

# Political Grab Bag

**By Steve Bagby, Sr. Political Action Committee Chair**

**We Have Good News To Enjoy!** The good news is that, due to a record breaking number of people who voted in the November 3, 2020 Presidential Election, we can now call Joe Biden, President-Elect and Kamala Harris, Vice President-Elect of the United States of America! That is indeed exciting for many, many reasons as we believe that a new administration in Washington, D.C. will help address the varying needs of those citizens who have been marginalized by the current administration and further address the difficult and pressing issues we face on the national and world stage as well. We are anxiously awaiting the Inauguration on January 20, 2021, when the new administration transitions into the White House. We know that there are several steps relating to the Electoral College, etc. that need to take place before President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris are sworn in as President and Vice President, but we are staying positive and believe that the process will work as it has been designed and that we will indeed be celebrating on January 20<sup>th</sup>. \* (See the **Note** below.) This will be another historic Inauguration. In 2009, we witnessed the Inauguration of the First Black President of the United States, Barack Obama, and in 2021, we will witness the Inauguration of the first woman, first Black woman and first South Asian woman Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris. This will definitely be an historic occurrence to be sure! **\*Note:** The remaining steps that need to be taken regarding the Electoral College, etc. before the January 20<sup>th</sup> Inauguration are set forth in detail for your perusal at the end of this article.

We also have the opportunity to experience some more good news due to the Senate race in Georgia. We know that President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris received the most votes in Georgia, turning the state from red (Republican) to blue (Democrat) for the first time in 28 years when Bill Clinton was elected President in 1992. As a result of the large Democratic voter turnout in Georgia, two Senate races are now subject to a run-off on January 5, 2021. In one Senate race, D. Perdue (Republican - Incumbent) received 49.7 % of the votes cast and J. Ossoff (Democrat) received 47.9 % of the votes cast on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. In the other Senate race, Rev. R. Warnock (Democrat – African American) received 32.9 % of the votes cast and K. Loeffler (Republican) received 25.9 % of the votes cast. If both Democrats win

the run-off elections in their respective jurisdictions, then the Senate would have the same number of Republican and Democratic Senators (50-50) when the transition occurs, which would place Vice President Kamala Harris, who would then preside over the Senate as part of her duties as the Vice President, in a position of being the tie-breaking vote, thus giving Democrats control of the Senate. Some have expressed concern that Democratic voters may feel that now that Biden and Harris are President-Elect and Vice President-Elect that their mission has been accomplished and, thus, they may not vote in the run-off election. However, nothing could be further from the truth. The same level of effort and commitment is necessary in the run-off election as shown in the November 3<sup>rd</sup> election as the stakes are extremely high. . . . all eligible Georgia voters must vote in the January 5<sup>th</sup> run-off election!! It is very important that we assist in the effort to ensure this same level of participation by phone banking, donating money through appropriate sites to the respective campaigns, as well as encouraging all of our relatives and friends who may live in Georgia to get out and vote on January 5<sup>th</sup>. We need to participate in this manner so the Democrats can “take back the Senate,” which would allow for the agenda of the upcoming President and Vice-President to be facilitated, as opposed to being stymied, as we have seen in the past, by an obstructionist Republican-controlled Senate!!! So, let us do our part to assist in this effort to “take back the Senate” as it would definitely be to our benefit if that occurred! There is still work to be done to advance the “Democratic agenda,” so let us continue our much needed efforts in Georgia to make that happen! To read more about Rev. R. Warnock (Democrat - African American) and to otherwise donate to his run-off election, access his website at [warnockforgeorgia.com](http://warnockforgeorgia.com). To read more about J. Ossoff (Democrat) and to otherwise donate to his run-off election, access his website at [election.com](http://election.com).

We are also experiencing some bad news, i.e., 45's failure to concede the election and his consistent, though unsubstantiated, allegations of voter fraud, which are now being denied by other Republicans legislators as well as his steadfast friend, U.S. Attorney General William Barr, who is speaking out against his unsupported claims. The many lawsuits that have been filed so far challenging the election as fraudulent have been unsuccessful, which would make one think that these ineffective lawsuits would soon cease and Trump would no longer “fan the flames” regarding baseless election fraud claims. However, per a December 2, 2020 *Yahoo News report*, now a right wing group out of Ohio supported by former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, who was recently pardoned by Trump for lying to the FBI about Russia's

