

VOTE RECOUNTS

RULES IN KEY
CONTESTED STATES

PENNSYLVANIA

State law requires an automatic recount when the margin is 0.5 percent or less. 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



Police officers confront protesters in Los Angeles; and supporters of Donald Trump protest in front of the Maricopa County Election Department while votes are being counted in Phoenix, Arizona. Three days after the US election, a winner had yet to be declared.

PHOTO: AFP



Divided US waits for result

Some Americans dance, others wield guns at vote-counting sites

REUTERS, Philadelphia

Joe Biden supporters danced in Philadelphia's streets on Friday, while armed backers of President Donald Trump in Phoenix shouted, "Stop the steal" as a third day of post-election ballot counting brought the Democratic former vice president closer to winning the White House.

In Detroit, several hundred supporters of the Republican president, some carrying guns, raised premature chants of "We won!" outside a vote-counting center for Michigan's largest city, despite news organizations having called the state for Biden.

But Philadelphia took center stage as the most populous and ballot-rich city in Pennsylvania - a must-win electoral prize for Trump even as Biden surpassed the president on Friday in the state's vote count.

With 20 electoral votes up for grabs, Pennsylvania was the most consequential of a handful of states where the outcome of Tuesday's election was still too close to call, and many Philadelphians delighted in parading past news cameras playing violins and trombones or dressed in election-themed costumes.

Sean Truppo, 37, a social studies teacher, said he lit fireworks upon awaking to news that Biden had overtaken Trump in the state's count before putting his 4-year-old



daughter in a stroller to join the crowds outside the Philadelphia Convention Center.

"My daughter was born under Trump and I wanted her to witness the end of Trump," he said.

Wearied from one of the most bruising presidential races in modern times, millions of Americans have spent three days since polls closed on Tuesday glued to round-the-clock news coverage of the slowing mounting vote tallies, a process prolonged by a record torrent of mail-in ballots.

Many sought distraction from the strain of prolonged uncertainty through work, chores or exercise.

Some Trump supporters, taking a cue from the president, insisted something must be wrong with any count showing

Biden winning, and brought rifles and handguns with them to rallies outside tabulation centers in Detroit and Phoenix. Wearing "Make America Great Again" red baseball caps and other pro-Trump garb, some fell to their knees in public prayer.

"It's hard to believe that we all went to bed Tuesday night and Trump was so far ahead and now he's behind," George Vosca, 72, a retired Illinois government employee, said after driving an hour to join a pro-Trump rally outside the Wisconsin state capitol building in Madison.

Pro-Trump rallies organized using the social media hashtag #StopTheSteal were being planned for yesterday in nearly 60 cities across six battleground states, including Michigan and Wisconsin, which were already called for Biden.

Most demonstrations on Friday were peaceful and relatively small, though tensions sometimes flared.

In Detroit, a few anti-racism protesters rallying behind the Black Lives Matter slogan entered an area cordoned off by police for Trump supporters on Friday.

In Arizona, another closely contested state, a growing crowd of several hundred protesters waving pro-Trump flags, some carrying rifles, returned for a third day to the counting center in Phoenix, Arizona's capital.

Counties must separate late ballots

SC tells Pennsylvania

REUTERS

US Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito on Friday night ordered county election boards in Pennsylvania to comply with a state directive to separate mail-in ballots received after 8 pm on Election Day from other ballots.

The decision comes as Democrat Joe Biden won the all important state yesterday.

The order came in a case pending before the justices to invalidate a September decision by the state's highest court that allowed election officials to count mail-in ballots postmarked by Tuesday's Election Day that are delivered through Friday.

Alito granted the request by Pennsylvania Republicans to separate the ballots without first referring the request to the other justices.

BATTLEGROUND

WHEN COUNTING WILL BE OVER?

Democratic candidate Joe Biden is leading the race to reach 270 electoral votes with 253. Trump has 213 electoral votes. Here is the state of play in the five states.

PENNSYLVANIA

(20 electoral votes)

Biden has a lead of 28,833 votes, or a 0.5 percentage point margin, with 96% of the estimated vote counted. Under Pennsylvania law, a recount is automatic if the margin of victory is less than or equal to 0.5 percentage point of the total vote. There are still ballots to be counted in Philadelphia, the state's largest city, and Allegheny county, home to Pittsburgh, which started to report votes on Friday evening. The majority of ballots left in Philadelphia are provisional and military ballots, Pennsylvania's election commissioner said, adding the final count could take several days. Friday is the last day that Pennsylvania can accept mail-in ballots postmarked on or before Election Day. The US Supreme Court ordered election officials in the state to separate out ballots received after Tuesday, which are the subject of a lawsuit in which Republicans contend they should not be counted.

GEORGIA

(16 electoral votes)

Biden leads Trump by 7,248 votes, with 99% of the estimated vote counted. Trump needs both Pennsylvania and Georgia to win a second term. Brad Raffensperger, Georgia's secretary of state, said he expects the margin to be just a few thousand votes, which will likely trigger a recount. A recount must wait until Georgia's results are certified, expected on or before Nov 20. About 9,000 military and overseas ballots are still outstanding and could be accepted if they arrive on Friday as long as they were postmarked Tuesday or earlier.

ARIZONA

(11 electoral votes)

Biden has 49.6% versus Trump at 48.7%, a lead of 27,963 votes, with 97% of the expected vote tallied. The state had about 173,000 ballots left to count at around 9:15 pm ET, Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs told CNN. That included 92,000 ballots in Maricopa County, where Biden has held a narrow lead. And it included more than 40,000 provisional ballots that she said might not be counted until Wednesday.

NEVADA

(6 electoral votes)

Biden leads Trump by 22,657 votes, or 1.8 percentage points, with about 93% of the vote counted as of 0330 GMT. More votes are expected out of Clark county, which includes Las Vegas. The majority of mail-in ballots are expected to be counted by Sunday, according to local officials.

NORTH CAROLINA

(15 electoral votes)

Trump leads by 76,515 votes, or 1.6 percentage points, with about 98% of the estimated vote counted. State officials have said a full result will not be known until next week. The state allows mail-in ballots postmarked by Tuesday to be counted if they are received by Nov 12.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS



Supporters of the National League for Democracy (NLD) party (dressed red) on a motorcade pass supporters of the opposition Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), during an election campaign event on the outskirts of Yangon on Friday, ahead of today's general election.

PHOTO: AFP

Food habit change can save planet

Study says emissions related to food could push Earth past global warming limits even if all fossil fuel emissions 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 agricultural chemicals 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.

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.