



October 5, 2020

The Honorable Mark Brnovich  
Arizona Attorney General  
2005 North Central Avenue  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Attorney General Brnovich,

The right to vote safely, securely, and free from discrimination to choose our elected officials is the promise of our representative democracy. Throughout our history, Americans have put their lives on the line to fulfill that promise and we must do everything we can to protect it.

Unfortunately, amid the myriad challenges of administering elections in the middle of a global pandemic, the president of the United States has launched a concerted, months-long campaign to suppress the vote by sowing doubts about the integrity of the process and undermining public faith in our elections.

During the first presidential debate, President Trump expanded on that effort. To an audience of millions he said, "I am urging my supporters to go into the polls and watch very carefully," as he spread lies about alleged examples of voting fraud. And we know what he means when he says "watch very carefully" because he told us in 2016: "and when [I] say 'watch,' you know what I'm talking about, right?"<sup>1</sup>

The implication was clear: Trump wants his supporters to engage in intimidation at polling places.

**Voter intimidation is an illegal--and abhorrent--practice and it's critical for your office to take these threats seriously and hold violators accountable for their actions.**

Trump's refusal to condemn white supremacist groups and reports that the racist, anti-Semitic "Proud Boys" were buoyed by his remarks at the debate only underscores the importance of taking this issue seriously.

These remarks are part of a pattern of behavior aimed at suppressing the vote. The president has spent months spreading misinformation about the process of voting-by mail and undermining your state's efforts to ensure nobody has to choose between their health and their vote. He has refused to commit to the peaceful transfer of power if he loses. His Department of

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<sup>1</sup> The Hill, "Trump to supporters: 'Go out and watch' on Election Day (August 22, 2016).



Justice has launched sham investigations into “fraud” allegations that quickly fall apart on close inspection.

To be clear, we are not opposed to having legal, administrator-approved election monitors in polling places. That happens every year and it’s an important part of accountability in our elections.

That is not what Trump called for and his supporters know what he means. Already, Trump supporters in Virginia disrupted the start of early voting there.<sup>2</sup> His party is also looking to recruit 50,000 “poll watchers” this cycle that experts have warned could be used to intimidate voters. This is the first presidential election since 1980 that Republicans are not under a consent decree that forbids such recruitment efforts, after egregious examples of intimidation.<sup>3</sup>

Protecting the right to vote also means holding accountable those who would try to take it away. As voters begin casting their ballots--by mail, at early voting locations, and soon on Election Day--it’s critical they feel safe to do so. As your state’s top law enforcement official, it’s critical for you to defend and protect the right to vote.

Signed,

Black to the Future Action Fund  
Brady Campaign  
Brady PAC  
The Collective  
Communications Workers of America  
End Citizens United // Let America Vote Action Fund  
Foreign Policy for America  
Human Rights Campaign  
JStreet  
Latino Victory Fund  
League of Conservation Voters  
LGBTQ Victory Fund  
NARAL Pro-Choice America  
National Democratic Redistricting Committee  
Southern Strategy  
Stand Up America  
Swing Left

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<sup>2</sup> New York Times, “Trump Supporters Disrupt Early Voting in Virginia” (September 19, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> CNN, “Trump campaign’s poll-watching plans spark fears of voter suppression” (August 15, 2020).