

VOTE RECOUNTS STATES' RULES

PENNSYLVANIA
State law requires an automatic recount when the margin is 0.5 percent or less. Biden yesterday won the state with .5 percent. If the margin is above that, voters may petition a state court within five days to order counties to conduct a full or partial recount. The requester must allege errors occurred in the initial count. Petitioners have to pay for the costs of the recount but may be refunded if fraud or substantial errors are found. A recount of the November 3 election would have to be completed by November 24.

GEORGIA
State law does not provide for an automatic recount in Georgia but candidates have a right to ask for a taxpayer-funded recount if the margin is 0.5 percent or less. Candidates may also petition the Georgia secretary of state for a recount by providing specific evidence of alleged errors or discrepancies. Partial recounts are not allowed.

WISCONSIN
State law in Wisconsin does not mandate automatic recounts but candidates may ask for one. Presidential recounts must be requested from the Wisconsin Elections Commission within one day of completion of the initial count and completed within 13 days. Costs are refunded if the results of the election are changed.

MICHIGAN
State law in Michigan provides for automatic recounts when the difference between candidates is less than 2,000 votes. Candidates also may request a recount from the Michigan secretary of state within 48 hours of the count and must allege "fraud or mistake" in specific jurisdictions. Recounts should be completed within 30 days, and petitioners must cover costs subject to potential refund if the recount changes the outcome. Partial recounts are allowed.

NEVADA
State law does not provide for automatic recounts in Nevada. A presidential candidate may ask the Nevada secretary of state for a recount within three days of the count regardless of the margin. Partial recounts are not allowed. The party requesting the recount must pay for it and the state has 10 days to complete the recount.

ARIZONA
Arizona requires an automatic recount if the margin between candidates is 0.10 percent of the total vote, or less. Candidates cannot request a recount. There's no set deadline for completion of a recount.
SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



People celebrate on Black Lives Matter plaza across from the White House in Washington, DC yesterday, after Joe Biden was declared the winner of the 2020 presidential election. People from New York to California yesterday celebrated Biden's victory after 4 days of anxious waiting.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS



Trump's brash and pugnacious presidency

REUTERS, Washington

Businessman-turned-politician Donald Trump has promoted "America First" nationalism, withstood impeachment and a bout with Covid-19, and taken contentious stands on race and immigration during a turbulent presidency that detractors say has flouted US democratic norms.

After decades of fame first as a brash and media-savvy New York real estate developer and then as a reality TV personality, the pugnacious Trump tapped into discontent among many Americans to become a political phenomenon unique in the country's 244 years.

Seeking re-election against now President-elect Joe Biden, Trump initially encountered fierce resistance within the Republican Party but managed to remake it in his own image and won loyalty even among some Republicans who had once denounced him.

"If I don't sound like a typical Washington politician, it's because I'm not a politician," Trump told an Oct 26 rally in Pennsylvania.

Trump, 74, assumed the presidency in January 2017 after his surprise victory over Democrat Hillary Clinton in November 2016.

His 2016 victory made him the first US president with no prior political or military experience as he pursued a right-wing populist approach. His presidency came at a time of deep polarization in the United States and political dysfunction in Washington.

Athome, Trump curtailed legal and illegal immigration and slashed the number of people admitted as refugees and asylum seekers, secured sweeping tax cuts, moved the federal judiciary including the Supreme Court dramatically rightward and rolled back environmental regulations that he called burdensome.

Abroad, Trump helped broker deals between close US ally Israel and three Arab states, abandoned

international agreements that he portrayed as unfair to the United States, alienated longtime allies and praised authoritarian foreign leaders.

He showed deference to longtime US adversary Russia and its president, Vladimir Putin. US intelligence agencies concluded that Russia used a campaign of hacking and propaganda to boost Trump's 2016 candidacy and that Moscow again tried



interfering again during the 2020 campaign to try to denigrate Biden.

Critics including senior Democrats and former members of his own administration portrayed Trump as a peril to democracy with autocratic tendencies.

