Elections Dashboard June 2024 Analysis

In the Spring of 2024, the National Task Force on Election Crises launched the Elections Dashboard, a visualization that collates news stories about past and present election-related developments, some of which could become or lay the foundation for actual election crises. Every month, the Task Force will share its analysis of prominent developments, compare the frequency and severity of developments from previous months, and highlight the top stories to watch going forward.

Each development on the Dashboard is assigned a category and a level.

Categories

- **Administration -** incidents that delay or disrupt normal voting and tabulation processes and best practices
- **Mis/Disinformation -** false information about elections spread either unintentionally (mis) or intentionally (dis)
- **Violence -** violence and intimidation aimed at voters, election administrators, judges, or political candidates
- **Interference -** bad faith efforts to manipulate an election and ultimately prevent the true election winner from taking office

Levels

- **3 - High Concern**
- **2 - Moderate Concern**
- **1 - Low Concern**
- **0 - No Concern**

Which development type was most prominent in the last month?

Over the past month, Administration has been the category with the most entries by a large margin.

Concerns about preserving voting access and protecting voter data have been among the most frequent developments throughout the 2024 primary season.

- — **Level 0 -** A Senator in Arizona has proposed legislation to create a sortable database which would allow those with access to "could check for themselves

that only eligible voters voted, see images of completed ballots, and examine how the machines counted the votes."

— **Level 1 -** The Georgia legislature passed a series of election law revisions that will "change how votes are counted on ballots, create new ballot security measures, and outline the probable cause for voter eligibility challenges that have risen since the 2020 presidential election."

— **Level 1 -** An exchange in North Carolina between the head of the state elections board and several legislators demonstrates the tension that arises when political rhetoric shapes discussions about professional election administration.

— **Level 1 -** After delays, in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, 183 voters received their ballots just three days before the April 23 primary.

— **Level 1 -** Voters with disabilities in Wisconsin filed a lawsuit which "seeks to require that electronic absentee voting be an option for people with disabilities, just as it is for military and overseas voters."

Nonprofit and political organizations are also organizing mass challenges to voter eligibility across many of the states featured in the dashboard, which we will continue to monitor.

Have any severe developments occurred in the last month?

Most of the developments in the Elections Dashboard continue to be in the Level 0 to Level 1 range.

The following are the Level 2 ratings from May and June:

— **Level 2 -** Former President Trump Won't Commit to Accepting Wisconsin Results

As the National Task Force on Election Crises said during the 2020 election: "Any suggestion by a candidate that he or she will refuse to leave office or will otherwise interfere with the will of the people if he or she loses an election must be rejected swiftly and decisively." Otherwise, the question of whether or not we will have a **peaceful transition of power** can cause uncertainty and instability.

— **Level 2 -** Harris County, Texas Ordered to Redo 2022 Judicial Race

The paperwork issues in Harris County highlight the **need for clear processes**, attention to detail, and proper training so election workers can catch potential problems and verify the eligibility of every voter. In close contests, any error could be decisive, which is **why safeguards are in place** to catch and remedy them.

— **Level 2 -** Delta County, Michigan Refused to Certify Vote

The refusal of a county board in Michigan to certify just over 4,000 votes in the primary election raises concerns about future attempts at certification interference in the 2024 general election. As research from Protect Democracy clearly states: **certification is a mandatory duty**. Even if officials in Delta County, MI, had not been able to match the number of ballots to the number of voters – which they were – or detected any irregularities – which they did not – other mechanisms outside of certification exist to address such issues. Each state has a process for counting, verifying, and challenging election results if necessary apart from certification. Fortunately, following a reminder of their duty from Michigan's Director of the Bureau of Elections, the officials ultimately complied, but their initial refusal is part of a concerning trend.

— **Level 2 -** Georgia election board proposes an 'inquiry' before certifying results

The proposed rule calls for a "reasonable inquiry" to be made before election results can be certified. This rule was made in response to a request from a local official who attempted to refuse to certify results of a primary election earlier this year. If this rule is finalized and implemented, it could give local officials **more opportunity to baselessly refuse to certify election results**. Since certification is a mandatory and largely ministerial responsibility, introducing unnecessary steps to it that could delay final certification would increase the level of concern.

— **Level 2 -** Florida election officials fear new ballot disposal rule

The new rule implemented by the state government would require poll workers to cut the corners off ballots that voters made a mistake filling out, which could conflict with the Florida Constitution's guarantee of the right to a secret ballot. Since poll workers would have to handle ballots to dispose of them, county election officials have raised concerns that the new rule could create legal risk. The guidance should be clarified to ensure that election workers are able to effectively administer the election without fear of punishment.

How do the frequency and severity of developments compare to previous months?

As we get closer to the election, states and counties are finalizing the processes for the 2024 election. While many of these developments will be straightforward and provide clear information and processes for voters, others might increase the likelihood of a crisis by providing confusing or contradictory guidance to voters and election officials.

Some of the most recent developments have received Level 0 ratings in the dashboard because they are either positive developments or simply to not indicate a problem. These include the Nevada Secretary of State's underlined guidelines for counting the votes – which may help the state count its ballots faster during the 2024 election.

Other developments are more concerning, such as a Wisconsin town eliminating voting machines ahead of the 2024 election (Level 1), proposed changes to the certification process in Georgia that could make it more difficult to certify the results (Level 2), and a new rule in Florida that contradicts other election laws and could cause confusion (Level 2).

What are the top stories from last month to watch going forward?

States and counties are currently finalizing their processes and rules for the 2024 election. State and county officials are publishing their guidelines for voters, and state legislatures and election boards are passing the final rules governing the 2024 election. It is important to watch these developments to watch for signs that these processes and rules may introduce unnecessary risks or cause confusion for voters. Additionally, lawsuits challenging these changes may add further uncertainty to the process.

In recent months the dashboard has tracked multiple cases that raise concerns regarding potential refusals to certify elections. County officials should understand that their role is largely ministerial, and more work must be done to educate the public about the necessity of certifying the election results in line with the will of the people.