



Written by [Annalisa Pesek](#) on June 15, 2021

## Arizona Election Audit Update; Reports of Missing Ballots a Hoax?

Conflicting reports are swirling around the historic Arizona Maricopa County election audit, which is nearing its completion. The full-hand recount of roughly 2.1 million certified ballots cast in the state's largest county during the 2020 presidential and U.S. Senate elections is on track to finish by the end of June. Counters have reportedly recorded all the regular ballots cast, with only Braille, overseas military, and duplicated ballots left to tally.

As of Sunday, Republican lawmakers from 13 states — among them Washington, Georgia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Nevada, Wisconsin, and Michigan — have toured Phoenix's Veterans Memorial Coliseum, where the forensic audit is taking place, to get a sense of how they might conduct similar audits in their jurisdictions.

Arizona GOP chairwoman Dr. Kelli Ward tweeted over the weekend that “[#AmericasAudit](#) is soon to be [#AmericasAudits](#)! Arizona is leading the way to [#ElectionIntegrity](#) in America.”

The battleground states of Pennsylvania and Georgia could start their own audits as early as next month, reported the [Gateway Pundit](#).

“In Georgia, there will be a court hearing next Monday for Fulton County's ballots. An audit of Fulton County absentee ballots could start within 2 or 3 weeks after,” Georgia elections expert Garland Favorito told the outlet. As long as there is no more delay in the courts.

Yet on Friday, U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland seemed to rebuke the ongoing effort in Arizona to ensure election integrity, commenting during a [speech](#) at the Justice Department that the Department of Justice “will apply scrutiny to post-election audits to ensure they abide by federal statutory rights and requirements to protect election records and avoid intimidation of voters.”

Garland further promised federal “guidance explaining the civil and criminal statutes that apply to post-election audits,” remarks that sparked an acerbic response from Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich, who wrote a caustic letter to Garland, effectively telling him to stay out of the state's way.

In the letter, Brnovich accused Garland of “display[ing] an alarming disdain for state sovereignty as defined under the 10th Amendment of the United States Constitution and the election provisions in Articles I and II.”



Maricopa County ballots cast in the 2020 general election are examined and recounted / AP Images



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Brnovich continued, “My office is not amused by the DOJ’s posturing and will not tolerate any effort to undermine or interfere with our State Senate’s audit reassure Arizonians of the accuracy of our elections. We stand ready to defend federalism and state sovereignty against any partisan attacks or federal overreach.”

In a sharp conclusion, Brnovich stated that “Arizona will not sit back and let the Biden administration abuse its authority, refuse to uphold laws, or attempt to commandeer state’s sovereignty.”

The letter was released on the same day that the [National File](#) published a report claiming boxes full of blank ballots, with hundreds of thousands of ballots, were missing in Arizona. This report, however, was refuted by former Arizona Republican secretary of state Ken Bennett, who told the *Epoch Times*, “There’s been no such finding yet.”

Bennett, who is the Arizona Senate’s liaison for the audit, confirmed that there haven’t been any missing ballots discovered during the audit thus far, per the *Epoch Times*.

Auditors, who review data from machines used in the election and other election material, are down to the last few boxes of ballots, Bennett told the *Epoch Times*. “These boxes primarily contain ballots that have been duplicated, such as when overseas voters email or fax their ballot and the vote is placed onto a regular ballot by poll workers so machines can scan them.”

The National File quoted a man named [Josh Barnett](#), who is running for Arizona’s sixth Congressional District and is described as an audit organizer. “We found a ballot shortage, anywhere from 5 to 10 percent of the votes,” Barnett said. “It looks like a couple hundred thousand ballots are unaccounted for. The ballots are missing.”

Yet according to the *Epoch Times*, a Maricopa County spokesman said the county’s elections department provided the 2,089,563 ballots as demanded by the state Senate’s subpoena.

Interestingly, Barnett’s Twitter [feed](#) contains no mention of the “missing ballots,” and he has not returned media requests for comment following the bombshell claims.

Increasingly turning their attention to paper evaluation, which includes looking at which ballots have folds and whether alignment on the front and the back of each ballot is correct, audit teams hired by the Senate have been examining the roughly 2.1 million ballots cast in Maricopa County in the 2020 election at Veterans Memorial Coliseum since late April.

“By the end of today, almost all of our resources will be deployed on paper evaluation,” Bennett said.

More information on the audit’s results is anticipated to be released in a report upon the recount’s conclusion.



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