



Written by [Annalisa Pesek](#) on June 29, 2021

## “Methodical, Accurate, and Complete, It’s Not to be Fast”: Unpacking the Bipartisan Aims of the Maricopa Audit and Where We Go from Here

The pressure is on, as Arizona’s Maricopa County Election Audit winds down, with Wednesday, June 30, marking the deadline for the review to be completed. At that time, thousands of volunteers and observers from across political aisles are expected to vacate Phoenix’s Veterans Memorial Coliseum, where, for two long months, they have worked carefully and diligently to conduct and oversee a tightly run [full-hand recount and paper evaluation](#) of roughly 2.1 million ballots cast in the state’s largest county during the 2020 presidential and U.S. Senate elections.



Arizona State Capitol Building (Photo: DustyPixel/iStock/Getty Images Plus)

Despite caustic criticism from the Democrats, including Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs and U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland, who claim the historic audit, spearheaded by Arizona Republicans and the Florida-based firm Cyber Ninjas, was “[sloppy, insecure, and opaque](#),” the goal of the review is by nature bipartisan and should not be viewed as an exclusively Republican effort.

Speaking to *The New American* in a phone interview, Ken Bennett, former Arizona secretary of state and audit spokesman and liaison to the state Senate, said “[the audit] aims to confirm in the minds of Arizonians and all those here in Maricopa County that their elections have integrity, and that if we don’t have that we will lose our country.”

Bennett stressed that “We [Americans] cannot lurch every four years from one party to the next party, as each one says the election is stolen. The point of the audit is to save our country.”

Statistics appear to support the former secretary of state’s remarks. According to a new Rasmussen Poll, [55 percent](#) of Americans are in favor of full forensic audits of U.S. election results, demonstrating that voters spanning the political spectrum are seeking restored confidence in the integrity of the U.S. election process.

Arizona Republican Representative Mark Finchem, a current candidate for Arizona secretary of state, revealed to *The New American* that “the audit was not a result of the [2020 presidential] election, it was an ongoing project that is low-hanging fruit,” adding that “the purpose of the audit is to be methodical, accurate, and complete, it’s not to be fast.”



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“Democrats also want to have that kind of translucent transparency across the election process, so it’s interesting they oppose it [the audit],” noted Representative Finchem, a Detroit-born former fire fighter and police officer.

Indeed, while the meticulous, highly structured hand recount and paper evaluation aspects of the audit have drawn to a close, the forensic portion of the review is ongoing, and it may be months yet before reports are complete and Americans get any definitive answers as to the role widespread voting fraud and other reported irregularities played in compromising the 2020 elections.

New changes to the election process already in the works in the state of Arizona, of which Finchem and others at the state Capitol are working, include the [Arizona Ballot Integrity Project](#).

This project, explained Finchem, will introduce a new ballot prototype that “would solve a lot of pesky problems,” and already “has been shown to 18 or so other state legislators who have been to visit the [Arizona] audit.”

What happens from here “wholly depends on timing and a lot of hypotheticals,” said Finchem.

Just last week, [news broke](#) that Arizona state legislators have held the longest legislative session in recent memory, typically adjourning in May, with 2013 being the last year they stayed on until June.

Yet with the audit wrapping up, potentially giving lawmakers the proof needed to draft new voting legislation ahead of the 2022 primaries and mid-term elections, the looming question is whether the legislature will go into recess, awaiting the audit results, or adjourn sine die, “with no return date,” until the start of the new legislative session in January 2022.

In an email forwarded to *The New American* on June 24 from Arizona Senate President Karen Fann’s office, Fann reportedly issued the following note to the Arizona state legislators regarding the 2020 audit:

I want to clarify that if the Legislature ends a session sine die, it will not impact any effort by the Senate to investigate potential findings of fraud or irregularities. The Senate President and Judiciary Chair will still call public hearings and subpoena witnesses when appropriate.

In addition, if the Legislature were to recess, instead of sine die, there would be a negative impact people aren’t talking about. All the quality legislation we have passed this year cannot take effect until 90 days after sine die. Important legislation such as SB 1485, to clean up our early voting list, and SB 1003, to block early ballots from being counted if they don’t have a signature, or SB 1530, which ensures early ballots go to current addresses, would all sit on hold.