Democrats accused Trump of placing himself above the law and disregarding constitutional constraints on presidential powers as he ignored congressional subpoenas, complained about a "rigged" American voting system, refused to commit to a peaceful transition of power if he lost to Biden, and assailed figures in the FBI and US intelligence agencies.

Critics also denounced Trump for employing falsehoods; fact-checkers listed thousands of them during his presidency. He relentlessly attacked free as

"the enemy of the people" and "fake news."

Trump became only the third US president to be impeached when the Democratic-led House of Representatives voted to charge him with abuse of power and obstruction of Congress over his push to gain dirt on Biden from Ukraine. The Republican-led Senate kept Trump in office by acquitting him at a trial in February.

Racial tensions simmered during Trump's presidency. Critics accused Trump of pursuing policies built around "white grievance" in a nation with a growing non-white population.

Having succeeded the first Black US president, Barack Obama, Trump erased many parts of his Democratic predecessor's legacy. Trump walked away from an international treaty over Iran's nuclear program and a global accord to battle climate change, reversed environmental protections and rolled back warmer ties with Cuba.

Trump's headline stance toward immigration was a hallmark of his presidency. And numerous women accused Trump of sexual assault, allegations he denied.

Trump cultivated an image of a flourishing businessman and deal-maker, though he had a history of financial losses, bankruptcies and business failures. Tax documents uncovered by the New York Times in September showed Trump paid just \$750 in federal income taxes in 2016 and again in 2017 - and no income taxes in 10 of the previous 15 years - mostly because he reported losing much more money than he made.

But even through a parade of controversies, the passionate support of many Americans - especially white men, Christian conservatives, rural residents and people without a college education - seemed undimmed.

In 2020, he lost to Biden after nail-biting finish with a negligible margin in number of popular votes. And he hasn't conceded yet.

Food habit change can save planet

Study says emissions related to food could push Earth past global warming limits even if all fossil fuel emmissions stops immediately

AFP, Paris

Even if all fossil fuel emissions ended immediately, greenhouse gasses from the food we eat could drive global temperatures above internationally agreed warming limits, a new study has warned.

The system to feed Earth's 7.7 billion people accounts for nearly a third of global total greenhouse gas emissions, including from land clearing and deforestation, fertiliser use and livestock.

Researchers in the United States and Britain said the only way to avert devastating levels of warming would be to transform what we eat, how it is produced, and the amount we waste. "Our work shows that food is a much greater contributor to climate change than is widely known," said co-author Jason Hill, a professor in the Department of Bioproducts and Biosystems Engineering at the University of Minnesota.

"Fortunately, we can fix this problem by using fertiliser more efficiently, by eating less meat and more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts, and

by making other important changes to our food system."

The study in the journal Science forecasts future food system emissions using expected trends in population growth, dietary changes and the



additional amount of land thought to be needed to feed the world.

The authors found that, if left unaddressed, these future food-related emissions would by themselves push Earth above the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming threshold -- seen as the guardrail for avoiding devastating climate impacts -- by 2050.

By the end of the century, they would lift temperatures to nearly 2C above preindustrial levels -- the limit set in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

There are multiple sources of

greenhouse gasses in the food system besides carbon dioxide emitted by burning fossil fuels in production and supply chains.

Land clearing and deforestation releases carbon dioxide (CO2) and nitrous oxide (N2O), the authors said, while production and the use of fertilisers and other agrichemicals emit CO2, N2O and methane.

Methane -- which has a warming potential 28 times greater than CO2 over a 100-year period -- is also released by livestock like cows, sheep and goats as well as rice production.

The 2015 Paris climate deal saw nations commit to limit temperature rises to "well below" two degrees Celsius. Earth has warmed by about 1.2C so far.

The United Nations says that to stay under the safer 1.5C cap, emissions must fall 7.6 percent annually this decade.

Research published in July by the Global Carbon Project found that emissions of methane have risen by nine percent in a decade, driven by mankind's growing appetite for energy and food.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



US President Donald Trump plays golf at Trump National Golf Club in Sterling, Virginia, yesterday, while major US news networks announce his rival Joe Biden the winner of US presidential race.

