



Written by [James Murphy](#) on March 13, 2021

Pelosi Sees Scenario Where Close Iowa House Race Could Be Overturned to Benefit Democrats

On Wednesday, The House Administration Committee refused to dismiss a [petition](#) contesting the results of Iowa's 2nd Congressional District, possibly paving the way for a reversal of the election's razor thin outcome. Republican Marianne Miller-Meeke bested Democrat Rita Hart by a mere six votes out of nearly 400,000 ballots cast.

Iowa election officials certified Miller-Meeke the winner of the election on November 30 after an exhaustive recount.

Pelosi acknowledged on Thursday that it was a "hypothetical" situation but later said that such a reversal was absolutely possible.



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (AP Images)

When asked about the possibility of an overturn of the election, Pelosi said, "Could you see a scenario? We don't do press conferences on 'can you see a scenario?'" Pelosi said. "Of course! Of course!"

"Well, I respect the work of the committee," The Speaker went on. "I did see, as you saw in the press, what they decided to do — and they were following my, as I read it, the requirements of the law as to how you go forward. And how you go forward is the path you're on and we'll see where that takes us. But there could be a scenario to that extent. Yes."

Miller-Meeke, who was seated provisionally in January, filed a motion to dismiss Hart's petition, asserting that Hart had "failed to exhaust state judicial procedures before filing her notice of contest with the House."

But that didn't fly with the committee.

"The margin separating the two candidates was only six votes out of almost 400,000 cast: less than one sixth of one percent. That's six votes — not 6,000; not 600; not 60 or even 16 — just six fewer votes than we have members of this committee," said committee chair Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.) "It should not be surprising that any candidate in these circumstances — with a margin this close — would seek to exercise their rights under the law to contest the results."

But the ranking Republican on the committee, Rodney Davis of Illinois, said the decision to go forward with the investigation was both "a dangerous precedent" and a waste of taxpayer money. "I can't think of a worse first step this committee could take in a new Congress than to waste taxpayer dollars by moving forward with overturning this election," Davis said.

Davis further accused Hart of eschewing the Iowa courts in order to have the matter settled in the highly partisan House of Representatives.

"It will be one of the greatest mistakes this House makes to take up an election contest with a candidate who side-stepped the courts and instead turned to a partisan process in the House because they knew



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they could not win any other way,” Davis said. “Sounds familiar, doesn’t it?”

Hart’s claim to the seat rests on [22 ballots](#) that she and her campaign say were illegally excluded from the original count and the recount. These ballots were not counted for a variety of reasons including not being included in the initial canvass.

“At least 22 Iowans’ legally-cast ballots still have not been counted due to a string of errors. We are glad to see the House Committee on Administration taking the next step toward ensuring that every legally cast vote is counted in this race and that all Iowans’ voices are heard,” a Hart campaign spokesman said in a statement.

But Miller-Meeks has countered that the same thing applies to votes for her that were discarded in the county canvassing and recounts.

“There were votes that were cast that were for me also that were not counted and that I did not receive. So, I think throughout that process you can’t continue to want to change the rules because the count doesn’t go the way you want,” Miller-Meeks told Iowa PBS in December.

Miller-Meeks has repeatedly said that “every legal ballot (in the 2nd District race) was counted and that, instead of using the Iowa courts to decide the matter, (Hart) is choosing to use a “partisan political process” in the House of Representatives to change the results of the race instead of leaving the decision to Iowans.

Ultimately, the House of Representatives (as well as the Senate) has the final say on the members it chooses to seat. Under provisions of the [Federal Contested Elections Act](#), the House can choose to investigate the matter and seat the member of their choice — a choice that currently lies with the Democrats if their majority holds firm on the issue. The last time it was done was in [1985](#) when House Democrats found that the winner was Democrat Frank McCloskey, despite the fact that Republican Richard McIntyre was certified as the winner by the Indiana Secretary of State.

Is there any doubt in this highly charged partisan atmosphere that Speaker Pelosi and House Democrats might look to expand their tenuous majority in this underhanded way?



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