

Trump Administration Escalates Undermining Elections with Fulton County FBI Raid

The reasons for the raid were some of the same claims and debunked conspiracy theories that have driven baseless speculation about the 2020 vote in Georgia for the past six years.



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[Voting & Elections](#)

This article was first published by [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) [\[link-1\]](#) on February 18.

When the FBI raids an office, any office, it looks like someone is up to something bad. The Jan. 28 [raid of the Fulton County election office](#) [\[link-2\]](#) had it all: geared-up agents in FBI jackets seizing [box after box](#) [\[link-3\]](#) in full view of the camera. In this instance,

though, the bureau wasn't after evidence of a crime.

And now we know just how flimsy was the basis for the raid. After the county took the federal government to court, the statement made by the government to explain the basis for the raid has now been made public.

It's a doozy — so much so the county [filed a motion](#) [\[link-4\]](#) Tuesday alleging

the Justice Department misled the judge by leaving key information out of the affidavit.

It turns out that the reasons for the raid were some of the same claims and debunked conspiracy theories that have driven baseless speculation about the 2020 vote in Georgia for the past six years. It would barely pass muster as a blog post, let alone the basis for what certainly seems to be an abusive and performative law enforcement action.

As Georgians well know, these false notions of criminal behavior have been declared exactly that — [false](#) [\[link-5\]](#) — by nonpartisan entities multiple times: a [Performance Review Board including experts in election administration](#) [\[link-6\]](#), a [monitor](#) [\[link-7\]](#) who was on site during the 2020 election, and [investigators](#) [\[link-8\]](#) looking into [complaints](#) [\[link-9\]](#) brought before the State Election Board.

The January raid was not the work of whistleblowers but of doubt-spreaders.

It's part of the Trump administration's project to undermine American elections, in Georgia and around the country. But that effort won't succeed if voters continue to reject it.

Local election officials did their jobs

The [FBI's affidavit](#) [\[link-10\]](#) underlying the January raid provides a window for voters into the mechanics of the administration's approach: Dazzle with meaningless detail that sounds important but doesn't have legal or investigative merit. In other words, despite the fanfare, the affidavit doesn't offer anything that indicates the Georgia outcome was wrong or that anyone inside Georgia's election administration committed fraud.

Take just one of the allegations. The FBI claims a discrepancy of more than 3% between the number of ballots in Fulton County's first official count, and the number they first reported when they conducted a recount. That would be concerning if true. But it isn't.

Nearly two years ago, investigators following up on a State Election Board complaint found that the same claim

made by the same witness was “[unsubstantiated](#) [\[link-11\]](#)” — a finding that the affidavit never acknowledges, despite citing the complaint itself.

The numbers of ballots reported in the two counts were, in fact, off by less than two-tenths of a percent — an amount that is far less concerning in a county with more than half a million ballots cast, and, of course, it does not put the outcome of the presidential contest into question.

So, what was the source of the confusion? It turns out that before the recount was completed, and before any official numbers were reported, local election officials did note a discrepancy between the number of ballots that were recounted and the number from the original count.

They looked into it and realized that in the process of naming batches of ballots — an ID like “Box A123” that helps identify groups of ballots as already scanned — some batches received identical names. When this happened, the software rejected the counts from the second, identically

named batch, and those ballots had not been included in the recount total, even though workers had put them through the ballot scanners.

Once this was discovered, those misnamed batches were given new names and were rescanned in the presence of party monitors from both the Republican and Democratic parties, as well as a state-appointed monitor. The correct totals, including all the scanned batches, were then provided in the official recount report.

In other words, election officials did their jobs. They noted a discrepancy, figured out the cause, and rectified the problem transparently. The recount thus served its function of verifying the original count.

Georgians have safe and secure elections

To be sure, reviews and investigations into the 2020 election in Georgia found areas where election administration could improve.

Those recommendations focus on organization, planning and other

logistical considerations that are typical of any administrative endeavor the size of running a high turnout election in a populous county.

But as multiple reviews have shown, there's no evidence of fraud, dishonesty or intentional malfeasance.

The election, ensuing litigation and state investigations are over. President Donald Trump's 2020 campaign availed itself of the options to challenge the results, and they did not succeed because they did not have the votes.

Yet the federal government is choosing to repeat debunked claims that shake the public's trust in elections and to signal smoke even though there's no fire, this time as purported grounds for a criminal investigation.

It's an escalation of the administration's campaign to undermine future elections — a show of force over state and local

governments that, under our Constitution and federal system, are charged with running and maintaining the integrity of our elections.

This unprecedented raid should not serve as an excuse for the president to do what he has no authority to do — decide how elections are run in Georgia.

Georgia voters have safe and secure options for casting ballots: by absentee ballot that they can mail or drop off, and in person at early vote sites and at all polls on Election Day.

They should plan for the method that works best for them. And their state leaders should resist pressure to take any of these voting options away, make them harder or [take over election administration](#) [link-12] to put it [in service of](#) [link-13] the federal government's goals rather than the needs of Georgia voters.

MORE ON

[Election Integrity](#) [link-14]

Links

link-1: The Atlanta Journal-Constitution <https://www.ajc.com/opinion/2026/02/trump-administration-escalates-undermining-elections-by-fulton-county-fbi-raid/>

link-2: raid of the Fulton County election office <https://www.ajc.com/politics/2026/01/fbi-raid-in-fulton-sends-shockwaves-across-georgias-political-landscape/>

link-3: box after box <https://www.wesa.fm/2026-01-30/fbi-seizes-thousands-of-2020-ballots-from-fulton-county-georgia>

link-4: filed a motion <https://www.cnn.com/2026/02/17/politics/fulton-county-ballots-justice-department>

link-5: false <https://www.npr.org/2026/02/10/nx-s1-5710649/fulton-county-2020-election-affidavit-fbi>

link-6: Performance Review Board including experts in election administration

https://sos.ga.gov/sites/default/files/forms/Performance%20Review%20Board%20Report%20on%20Fulton%20County%20Elections%20%281-13-23%29_0%20%28OLD%29.pdf?inline=1

link-7: monitor <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/20484973-fulton-county-state-election-board-report/?q=signature&mode=document#document/p1>

link-8: investigators <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/26949175-seb2023-025-roi-redacted/>

link-9: complaints <https://www.scribd.com/document/997000263/SEB2020-203-ROI-Redacted>

link-10: FBI's affidavit <https://www.ajc.com/sp/annotated-the-fbis-affidavit-in-support-of-fulton-county-search/>

link-11: unsubstantiated <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/26949175-seb2023-025-roi-redacted/>

link-12: take over election administration <https://www.ajc.com/politics/2026/02/fbi-affidavit-for-fultons-2020-records-fuels-gop-calls-for-state-takeover/>

link-13: in service of <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/confidential-agreements-show-trump-administrations-plans-states-voter>

link-14: Election Integrity <https://www.brennancenter.org/topics/voting-elections/election-integrity>