

Could courts again decide US election?

Legal experts say Trump cases may not prevent a winner being declared and US SC may not have final say

AGENCIES



Voter lists' books are pictured after Election Day at the Kenosha Municipal Building in Kenosha, Wisconsin, US, on Wednesday. America yesterday waited for a winner two-day after election election day.

PHOTO: REUTERS

BATTLEGROUND STATES



ARIZONA
(Electoral votes 11)
BIDEN 50.5% TRUMP 48.1%
Votes counted: 86 percent

To keep in mind: Trump needs to win nearly two-thirds of the remaining votes to capture the state.
Final results likely to come Friday or Saturday

NEVADA
(Electoral votes 6)
BIDEN 49.4% TRUMP 48.5%
Votes counted: 89%

Keep in mind: Biden leads by more than 11,000 votes, but only Democratic-leaning late mail and provisional ballots to be tabulated. Counting has been suspended in Nevada until 11 pm BST Thursday. An projection of winner is expected as early as Friday

PENNSYLVANIA
(Electoral votes 20)
BIDEN 48.5% TRUMP 50.2%
Votes counted: 92%

Keep in mind: Biden needs to win about two-thirds of the remaining votes. Counting left in Democratic-leaning populous urban counties of Philadelphia, Allegheny.
A winner may be projected on Friday

GEORGIA
(Electoral votes 16)
BIDEN 49.2% TRUMP 49.5%
Votes counted: 98%

Keep in mind: Many of the votes still coming in are in suburbs of Atlanta and other populous counties that have been breaking for Biden. Biden must win around 60 percent of the remaining votes to pull ahead.
Results may be out early Friday or later

NORTH CAROLINA
(Electoral votes 16)
BIDEN 48.6% TRUMP 50.0%
Votes counted: 95%

Keep in mind: With most votes now tabulated, Biden would need to win about two-thirds of the remainder to pull ahead.
Results may not come until 12 November. Though, a winner may be projected sooner than that

SOURCE: CNN

While President Donald Trump wants the US Supreme Court to weigh in on a presidential race that is still too close to call, it may not be the final arbiter in this election, legal experts said, adding it might not also prevent states declaring a winner.

They said it was doubtful that courts would entertain a bid by Trump to stop the counting of ballots that were received before or on Election Day, or that any dispute a court might handle would change the trajectory of the race in closely fought states such as Michigan and Pennsylvania.

After Trump declared he was ready to go to the US Supreme Court to dispute the vote counting, his campaign announced a recount demand in Wisconsin and lawsuits in Michigan and Pennsylvania, three states critical to winning the presidency. In Michigan, the Trump campaign sued to halt ballot counting saying they were not given "meaningful access."

Late Wednesday the Trump campaign filed suit in a fourth battleground, Georgia, as the president's lead there shrank to less than a percentage point. The Georgia suit wants counties to "separate any and all late-arriving ballots from all legally cast ballots" that arrived by the 7:00 pm Election Day deadline, Trump deputy campaign manager Justin Clark said.

Americans cast more than 65 million mail-in-ballots in 2020 election.

However, legal experts said that while there could be objections to particular ballots or voting and counting procedures, it was unclear

if such disputes would determine the final outcome.

Ned Foley, an election law expert at Ohio State University, said the current election does not have the ingredients that would create a situation like in the 2000 presidential race, when the Supreme Court ended a recount in George W Bush's favor against Democrat Al Gore.

"It's extremely early on but at the moment it doesn't seem apparent how this would end up where the US Supreme Court would be decisive," Foley said.

Both Republicans and Democrats have amassed armies of lawyers ready to go to the

mat in a close race.

Trump attorney Jenna Ellis on Wednesday defended Trump's bid to challenge the vote count and evaluate his legal options. "If we have to go through these legal challenges, that's not unprecedented," Ellis told Fox Business Network in an interview. "He wants to make sure that the election is not stolen."

The case closest to being resolved by the Supreme Court is the Pennsylvania dispute in which Republicans are challenging a September ruling by Pennsylvania's top court allowing mail-in ballots that were postmarked by Election Day and received up to three days later to be counted.

'Stop the steal!'

Armed Trump supporters gather outside Arizona vote centre

REUTERS

A crowd of Donald Trump supporters, some armed with rifles and handguns, gathered outside an election center in Arizona on Wednesday night after unsubstantiated rumors that votes for the Republican president were deliberately not being counted.

Chanting "Stop the steal!", and "Count my vote!", the mostly unmasked protesters stood in front of the Maricopa County Elections Department in Phoenix, as Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden held a razor thin lead in the critical battleground state. Some news outlets have called Arizona for Biden, but Trump's campaign says it is still in play.

