to rein in the president or counter him.

“This is the path to fascism,” Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.) tweeted, referencing news of Trump’s plan to meet with Michigan lawmakers. “This is no time for silence from GOP. Stand with your country. Condemn Trump for trying to topple democracy. Now.”

Republicans, for the most part, have not criticized Trump — though there have been exceptions.

Several GOP lawmakers made public their displeasure of Trump’s firing this week

of Christopher Krebs, the administration's top cybersecurity official.

"That press conference was the most dangerous 1 hr 45 minutes of television in American history. And possibly the craziest. If you don't know what I'm talking about, you're lucky," Krebs tweeted Thursday afternoon.

Source:

<https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/526752-trump-attorneys-step-up-efforts-to-reverse-elections-outcome>

[Disclaimer]