The audit results may not be finalized for a few more months due to the continued litigation from the Board of Supervisors and Democrats. While it may seem like a good idea to delay the end of the session until the audit is complete, the consequences of postponing good legislation would be more detrimental.

The American public should anticipate news of the audit findings by July, but it could be mid-August or later when final results are complete and sent to the Arizona Senate and U.S. Attorney General Garland.

In the same way that the Arizona audit, by itself, cannot reverse the outcome of the presidential



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election — despite discrepancies found that determine the Arizona legislature should decertify its results and reclaim its electors, declaring Trump triumphant over Biden — there also will be no changes to the Arizona Senate seat, currently occupied by Democrat Mark Kelley, even if evidence surfaces that incumbent Republican Martha McSally was the true winner.

“If the audit shows evidence that there are discrepancies [in the presidential election], then, depending on the date and whether the legislature is in session, I would expect us to take up the report and explore public-policy responses to address the source of the discrepancies,” explained Finchem.

“[It’s] Sophie’s choice,” he added. “I see both arguments. If we don’t sine die, the laws we have passed can’t take effect. If we do [sine die], we may not have an opportunity to address the potential of audit findings. Weighing both, I would *not* sine die, but it only takes 31 votes in the House and 16 in the Senate to sine die, and the Democrats can’t wait to end the session.”

There are 31 Republicans and 29 Democrats in the Arizona House, and 16 Republicans and 14 Democrats in the Senate. In order for the legislature to call for a special session and not sine die, a two-thirds vote is needed in both the House and the Senate.

Of the 31 Republicans in the lower chamber, noted Finchem, “10 or 12 are ‘constant conservatives’ — dependable, reliable conservatives — then we have 10-14 moderates, and the remainder are the selfish ones, who are willing to bargain with anyone to get their objective done, and they will side with the Democrats.”

As Bennett and Finchem both explained, another route the legislature could go, which is not at all recommended, is to adjourn and then wait for Arizona Republican Governor Doug Ducey to call for a special legislative session, permitting the state’s legislative work to continue.

But considering Ducey’s track record, specifically his refusal last January to call for a special legislative session to address voting irregularities, the chances that he would reverse course now are highly unlikely.

On June 23, Bennett reported to [One America News](#) that a lot of forensics still needed to be explored in the audit, but that he felt in a very good place with the resources he has for the audit moving forward.

In that interview, Bennett urged the people of Arizona to call their state representatives, reminding viewers that “each district has two representatives and one senator, so everyone should have three people to call to encourage the House and the Senate to maybe stay in session, or recess.”

“We [the American people] win either way,” said Bennett. “As long as we see it through to the end, if we conduct the audit and we find everything went pretty smoothly and no changes need to be made, then we win. But if the findings of the audit prove that things need to be fixed then we need to fix them in 2022 so people can have 100 percent confidence in their elections. And if we don’t have that, we will lose our country. I think we’re here saving the country, and the legislature needs to be ready to act if we find some suspicious findings that suggest they need to improve the state laws and procedures.”

Meanwhile, Republican representatives from more than a dozen states — among them Washington, Georgia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Nevada, Wisconsin, and Michigan — have toured the Veterans Memorial Coliseum to get a sense of how they might conduct similar audits in their jurisdictions.

“[#AmericasAudit](#) is soon to be [#AmericasAudits](#),” [tweeted](#) Arizona GOP chairwoman Dr. Kelli Ward in late May, declaring “Arizona is leading the way to [#ElectionIntegrity](#) in America.”

On June 24, a Georgia judge ruled in favor of a lawsuit moving forward that seeks to examine some



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“147,000 absentee ballots to determine whether there are illegitimate ballots among them,” [reported](#) ABC News via the Associated Press.

“When we [the legislators] are executing our duties as outlined in the U.S. Constitution, Article II, Section 1, Clause 2,” stated Finchem, “... we have the authority to reclaim our electors. The two-thirds vote needed in both chambers, that law requires the supermajority to call the legislators back into session. This is about state matters, and we have a duty to act.... I would advocate it only takes 31 members and 16 members, and hope springs eternal, I have a tendency to think all things are possible when one has the political courage and the will to do their duty.”



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