A victory for Biden in Arizona would give the Democrat 11 electoral votes, a major boost in his bid to win the White House, while severely narrowing Trump's path to re-election.

On Election night Fox News and the Associated Press called Arizona for Biden, even though only just over 70% of the vote had been counted, a move that infuriated Trump and his aides.



Some of the roughly 200 protesters, who were faced by a line of armed county sheriffs, chanted "Shame on Fox!"

Rumors spread on Facebook Tuesday night that some votes were not being counted because voters used Sharpie pens to mark their ballots. Local election officials insisted that was not true.

A similar scene played out on Wednesday afternoon in downtown Detroit, where city election officials blocked about 30 people, mostly Republicans, from entering a vote-counting hall amid unfounded claims that the vote count was fraudulent.

'Count Every Vote'

Arrests made as anti-Trump protesters rally in Oregon

REUTERS

Police in Portland declared riots, arrested 11 people and seized fireworks, hammers and a rifle, as Oregon Governor Kate Brown activated the National Guard in response to protests on the night after voting in the US presidential election.

The protesters involved in the clashes had earlier attended a 300-strong peaceful rally in a downtown park hosted by a coalition of anti-capitalist groups featuring lectures, music and slogans including "The Vote is Over. The Fight Goes On."

Rally organizer Evan Burchfield told AFP the city had been using the police as a "tool of political repression" for years and that "nothing is actually going to change" if Joe Biden is elected.

Another group of protesters who had gathered by Portland's river Wednesday vowed to "protect the results" of Tuesday's close-run election and held banners proclaiming "Count Every Vote."

Several of the demonstrators were openly carrying firearms, including rifles, and one



anti-racism and anti-imperialism banner showed an image of an assault rifle, with the slogan "We Don't Want Biden. We Want Revenge."

In New York, police said they had made about 50 arrests in protests that spread in the city late on Wednesday.

Demonstrations, mostly small and peaceful, were held in cities across the United States by anti-Trump supporters. Four arrests were made in Denver as protesters clashed with police, the Denver Police Department said.

France fighting extremism, not Islam: Macron

AFP, Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron has said his country is fighting "Islamist separatism, never Islam", responding to a Financial Times article that he claimed misquoted him and has since been removed from the newspaper's website.

In a letter to the editor published Wednesday, Macron said the British paper had accused him of "stigmatising French Muslims for electoral purposes and of fostering a climate of fear and suspicion towards them".

"I will not allow anybody to claim that France, or its government, is fostering racism against Muslims," he said.

An opinion article written by a Financial Times correspondent published Tuesday alleged that Macron's condemnation of "Islamic separatism" risked fostering a "hostile environment" for French Muslims.

The article was later removed from the paper's website.

The French president sparked protests across the Muslim world after last month's murder of teacher Samuel Paty -- who had shown his class a cartoon defamatory to Muslims -- by saying France would never renounce its laws permitting blasphemous caricatures.

Following the protests and boycotts of French goods across the world, Macron told the Al-Jazeera network over the weekend that he understood the caricatures could be shocking for some.

But recounting a wave of Islamist attacks in France since 2015, Macron warned in his letter this week that there were still "breeding grounds" for extremism in France.

"This is what France is fighting against... hatred and death that threaten its children -- never against Islam. We oppose deception, fanaticism, violent extremism. Not a religion."



A vendor selling traditional snacks waits for customers on Rajpath street amid smoggy condition in New Delhi. New Delhi, the capital city with the worst air quality worldwide, suffered its most toxic day in a year yesterday, recording the concentration of poisonous PM2.5 particles at 14 times over the World Health Organisation safe limit.

PHOTO: AFP

GROWTH IN DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION NY Times profit beats estimates

REUTERS, New York

The New York Times reported better-than-expected results on Thursday as revenue from digital-only sign-ups surpassed print subscription revenue for the first time in a quarter dominated by news related to the Covid-19 pandemic and the US presidential election.

The company hit the milestone after years of focus on online subscriptions for its news, crossword and cooking products to offset an industry-wide decline in print readership and fickle advertising revenues.

New York Times said it added 393,000 paid digital-only subscribers during the quarter. Of this, 275,000 subscribed for its digital news product, while the remaining were for its cooking, games and audio products.

"The news cycle certainly played a role, but as we are increasingly seeing with each passing quarter, so too did the breadth of our coverage and our improving ability to mean more to more people," Chief Executive Officer Meredith Kopit Levien said.

