

September 2024 (Part II)

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

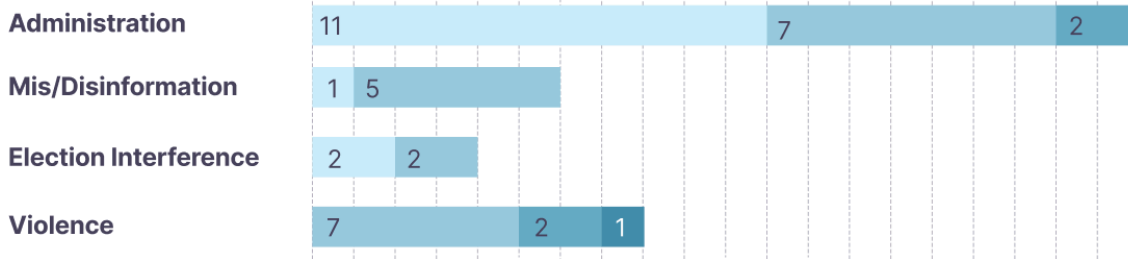
Interference: Bad faith efforts to manipulate an election and ultimately prevent the true election winner from taking office

ELECTIONS DASHBOARD DEVELOPMENTS

September 10 through September 22, 2024

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

No Concern Low Concern Moderate Concern High Concern



WHICH DEVELOPMENT TYPE WAS MOST PROMINENT THIS PERIOD?

Election Administration

From September 10, 2024 - September 22, 2024, the majority of developments that we observed pertained to Election Administration. This is an increase from the previous period, when only a plurality of developments fell into this category.

- **Level 2 - [The Georgia State Election Board passed a mandatory hand count rule.](#)**
In late September, the State Election Board in Georgia passed a new rule requiring a hand count of all ballots on election night. While verified machines will still tabulate the actual vote count, a hand count to verify the number of ballots received by each precinct could cause unnecessary delays. This new rule was adopted with less than 50 days until Election Day, leaving local election offices with little time to make the necessary adjustments. Georgia's Attorney General has warned that such a rule is unsupported by state law. Litigation may negate the new rule, which would decrease the potential for a crisis.
- **Level 1 - [In Pennsylvania, election results reporting may be delayed.](#)**
Since the 2020 election, several states have passed laws to expedite the counting of mail-in votes. This is generally a positive development; lessening the time between the close of the polls and the announcement of the results is a way for states to increase confidence. However, Pennsylvania—a key swing state in this year's presidential election—has not taken such a step, leaving the door open to the possibility that the state may once again be delayed in reporting its results on election night. This situation creates the potential for false

narratives of the election being “stolen” to arise, as occurred in 2020, and requires ongoing monitoring. Absent this legislative fix, state and county officials in Pennsylvania are updating processes and applying lessons learned from 2020 to ensure faster counting than in the previous election.

- **Level 1 - [Pennsylvania’s Supreme Court takes up “naked ballot” case](#)**

In Pennsylvania, voters place their mail-in ballots inside of one envelope, and then place that envelope inside another to ensure secrecy. Both envelopes are provided by the Commonwealth.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court recently agreed to hear a case as to whether “naked ballots”—ballots received without the internal protective envelope—should be considered valid. To avoid changing the rules very close to or after Election Day, the court should render its decision as swiftly as possible. A decision that disenfranchises Pennsylvanians who have already voted could increase the level of concern in this matter.

HAVE ANY SEVERE DEVELOPMENTS OCCURRED IN THE LAST MONTH?

Political violence continues to escalate.

During this period, we observed one Level 3 development, as well as a series of Level 2 developments. The sustained level of political violence and the potential threat that it poses are clear trends in this election.

- **Level 3 - [Man suspected of attempting to assassinate former President Trump.](#)**

In Florida on September 15, a man waited for twelve hours near a golf course in an alleged attempt to assassinate former President Donald Trump. The man, Ryan Routh, was later arrested and now faces trial. [Investigators have since found a letter](#) written by Routh that details his alleged plan to assassinate the former president.

While no shots were fired, the shooter was able to get within 300-500 yards of the presidential candidate with a high-powered rifle. Violence against a major party's presidential candidate could inflame political tensions and should be unequivocally condemned, especially since this is the second instance of an attempt on Trump's life.

- **Level 2 - [Florida state police are questioning abortion petition signers at their homes.](#)**

In Florida, state police are appearing at the homes of voters who signed a petition to add an abortion rights amendment question to the ballot on Election Day. The officers appear to be

questioning these voters about their decision to sign the petition in an effort to investigate alleged “petition fraud.” However, significant evidence of fraud related to the petition has not been produced, and the deployment of police should be promptly addressed as it could have an intimidating effect on voters. Additionally, a state agency appears to have created a website that includes critical information about the amendment's implications. Seven members of Florida's Democratic Congressional delegation have asked the US Department of Justice to investigate the potential intimidation and alleged electioneering related to the website.

- **Level 2 - [In Michigan, misinformation drives election official threats.](#)**

In Michigan and other states around the country, sustained misinformation continues to lead to threats against election officials. “We’re daily receiving threats, whether it’s through voicemails, emails, social media or in person,” [said Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson](#). “They’re all rooted in lies and misinformation, which is always disappointing and sad, but at the same time, it’s real.” Rampant misinformation continues to sew distrust, and has even begun to seep into smaller, closer-knit communities. These threats should end immediately so officials can continue to administer a safe and secure election. ([To learn more about Michigan’s elections system, review this resource from the National Task Force on Election Crises.](#))

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

Election Administration is the most frequent concern

During this period, the majority of developments that we observed pertained to the administration of elections—an increase from the previous period, but also a continuation of a trend. Election Administration developments have been the most common for a considerable amount of time, and are likely to continue to be as the election draws closer.

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

Political violence and intimidation constitute a troublesome trend.

As we touched on in the [most recent Dashboard Analysis](#), political leaders and election officials continue to face threats of violence. President Trump has now been the victim of two assassination attempts. Election officials in states across the country are facing threats on a daily basis. The

recent development in Florida, where state police are questioning certain voters at their home under the guise of investigating alleged “petition fraud,” may constitute an effort to intimidate voters.

It is clear that, across the country, candidates, election officials, and voters are encountering violence and intimidation at an alarming rate. In our last Dashboard Analysis, we wrote that there is no place for political violence in our democracy, and that this increasing trend must be condemned. We reiterate those sentiments today.

Thanks to the tireless work of election officials and law enforcement professionals around the country, America’s election system is safe and secure. Long-established systems and procedures are in place to protect the integrity of the results. Intimidation and violence have no role to play in this process, and must be condemned in the clearest of terms.

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.