

Why it's clear Biden won the election

By **CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY and ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE**
Associated Press

ATLANTA — As Democrat Joe Biden is sworn in Wednesday, Jan. 20, as the nation's 46th president, Donald Trump's most ardent supporters still believe Biden was not legitimately elected after Trump continues to argue the election was stolen.

There is no evidence of the widespread fraud that Trump and his allies have claimed. Republican and Democratic election officials have certified the election as valid. Courts have rejected lawsuit after lawsuit, and a clear majority of Congress has confirmed the final result despite a riotous mob earlier this month that sought to disrupt the process.

So who has claimed what, precisely? What's the evidence that the 2020 election was valid and Biden is the duly elected president of the United States?

After a rocky primary season that played out during the coronavirus pandemic, election officials were determined to ensure voters could safely cast their ballots and ramped up operations to handle a massive influx of absentee ballots. Voting absentee has long been available in the U.S., with some states limiting it to certain voters, and the process has safeguards so any ineligible voter or voter casting multiple ballots is caught and prosecuted.

In many places, election officials added drop boxes for voters concerned about widespread mail delays. Others offered curbside voting and a few states opted to send ballots to all registered voters. Although Trump and his allies claimed these changes were designed to rig the election in favor of Democrats, Trump saw more people vote for him in 2020 than four years earlier and Republicans gained seats in Congress.

One of the changes that drew the most scrutiny was the expansion of absentee voting in Pennsylvania, but that was done prior to the pandemic and authorized in a law passed with bipartisan support through the state's Republican-controlled Legislature.

State and local election officials have called the November election one of the smoothest in recent memory, with voting spread out across days and even weeks rather than a crush of people at polling places on Election Day. Even Trump's recently departed attorney general, William Barr, said he saw no evidence of widespread fraud.

And the fact that so many people voted using a paper ballot, which guarantees a record in the event of a dispute, prompted a coalition of government and election security officials, including representatives of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's cybersecurity agency, to issue a statement calling 2020 the "most secure" election.

After voting ended, election officials counted the results and used various measures to verify the totals, such as looking at how many people checked in at each precinct and how many ballots were issued to ensure they add up. For mail ballots, election workers reviewed the voter's registration to ensure they were eligible to vote and many states matched voter signatures against ones on file.

Any discrepancies were investigated, and results were presented to the state to certify the results as accurate. This happened across the country largely without controversy, except for a few instances in which Republicans raised questions.

States report COVID-19 vaccine shortages

By **MICHAEL HILL**
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The push to inoculate Americans against the coronavirus is hitting a roadblock: A number of states are reporting they are running out of vaccine, and tens of thousands of people who managed to get appointments for a first dose are seeing them canceled.

The full explanation for the apparent mismatch between supply and demand was unclear, but last week the U.S. Health and Human Services Department suggested that states had unrealistic expectations for how much vaccine was on the way.

The shortages are coming as states dramatically ramp up their vaccination drives, at the direction of the federal government, to reach people 65 and older, along with other groups deemed essential or at high risk. More than 400,000 deaths in the U.S. have been blamed on the virus.

Teacher Karen Stachowiak spent almost five hours on the New York state hot line and website to land an appointment set for Wednesday, Jan. 20, only to have it canceled. She and her parents were among several thousand people with canceled appointments in Erie County because of supply problems.

"It's stressful because I was so close. And my other friends that are teachers, they were able to book



Lynne Sladky/AP Photo, File

Robert Owens, 90, stands in line Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2021, with other residents to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Pompano Beach, Florida. The push to inoculate Americans against the coronavirus is hitting a roadblock: A number of states are running out of vaccine, and tens of thousands of people who managed to get appointments for a first dose are seeing them canceled.

appointments for last Saturday," Stachowiak said. "So many people are getting theirs in and then it's like, 'Nope, I've got to wait.'"

About half of the 31 million doses distributed to the states by the federal government have been administered so far, though only about 2 million people have received the two doses needed for maximum protection against COVID-19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Countries across Europe are also having problems getting enough doses to provide protection against a virus that is now appearing in new, more contagious variants around the globe.

Pfizer said last week it

would temporarily reduce deliveries of its vaccine to Europe and Canada while it upgrades capacity at its plant in Belgium, which supplies all shots delivered outside the United States. In the U.S., Pfizer has a plant in Michigan.

In the U.S., some states have suggested they may run out of vaccine by Thursday and are unclear when new doses will arrive.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said Wednesday the city had to cancel 23,000 appointments for people awaiting their first dose this week because of inadequate supply. The mayor, who has been sounding the alarm about vaccine shortages for days, said the situation was compounded

by a delay in this week's delivery of Moderna vaccine to the city.

"So we already were feeling the stress of a shortage of the vaccine," he said. "Now the situation has been made even worse. We need to think differently in this moment."

Citing a statewide shortage of vaccine, New York City's police department suspended first-shot vaccinations for its officers.

In Florida, local media reported a similar problem in the Miami area, where the Baptist Health care system canceled appointments that had been scheduled for first doses.

"I could have blown the top of my head off with steam," Charlotte Reeve, 76, told The Miami Herald. "I'm also a fairly recent widow. To me, having to be locked up in my house alone is just devastating to me. ... I feel like I just got cut off at the knees, again."

San Francisco's health department said it is likely to run out of vaccine on Thursday, in part because the state pulled back on administering a batch of Moderna shots after several health workers suffered what may have been a bad reaction. The county health department received 12,000 doses last week but fewer than 2,000 this week.

West Virginia, which has run one of the speediest vaccination drives in the country, in part by using small-town pharmacies,

said it didn't receive an expected increase in doses this week. With 99.6% of first doses on hand already administered, officials are clamoring for the government to send more.

"Here we are with no vaccines," said Republican Gov. Jim Justice, fretting that other states have doses sitting unused. "We've got them all in people's arms and we've done exactly what we should have done. ... I think performance ought to be rewarded."

He said the state hasn't received a promised 25,000 additional doses this week on top of its usual weekly allocation of about 23,000.

Hawaii leaders complained that the state received 59,000 doses last week but expects only about 32,000 this week.

In New York State, Barbara Carr, a 72-year-old retiree in Buffalo, was distraught when her vaccine appointment for Thursday was canceled. But she was able to quickly get another appointment at a local pharmacy and received her first dose on Tuesday.

Now she is worried about her two children, who are teachers. Their appointments were canceled.

"They have had no luck with scheduling, no phone calls, no communication whatsoever other than 'You're canceled,'" Carr said. "The poor teachers. ... I can stay home so I can hide from the virus. They can't."

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