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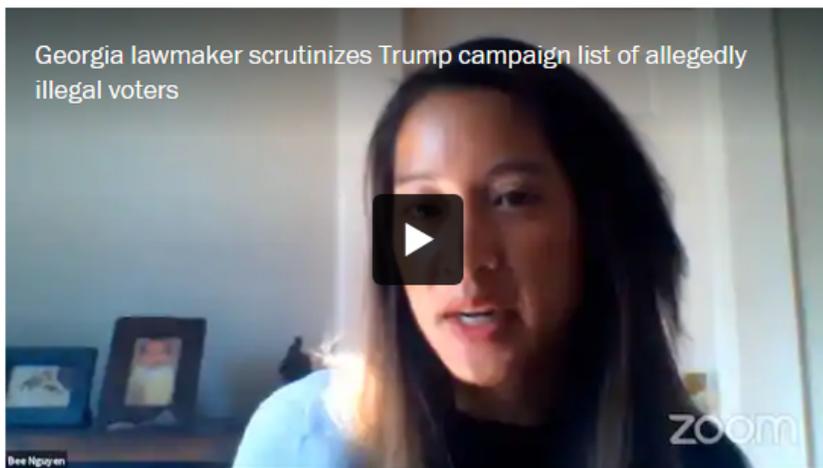
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Here's what happened when a Georgia lawmaker scrutinized the Trump campaign's list of allegedly illegal votes



Georgia state Rep. Bee Nguyen (D) fact-checked a list of voters who President Trump's campaign claimed cast illegal ballots during a hearing on Dec. 10. (The Washington Post)

By **Michelle Ye Hee Lee**

Dec. 11, 2020 at 12:17 a.m. GMT

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When Georgia state Rep. Bee Nguyen (D) reviewed a list of



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When Georgia state Rep. Bee Nguyen (D) reviewed a list of voters who President Trump’s campaign claimed cast illegal ballots in the state, three names caught her eye: two friends and a constituent.

For days, Nguyen pored over public records, spoke with voters by phone and even knocked on doors in person to vet the Trump list. She found that it included dozens of voters who were eligible to vote in Georgia — along with their full names and home addresses.

On Thursday, when a data analyst who compiled the list told a panel of state lawmakers that it proved thousands of voters cast ballots in Georgia who should not have, Nguyen was ready.

“I do want to share with you some of the things that I found that appeared to be incorrect to me,” the two-term lawmaker told Matt Braynard, whose research [has been cited in numerous suits filed by Trump and his allies](#), several of which have been tossed out of the courts.



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Nguyen’s 10-minute dissection of the data offered a rare real-

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Nguyen’s 10-minute dissection of the data offered a rare real-time fact check of the unsubstantiated claims of widespread fraud that the president’s allies have promoted in state hearings around the country, largely before friendly Republican audiences.

“If you are going to take the names of voters in the state of Georgia and publish their first, middle and last name, their home address, and accuse them of committing a felony, at the very minimum there should have been an attempt to contact these voters,” she said in an interview after the hearing. “There was no such attempt.”

Braynard said in an email to The Washington Post that he “appreciated her feedback and look forward to getting her records that are questionable. I was happy to make a statement and happy to hear feedback and questions.”



The episode shows how quickly the allegations by Trump and his supporters have fallen apart under scrutiny, particularly in the courts, which have consistently rejected assertions that rampant irregularities tainted the vote.

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in the courts, which have consistently rejected assertions that rampant irregularities tainted the vote.

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Georgia Voting Systems Manager Gabriel Sterling expressed his frustration on Dec. 10 with conspiracy theories about the 2020 election. (The Washington Post)

Yet in Georgia and elsewhere, many state Republicans have given Trump a platform to air the claims, holding legislative hearings on election integrity that have largely been used to recycle conspiracy theories and unsubstantiated allegations.

The president's lawyer, Rudolph W. Giuliani, appeared via video at the Georgia House's investigative hearing into the election on Thursday, a day after being discharged from the hospital due to a [coronavirus](#) infection. During his testimony, Giuliani reiterated several claims that state election officials have repeatedly debunked since Election Day.

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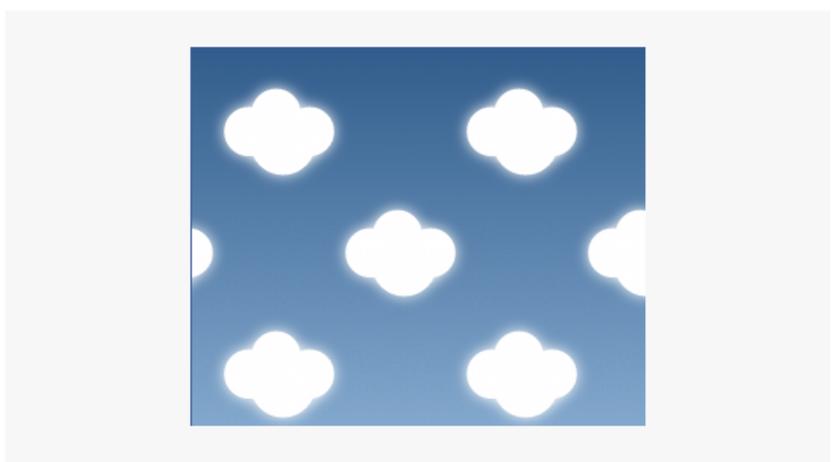
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Giuliani called out several Black election workers in Fulton County, alleging that they were “passing around USB ports as if they were vials of heroin or cocaine.” He also referred to some election workers by name while questioning their actions — [despite repeated pleas](#) from state election officials to protect the safety of election workers.