PHOTO: AFP

UN warns of famine risk in world crises hotspots

AFP, Paris

A new report by two United Nations agencies warned Friday of a heightened risk of famine in three conflict-torn African states and Yemen, and a high hunger risk in 16 more.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) warned that a "toxic combination of conflict, economic decline, climate extremes and the Covid-19 pandemic ... is driving people further into the emergency phase of food insecurity".

The agencies swung the spotlight on Burkina Faso, northeastern Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen, all facing rising levels of acute hunger with potential risk of famine.

Issuing "a stark warning" in their Early Warning Analysis of Acute Food Insecurity Hotspots, the agencies said the four countries have areas that could soon slip into famine.

Some parts of the population "are already experiencing a critical hunger situation", whereby any reduction in humanitarian access could lead to a risk of

famine, they said.

Another 16 states are "at high risk of rising levels of acute hunger", the agencies said.

Those countries are Venezuela, Haiti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Lebanon, Syria and Afghanistan.

In the case of the DRC, around 22 million are food insecure -- "the highest number ever registered for a single country."

The agencies said the global health crisis, extreme weather patterns and conflict had exacerbated hunger.

Only fast action could avoid a first outbreak of famine since 2017, which struck parts of South Sudan, they said.

"This report is a clear call to urgent action," said Dominique Burgeon, the FAO's director of emergencies and resilience.

"We are deeply concerned about the combined impact of several crises which are eroding people's ability to produce and access food, leaving them more and more at risk of the most extreme hunger."

Is Rupert Murdoch dumping Trump?

AFP, New York

Fox News and the New York Post, magnate Rupert Murdoch's main media outlets, have started distancing themselves from Donald Trump as the US election vote counting drama drags on -- a first since the president came to power and a potential turning point.

On Thursday night in Phoenix, Arizona, supporters of Trump bluntly shouted "Fox News Sucks" in reference to the news outfit considered fiercely loyal to the president for the past five years.

Fox News infuriated Trump and his people on election night by calling Arizona for Democrat Joe Biden. Jared Kushner, Trump's advisor and son in law, called Murdoch in vain to try to get that call retracted. Other media held off from calling the battleground state for Biden as the tallying of ballots continued.

Since that night, Fox News has stepped very carefully around allegations of massive vote fraud coming from the Trump campaign and the man himself. "We just haven't seen it. It hasn't been presented to us," Fox News anchor Brett Baier said on the air Friday.

So people are asking if Fox News, which helped bring Trump to power in 2016, is in the process of dumping him as Biden closes in on the magic number of 270 electoral votes that would win him the White House.

DePauw University communications professor Jeffrey McCall said Fox News has always had a twin identity -- on one hand, star anchors who are more editorialists than journalists and on the other a newsroom that is much more measured.

Some Fox journalists, such as Chris Wallace,



who was the moderator at the first Trump-Biden debate, are very well respected professionals.

On the in-your-face editorial side stands Fox star Sean Hannity, who is very close to Trump and said on Thursday evening, "Americans have every right to be suspicious ... to distrust the legitimacy of the results."

McCall said that the way Fox News has treated Trump since the election and its early calling of Arizona for Biden show the more serious side of the network is trying to "operate

as independently as possible from the opinion section and even from the ownership."

"These people have their own journalistic standards that they want to uphold."

Behind Fox News, which chalked up 14.1 million viewers on US election night, is, of course, Murdoch. The 89-year old media mogul is known for his conservative views but over the past few months has come to grips with the idea of a Biden win, according to the Daily Beast.

Still, said McCall, "My guess is that the Murdoch family is not calling into the newsroom to tell Bret Baier how to cover certain kinds of stories." Murdoch's other pet US outlet, the New York Post, might be "a closer reflexion of Murdoch's own opinions politically than even Fox News," said Peck.

Just days ago, right before the election, it did not hesitate to run a story that said Biden's son Hunter, sitting on the board of a Ukrainian gas company, sold access to his father, who was then vice president under Barack Obama.

On Friday the Post ran two opinion pieces that made the assumption that Trump would probably lose the election.

"Murdoch at times you can sense him understanding where the political winds are going," said Peck, who teaches at City University of New York (CUNY). And Biden is a centrist Democrat that he could stomach.