

JANUARY 6TH COMMITTEE – OPENING COMMENTS

Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger

Thank you for inviting me today and the honor to speak before my fellow Americans. Our Founders chose a Constitution and the Rule of Law, and I cherish both. No one is above the law, and before the law we are all equal.

After the 2020 election and the immediate charge of a stolen election due to voter fraud, I thought I had been transported back in time to 2018 when we heard the charge of a stolen election, that time due to voter suppression. Same coin—just the other side.

Will this become a nationwide trend where we see every candidate who loses a major election refuse to accept the results, and instead set out to raise money and build support on unfounded claims of fraud and corruption? If America wants to avoid that prospect, we must come to grips with the scope of the problem, but I realize this won't be comfortable for either party. I say either party because, in Georgia, I have been battling myths of stolen election claims from both sides in both 2018 and 2020.

On my first day in office in January 2019 I had nine lawsuits from the losing Gubernatorial candidate and her allied organizations in 2018. The most striking aspect of the 2020 election claims was not its novelty, but the elevated assault on election integrity. In fact, many of the complaints following the 2020 election campaign lawsuits were nearly identical to complaints received following the 2018 election, and some 2020 lawsuits relied heavily on 2018 lawsuits to attempt to support their false claims.

Stolen election claims destroy voter confidence, and yet America is remarkably good at running elections. We have 50 States, and Georgia has 159 counties, who run our elections, and that effort is carried out in over 2,500 precincts in Georgia. Elections in Georgia, and indeed in our nation, are both fairer and more secure than they have been at any point in our history. Today Georgia is recognized #1 in America for election integrity.

Stolen election claims have no space in the state of Georgia. We have seen what these claims lead to, and we need to hold both extremes accountable.

Briefly stated, here is what happened in Georgia in 2020—28,000 Georgians skipped the Presidential race and didn't vote for anyone at the top—they didn't vote for Donald J. Trump, Joseph R. Biden or Jo Jorgensen. They left that part blank yet voted down-ballot on other races. The Republican Congressman collectively received 33,000 more votes than President Trump. That is why President Trump came up short in Georgia.

There was never even close to enough illegal votes in Georgia to overturn the outcome of the 2020 election. The claims of voter suppression in the 2018 election were similarly false. I wrote a 10-page letter to Congress dated January 6th, 2021, and a book titled *Integrity Counts* to set the record straight about Georgia's elections of 2018 and 2020.

I believe what binds all Americans is our Declaration of Independence; our Constitution; and our fidelity to the Rule of Law and its commitment to freedom, integrity, and truth.

Thank you.