The president’s legal team also questioned the security of the voting machines used in Georgia, repeating a widely debunked conspiracy theory.

At one point, as the lawyers played a video of an election official in Coffee County, Ga., Giuliani was heard saying off-camera: “This is really good stuff,” adding: “We should try to get this on Newsmax, on OAN,” referring to conservative media outlets.

House Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Shaw Blackmon, a Republican, did not offer an opportunity for lawmakers to question Giuliani.



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The forum was sharply criticized by officials with the secretary of state's office, who have defended the integrity of the election and denounced efforts to undermine public faith in the outcome.

"Giving oxygen to this continued disinformation is leading to a continuing erosion of people's belief in our elections and our processes," Gabriel Sterling, Georgia's voting information systems manager, said during a news conference Thursday afternoon.

Georgia certified its election results for the second time this week after a second recount of presidential ballots reaffirmed Joe Biden's narrow victory in the state.



A cardboard cutout of President Trump is held up during a victory rally Saturday in Valdosta. (Jabin Botsford/The Washington Post)

But the legal challenges have not abated. The Republican National Committee filed a lawsuit Tuesday claiming that some poll watchers could not observe the vote counting as closely in person as it had hoped, and challenging the use of

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But the legal challenges have not abated. The Republican National Committee filed a lawsuit Tuesday claiming that some poll watchers could not observe the vote counting as closely in person as it had hoped, and challenging the use of ballot drop boxes, which were installed at the direction of election officials in Georgia.



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In another lawsuit filed in recent days, the Trump campaign and Georgia Republican Party Chairman David Shafer alleged systemic irregularities and requested that the court decertify the election and prevent the state's electors from casting their votes for Biden when the electoral college meets on Monday.

Legal experts said the court challenges have little hope of success.

"It seems, in any event, to be much ado about nothing," said John Powers, a Georgia analyst at the voting rights group Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. "It's not clear what the end game is here, but it's never been clear to me that there is a discernible end game."

The Trump campaign's 1,585-page lawsuit relies heavily on data analysis by Braynard, who worked on the Trump campaign in 2016 and [who has led an outside effort to](#)

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The Trump campaign’s 1,585-page lawsuit relies heavily on data analysis by Braynard, who worked on the Trump campaign in 2016 and [who has led an outside effort](#) to analyze voter records and other databases in search of signs that ballots may have been cast illegally.

[The federal government’s chief information security officer is helping an outside effort to hunt for alleged voter fraud]

“When just combining my findings alone, the number of ballots that are strongly indicated as illegally cast surpasses the margin of victory in the presidential election, thus making it impossible to know who the deserved winner is in Georgia,” Braynard said during the hearing.

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He provided lists of voters’ personal information to back up his claim that there were thousands of individuals who had voted but were registered in another state. He said the lists showed voters who used a post office address to mask their true residences and that others voted in two states.

During the hearing Thursday, Nguyen countered Braynard’s analysis with her own research, based on a sampling of the exhibits included in the lawsuit.

Of the first 10 names on the list that were allegedly out-of-

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analysis with her own research, based on a sampling of the exhibits included in the lawsuit.

Of the first 10 names on the list that were allegedly out-of-state voters, Nguyen said she found eight who were longtime Georgia residents and property owners by using public records.

Dozens of voters who the campaign suggested used P.O. boxes to vote illegally were actually residents of a single condominium building that had a mail center on the first floor — including Republicans and Democrats, she said.

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“I wanted to do the research because these are real-life people and we cannot just be alleging that they are committing voter fraud and that they are committing a felony and not do our due diligence,” Nguyen said later.

Nguyen, who in 2017 filled the state legislative seat vacated by Stacey Abrams when she ran for governor, said the voters she contacted said they were not aware that their names and addresses were made public in the lawsuit.

After she presented her findings during the hearing, Braynard thanked Nguyen for her research.

“I actually want to thank you for helping to raise issues to

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After she presented her findings during the hearing, Braynard thanked Nguyen for her research.

“I actually want to thank you for helping to raise issues to help better validate data,” he said. “It’s only with strong scrutiny that we’re able to be completely confident in our findings.”

Aaron Schaffer contributed to this report.

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Michelle Lee

Michelle Ye Hee Lee is a reporter on The Washington Post’s national political enterprise and accountability team. Follow

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