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Trump's Fraud Claims Hit a Barr

The AG says the feds have seen no evidence that would overturn Joe Biden's victory.

By [The Editorial Board](#)

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Attorney General William Barr

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Bill Barr can take the heat, and on Tuesday the stalwart Attorney General guaranteed he'll get it when he said "to date, we have not seen fraud on a scale that could have effected a different outcome in the election."

Mr. Barr told the Associated Press that allegations of "particularized" fraud, with some that "potentially cover a few thousand votes," are being explored. But President Trump is down by 150,000 votes in Michigan, 80,000 in Pennsylvania, and 20,000 in Wisconsin. As for the idea that voting machines were compromised, Mr. Barr said the feds "have looked into that, and so far, we haven't seen anything to substantiate that."

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Voters sent a complicated message this election, apparently denying President Trump a second term but handing Republicans down-ballot victories. Mr. Trump is challenging the vote counts in several states but remains a long shot to carry enough to win. Join WSJ Opinion to assess the election results and what they mean for the next administration. [BEGINS 7:00 PM EST DECEMBER 2, 2020.](#)

As specific claims of fraud get knocked down, however, the broader tale of election theft takes on the nature of the unfalsifiable. "We won the election easily," Mr. Trump said Sunday. He later added: "It's not like you're going to change my mind." But where's the hard evidence to convince the country? Many of the theories floating around don't withstand scrutiny.

- "Ballot dumps": It's being painted as suspicious that big batches of votes were reported in the early hours of Nov. 4. To take Wisconsin: Mr. Trump complained in a tweet that Joe Biden got "a dump of 143,379 votes at 3:42AM." But the explanation is prosaic: Contemporaneous reporting says this is when

Milwaukee's central counting location finished with roughly 170,000 mail ballots. They included votes for both candidates but broke heavily for Mr. Biden.

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The timing is unfortunate, but Wisconsin law doesn't let counties process absentee ballots until Election Day, unlike states that reported early, including Florida. Still, the margin in Milwaukee County doesn't look crazy: Mr. Biden won 69% to 29%, compared with Hillary Clinton's victory of 65% to 29%. As a share of Wisconsin's vote total, Milwaukee County fell to 13.9%, from 14.8%. A recount finished last week increased Milwaukee's tally by only 382 votes.

The same goes for Michigan, which reported a similar batch of ballots in the wee hours of Nov. 4. State law says mail votes can't be processed until one day before the election. The overnight jump for Mr. Biden appears to have come from Wayne County, which includes Detroit. But again the margins aren't wild: Mr. Biden won there 68% to 30%, compared with Mrs. Clinton's 67% to 29%. As a share of Michigan overall, Wayne County fell to 15.8%, from 16.2%.

Where Mr. Biden shined was the suburbs. To take Pennsylvania, he won Philadelphia with 81% to 18%, notably worse than Mrs. Clinton's 83% to 15%. Meantime, Philly shrank to 10.7% of the state total, from 11.6%. But look at the surrounding areas: Mr. Biden beat Mrs. Clinton's share by 3.1 points in Bucks County, 3.4 in Delaware County, and 3.7 in Montgomery County.

- *Vote totals:* "I got 74 million votes, the largest in the history of a sitting president," Mr. Trump said Sunday. It's 11 million more than in 2016. Yet he lost to Mr. Biden, who Mr. Trump said "did not get 16 million more votes than Barack Hussein Obama."

What's unbelievable? The electorate grows. Since 2012, the voting-eligible population has risen by 17 million, according to estimates by the U.S. Elections Project. Turnout in 2020 was historic, helped by expanded absentee voting. If enthusiasm was also high, perhaps it's because Donald Trump has been a polarizing President and drove Democratic as well as Republican turnout. As for the failure of bellwether states, they're predictive until they're not. Florida and Ohio have trended red for years.

- *Poll watchers:* Judges have dismissed affidavits submitted by the Trump camp as "rife with speculation and guess-work" and "inadmissible as hearsay." Other claims made in public circulate largely without being tested. A poll watcher from Delaware County, Pa., alleged last week, without giving any evidence, that 47 USB cards used in the election "are missing, and they're nowhere to be found." Where's the proof? "We are aware of these allegations," says Lauren Hagan, the chief elections clerk in Delaware County. "They are false. All votes on all scanners have been accounted for."

- *Dominion:* On Sunday, Mr. Trump called Dominion voting systems, used in dozens of states, "garbage machinery." But the totals from Georgia's hand recount closely matched the results from its scanners. How does Mr. Trump explain that? In an op-ed for these pages, Dominion's CEO denied the "bizarre" claim that his company is tied to Hugo Chávez. Third-party labs, he said, "perform complete source-code reviews on every federally certified tabulation system."

Fighting such claims is like whack-a-mole. No, Pennsylvania didn't count more mail votes

than it sent out. No, Wisconsin didn't have 89% turnout. No, several states didn't simultaneously quit counting ballots on election night. No, ballots in Arizona filled out with Sharpie markers weren't discounted. In an election with 155 million votes, there are no doubt irregularities and maybe some fraud. But for Mr. Trump to win the Electoral College, he'd need to flip tens of thousands of votes in multiple states.

We're open to evidence of major fraud, but we haven't seen claims that are credible. Now comes Mr. Barr, who has no reason to join a coverup. He likes his job. He wanted Mr. Trump to win. As the election timetable closes, Mr. Trump should focus on preserving his legacy rather than diminishing it by alleging fraud he can't prove.

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