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Ranking Member Joe Morelle (NY-25)
Committee on House Administration
“Make Elections Great Again: How to Restore Trust and Integrity in Federal Elections”
February 10, 2026, at 10:15 am
Opening Statement

Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Steil. Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

There is nothing to gain—and everything to lose—in hiding from the truth.

Because the truth is our last, best line of defense.

Defense against an Administration willing to abandon any pretense at honesty or integrity as they try—desperately and corruptly—to cling to power.

An Administration that long ago surrendered any imperative they felt to tell the truth.

When federal agents gunned down American citizens on the streets of Minneapolis—first a mother, then an ICU nurse—this Administration’s first instinct was to try to deceive the public.

To—despite video evidence—spread false claims about the events leading up to the murders.

To smear dead Americans, calling them “domestic terrorists.”

In the face of this dishonesty, those of us who would defend this Republic have a moral obligation to say—forcefully, loudly—what we know to be true.

And this is what we know:

Donald Trump and congressional Republicans are terrified that they will lose the next election.

The American people, over and over again for the past year, have rejected the President’s policies at the ballot box.

Resounding defeats for Trump-aligned candidates across the country, from Virginia to Texas and beyond.

Because President Trump has done nothing to make the lives of Americans better—nothing to make things less expensive, nothing to make us safer.

Because of these failures, Republicans know they have one hope at winning the next election: changing the rules of the game, destroying the rule of law, and deserting any last remaining shreds of allegiance to the United States Constitution.

Redrawing congressional lines.

Changing the rules of elections.

Brutalizing American citizens who exercise their rights under our Constitution.

This scheme is not just how Republicans plan to take over our elections.

This is how they plan to take over our country.

To irrevocably destroy the American principles—peace, prosperity, equality—that we hold dear.

I want the Administration to know—I want my Republican colleagues on this Committee to know:

We see what you are doing.

And we will not let it happen.

That is why Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member Bennie Thompson and I sent you a letter last month, Mr. Chairman.

We requested that this Committee hear directly from Attorney General Bondi and Secretary Noem about the Trump Administration’s attempt to extort an American state—holding Minnesotans hostage, literally at the barrel of a gun, in exchange for voter data.

If this majority cared about election integrity, why aren’t we investigating this horrendous abuse of power? Why aren’t we demanding answers from this DOJ, from this DHS, from this Administration that—by the President’s own admission—wants to “nationalize” elections to help Republicans win?

Today, we’re apparently, discussing the “Make Elections Great Again” Act.

Or at least, I think that’s what we’re talking about—Republicans can’t seem to decide.

Our House colleagues have been talking about the SAVE America Act. We’re voting on that bill tomorrow. Senate Republicans are talking about the SAVE Act.

But really, all these bills have the same outcome:

These are the Trump elections takeover bills.

We know this, because the President has said so himself.

He said: “We want to take over. We should take over the voting in at least 15 places. The Republicans ought to nationalize the voting.”

Where are the Republicans, who once claimed they believed in the power of states to run an election?

Because these bills would destroy that state power.

This bill gives nine separate authorities to the Department of Homeland Security—the department that has unleashed ICE and Border Patrol onto our streets, harassing and attacking American citizens—to interfere in state and local elections.

Even some congressional Republicans have called on Secretary Noem to resign—why would we give her access to the personal, private information of American voters?

What's more, this bill gives Pam Bondi the power to unilaterally withhold all election funding to any state she chooses.

I ask the American people this:

Do you want Donald Trump running your elections?

Do you want Pam Bondi, or Kristi Noem, running your elections?

I want every American to know:

This is not President Trump's election to take over.

It is yours.

He wants to take your power for himself.

You, the American people, will determine the outcome of the midterm elections.

Not Donald Trump.

Not Kristi Noem.

Not Pam Bondi.

We see what this Administration is planning.

And we will stop them.

Even if congressional Republicans will not.

Thank you, and I yield back.

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