The media company said it expects digital-only subscription revenue to rise about 35% and ad sales to decline about 30% in the fourth quarter. Revenue from subscription rose 12.6% to \$300.95 million in the third quarter, while ad revenue dropped 30.2% to \$79.25 million.

Advertising sales have been unpredictable as companies slashed ad budgets to cope with a sharp drop in business due to coronavirus-led lockdowns.

Iran's supreme leader mocks US democracy

AFP, Tehran

Iran's supreme leader has mocked the rancorous aftermath of election day in the United States, saying that the vote has exposed the reality of US democracy.

Well over 24 hours after the last polling stations closed in the US state of Alaska, the battle for the White House remains undecided.

US President Donald Trump has caused disquiet among even leaders of his own Republican Party by flatly alleging fraud, while his Democratic challenger Joe Biden's campaign team has accused the incumbent of seeking to deny the electoral rights of tens of thousands of postal voters.

"What a spectacle!" supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei tweeted late Wednesday.



"One says this is the most fraudulent election in US history. Who says that? The president who is currently in office. "His rival says Trump intends to rig the election! This is how #USElections & US democracy are."

The deepening polarisation of US politics since Trump's surprise election victory four years ago has drawn expressions of concern even from Western allies, with Germany warning of a "very explosive situation" in the aftermath of the poll.

Despite US allegations that Tehran sought to use social media to influence voters in the run-up to polling day, Iran's leadership has publicly insisted it favours neither candidate, despite their sharply divergent policies towards Tehran.

Win or lose, Trumpism stronger than ever

AFP, New York

The US presidential election is still up in the air, but one thing is for certain: the movement created by Donald Trump is alive and well, and more solid than pundits expected.

No matter if he wins or loses, Trumpism looks set to live on.

Republican political pundit Sophia A. Nelson summed it up quickly: "The Trump movement is real. And it's here to stay."

Despite being repeatedly -- and wrongly -- described as only older, white and rural, Trump's base will help deliver the third highest vote total in American political history -- behind only Joe Biden, and Barack Obama in 2008.

Hispanic voters, often expected to lean left, turned to Trump this time around -- their turnout in Florida helped him easily defeat Biden in the Sunshine State in Tuesday's nailbiter of an election.

"Ahead of the election, a lot of pundits talked about how Trump wasn't bringing new voters to his camp," said Abraham Gutman, who is on the editorial board at The Philadelphia Inquirer.

But he will have, at a minimum, won about five million more votes this time around than he did in 2016 against Hillary Clinton.

"Regardless of the eventual outcome -- in the state contests for electors or in the popular vote margin -- the media needs a serious post mortem to explore how, despite so much ink spilled on Trump voters, the story of the growth of the Trump movement was totally missed," Gutman said.



former vice president. He was regularly greeted by sizeable crowds.

Trump parades for the Republican incumbent rolled through town after American town, as did boat processions in waterfront communities.

All were evidence of a wide base of support.

"His supporters love him. They love him for this fact that he keeps America first and Americans first," Jim Worthington, the founder of People4Trump, told AFP in a phone interview.

"They realize that he's fighting for them. We broadened our coalition," added Worthington, who owns two gyms.

Trump's controversial handling of the coronavirus pandemic, which has so far claimed the lives of more than 233,000 Americans, his tough immigration policies

and his brash style of speaking have not dissuaded his fans.

The real estate mogul turned world leader is still one of the most popular Republicans in recent memory, since Ronald Reagan.

His supporters "have a real affection for this guy despite all of his flaws or maybe because of his flaws," said John Feehery, a lobbyist with EFB Advocacy who has worked with several Republican lawmakers.

That's a strange thing. I think part of it is because he's so authentic. (...) He says what's on his mind. And people like seeing what's on his mind."

He also strikes a chord with voters who has a "desire for nationalism," Feehery said.

If Trump eventually wins the election, his future and political legacy won't be clear for another few years.

If he loses, "I don't think the movement goes away," said Worthington. "I think everybody regroup. He'll decide what pathway for all of us that we would take and I think we would galvanize together."

As for his overall influence on the Republican Party, which has massively rallied behind him over the past four years, many think a loss in 2020 would likely not adversely affect it.

Even with a narrow White House defeat, the Republicans are on course to maintain their Senate majority and did not lose in spectacular fashion in the House of Representatives.

For David Hopkins, an associate professor of political science at Boston College, Trump "has had and will continue to have a major influence on the Republican Party" for at least the next four years, even if he loses.

Feehery said that if Trump loses this time, "I wouldn't be surprised if he ran again."