



# ISWNE

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## Pick your worst-case scenario

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Is America headed to a “worst-case” scenario on its way to attempting to hold a free and fair election? According to several non-partisan and bipartisan studies, commissions and government watchdogs, the answer is a scary and sobering “yes.” The only wavering in these opinions is over which of several imagined worst-case scenarios will prevail over all others.

All the experts, media pundits and Trump and Biden campaign leaders agree that it will take days or months after Nov. 3 for a winner to be declared in the 2020 Presidential Election. What is also gaining consensus is that America will see violent protests in its streets in the days immediately following Nov. 3. All the terrible predictions grow much darker and more violent from there.

Can these scenes of post-election protests and violence we are used to seeing in dictator-led countries like Russia, Turkey, Belarus and China’s Hong Kong really be set to happen in our USA? Is it too late to avoid them? The experts’ verdict is it’s already too late.

We are not headed to an election like the Bush-Gore race of 2000 where the arguments were about “hanging chads” in

Florida and all the fighting and action took place in legal courtrooms. The protests and counter protests we have seen in Portland, Kenosha and our Nation’s Capital are looking like radical left and extremist right “rehearsals” for what’s to come.

Why is this happening?

These worst-case scenarios are the result of a conflagration of pandemic-forced mail voting in huge quantities; the toxicity of our other virus – the disinformation and disruptions of social media; the coarsening divide between liberal and conservative voters and Democrats and Republicans; the repeated threats by the incumbent in the White House that he will not accept any election results where he is not declared the winner; the anti-democratic partisanship of the leaders of the U.S. Senate and federal Department of Justice; and, last but not least, the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, which puts a pall, if not a pox, over everything, including the survival of our democracy. (Several of the worst case prognostications, including one by the bipartisan National Task Force on Election Crises, utters the word “coup,” where the paramilitary of the Homeland Security and a politicized Department of Justice secures the election for the favored incumbent.)

Because of these violent specters, what we are not reckoning with is a large set of “preexisting conditions” that already were threats and obstacles to our free and fair

elections. These include, but are not limited to: reforming or abolishing the Electoral College, correcting the imbalanced representation of the states and voters in



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the U.S. Senate, defeating voter suppression efforts, eliminating “dark money” from election campaigns and shortening the “lame duck” session between the November election and the Jan. 20 inauguration.

Here’s a semi-bright spot to our upcoming Nov. 3 election. Sonoma County voters can be assured all their votes for local offices, tax questions, statewide initiatives and Congressional representatives will be accurately recorded even if it takes extra days of ballot counting. We know this from decades of past performances by our county’s Registrar of Voter’s office. Even the local presidential counts will be accurate, but they won’t matter.

The 2020 Presidential Election will be decided by votes in the “battleground” states like Pennsylvania, Florida and Michigan. (Maybe we shouldn’t call them battle-

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 3**

**IN THIS  
ISSUE**

**Member Profile:**  
Susan Windram,  
page 14



**Paper office closes;**  
*Planet* statue moves,  
page 16

