

October 2024

Elections Dashboard Analysis

The National Task Force on Election Crises' Elections Dashboard is 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. **Now every two weeks**, the Task Force shares an analysis of prominent developments, comparing the frequency and severity of developments from previous months and highlighting the top stories to watch going forward.

HOW DEVELOPMENTS ARE CLASSIFIED

Levels

3: High Concern

2: Moderate Concern

1: Low Concern

0: No Concern

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)

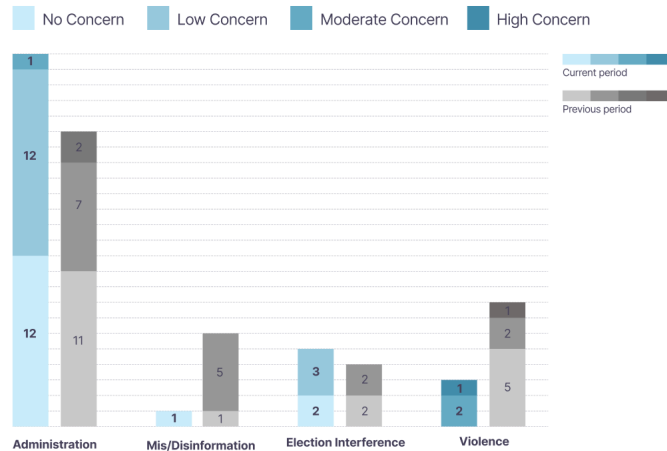
Violence: Violence and intimidation aimed at voters, election administrators, judges, or political candidates

Interference: Bad faith efforts to manipulate an election and ultimately prevent the true election winner from taking office

ELECTIONS DASHBOARD DEVELOPMENTS

September 23 through October 11, 2024

Number of new developments this month by category and level of concern.



WHICH DEVELOPMENT TYPE WAS MOST PROMINENT THIS PERIOD?

Election Administration

From September 23, 2024 - October 11, 2024, the majority of developments that we observed once again pertained to Election Administration, continuing the trend from the previous period.

- **Level 1 - [In Pennsylvania, some absentee ballot return envelopes are arriving to voters already sealed.](#)**

In Pennsylvania, voters who request a mail-in ballot are sent their ballot, as well as two additional envelopes: a protective inner envelope to place their ballot inside, and a return envelope to place the protective inner envelope inside before mailing in their ballot. In Philadelphia, multiple voters reported receiving return envelopes that had already been sealed, which election officials have attributed to extreme humidity. Officials are encouraging voters to contact their county officials if they receive a return envelope that is already sealed. According to City Commissioner Seth Bluestein, roughly 10,000 envelopes pre-sealed have now been reported in Philadelphia, indicating that the scale of the problem is limited.

- **Level 1 - [In Texas, the state Attorney General is seeking federal records to verify voter registration.](#)**

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has requested that Texas Secretary of State Jane Nelson work with the federal government to verify the identity of registered voters who do not have a state-issued ID. States typically remove eligible voters on an ongoing basis, but the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 prohibits them from doing so within 90 days of the election. Immigration advocates have warned that many federal databases are not designed to be used to verify voter data. This request from the attorney general could be used to undermine trust in the election, and should be monitored.

HAVE ANY SEVERE DEVELOPMENTS OCCURRED SINCE THE LAST UPDATE?

Hurricane Helene unleashes destruction across the South.

During this period, we observed one Level 3 development and one Level 2 development.

- **Level 3 - [Hurricane Helene disrupts the election.](#)**

Hurricane Helene made landfall on September 26 and charted a path of devastation through the Southeastern United States. The storm [took the lives of over two hundred Americans](#) and [caused tens of billions of dollars in damage](#). The widespread damage to all levels of infrastructure such as roads and electricity poses a major risk to the state's ability to administer the 2024 election, but election officials are taking emergency measures in Western North Carolina to ensure that voters will be able to cast their ballots.

The North Carolina State Board of Elections [unanimously passed a bipartisan resolution to give impacted counties flexibility to ensure voting access](#); the state legislature is likely to enact additional measures and provide additional funding. Concerns remain, however, as the October 11th voter registration deadline was not extended, and some experts have expressed concern about false narratives around the hurricane leading to potential post-election challenges. Helene's impact on this election could be significant, and the response must be monitored closely.

- **Level 2 - [In Wisconsin, a mayor unilaterally removed ballot dropboxes.](#)**

On Sunday, September 22, Wausau, WI, Mayor Doug Diny personally removed the city's only ballot dropbox from its position outside of City Hall. Diny posed for a photo and reportedly said, "This is no different than the maintenance guy moving it out there...I'm a member of staff. There's nothing nefarious going on here. I'm hoping for a good result."

Diny's actions could be beyond his legal authority and should be promptly addressed. The Marathon County District Attorney has already announced that she is investigating the matter; since absentee balloting has already begun and the election is mere weeks away, this impasse should be resolved as quickly as possible.

HOW DO THE FREQUENCY AND SEVERITY OF DEVELOPMENTS COMPARE TO PAST UPDATES?

Election Administration remains the most frequent concern.

During this period, the majority of developments that we observed once again pertained to the administration of elections. Election Administration are likely to continue to be as the election draws closer.

WHAT ARE THE TOP STORIES FROM THE LAST PERIOD TO WATCH GOING FORWARD?

How will Hurricane Helene impact the election?

The historic level of destruction wrought by Hurricane Helene is the single most important development that we observed during this period.

On October 10, the Task Force held a briefing to discuss elections in the aftermath of natural disasters. Task Force Member and election emergencies expert Michael Morley, Protect Democracy's Ann Tindall, and former North Carolina Supreme Court Justice Robert Roff provided these key insights, among others:

- Damage assessments in North Carolina are ongoing and comprehensive.
- Officials at every level are taking steps to ensure elections run smoothly amidst the devastation in Florida and North Carolina.
- North Carolina has an election emergency statute that allows the State Board of Elections to authorize emergency measures in response to natural disasters and other crises. In response to Helene, they have utilized this authority through unanimously-approved measures.
- The North Carolina State Boards of Elections has launched a website with resources for those affected. The site, <http://ncsbe.gov/helene>, will have updates on changes to the voting process—including information on getting absentee ballots delivered to a temporary address and what to do if your ID was lost.

We applaud the heroic efforts of first responders, as well as the swift action taken by election officials to protect affected voters' right to the ballot. The Task Force will continue to monitor the developments resulting from Hurricane Helene.

For more information, review Protect Democracy's memo on North Carolina's 2024 election after Hurricane Helene:

<https://protectdemocracy.org/work/the-2024-election-after-hurricane-helene-north-carolina/>

This document is published by the National Task Force on Election Crises, a cross-partisan group of experts that helps civil society and decision-makers prevent, prepare for, and mitigate a range of election crises. You can learn more at electiontaskforce.org.