involvement in the 2016 Presidential election, took out an ad in the Washington Post calling on Trump to “declare martial law, suspend the Constitution and have the military implement a national re-vote with only paper ballots.” The group called for a “Stop the Steal” rally on Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> in front of the Atlanta statehouse to “demand the resignations of Georgia’s Governor and Secretary of State.” Their animus is directed at Georgia’s Republican Governor, Brian Kemp, for refusing to intervene in the tabulating of results from his state’s election and at Republican Secretary of State, Brad Raffensperger, who has maintained that the state’s election was honest and fair. The ad placed in the Washington Post really stepped up the rhetoric by citing “recent reports of record gun sales in the U.S., stating that, ‘without a fair vote, we fear, with good reason, the threat of a shooting civil war is imminent.’” Really? All of this anger is being fueled by Trump’s failure to believe and accept that HE LOST THE ELECTION FAIR AND SQUARE! We hope that these comments are simply rhetoric and “cooler heads” will prevail as even Republicans want to “tone down the temperature.” According to *Spectrum News 13*, on Tuesday, December 1, 2020, “Gabriel Sterling — Georgia’s Voting System Implementation Manager — addressed the President directly, calling on Trump to stop fanning the flames of violence.” “It has to stop,” Sterling added, calling elections “the backbone of democracy.” Sterling’s respective messages came a day after Secretary Raffensperger refuted the statements made by President Trump about the efficacy of his state’s voting security.

“There are those who are exploiting the emotions of many Trump supporters with fantastic claims, half-truths, misinformation, and frankly, they are misleading the President as well, apparently,” Raffensperger said, adding: “The great thing about our paper ballot system [is that] it is audible, it is re-countable, and it can provide the voters . . . [with] confiden[ce] [that] the outcomes are correct.” “Upholding the law matters. Truth matters and your vote matters,” Raffensperger continued. “Anyone telling you to boycott an election is not on your side.” We can only hope that Trump and all the others who are being “riled up” by misinformation are hearing the voices of those from their own party and that they are listening!!!!

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Notwithstanding the bad news referenced above about “alleged voter fraud,” there is more good news for us to focus on in that President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris are going forward to name people to Cabinet

positions who represent the diverse nature of the electorate including African Americans, Women and Latinos. The upcoming occupants of the White House are doing their best to surround themselves with exceptionally capable people who represent the interests of the majority of the citizens and not just a “well-heeled” few. We applaud them for their efforts of inclusivity and for selecting people who are concerned about the rights and privileges of ALL citizens in this country!!

### **LOS ANGELES COUNTY/CITY ELECTION RESULTS -**

Turning to local politics, here are the results of some of the **Los Angeles County/City** races per the information set forth on the L.A. County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk’s Office website as of November 30, 2020:

#### **DISTRICT ATTORNEY -**

**GEORGE GASCON - 53.53%**; JACKIE LACEY-(Incumbent) 46.47% (This was the wrong year to be an incumbent D. A. in light of the Black Lives Matter Movement)

#### **UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE, 37th District -**

**KAREN BASS -- 85.94%**; ERROL WEBBER - 14.06%

#### **UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE, 40th District -**

**LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD - 72.74%** (Our Church is located in her district); CANTONIO DELGADO -27.26%

#### **UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE, 43rd District -**

**MAXINE WATERS -71.68%**; JOE E. COLLINS III - 28.32%

#### **STATE SENATOR, 35th District -**

**STEVEN CRAIG BRADFORD - 72.50%**; ANTHONY PERRY - 27.50%

#### **MEMBER OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY, 41st District -**

**CHRIS HOLDEN - 69.55%;** ROBIN A. HVIDSTON - 30.45%

**MEMBER OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY, 59th District -**

**REGGIE JONES-SAWYER -57.52% (Our own SBC member);** EFREN MARTINEZ - 42.48%

**MEMBER OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY, 62nd District -**

**AUTUMN R. BURKE -80.90%;** ROBERT A. STEELE -19.10%

**MEMBER OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY, 64th District -**

**MIKE ANTHONY GIPSON- 59.50%;** FATIMA S. IQBAL-ZUBAIR- 40.50%

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERVISOR 2ND DISTRICT -**

**HOLLY J. MITCHELL -60.57%;** HERB J. WESSON JR. -39.43%

**LOS ANGELES CITY GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION- City Council, 10th District**

**MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS -60.60%;** GRACE YOO - 39.40

### **PROPOSITIONS –**

We also had several **PROPOSITIONS** on the November 3<sup>rd</sup> ballot in California. Results for the 12 Ballot Measures are as follows:

**Proposition 14 - (Bonds)** - Issues 5.5 billion in bonds for state Stem Cell Research Institute. **APPROVED**

**Proposition 15 – (Taxes)** - Requires commercial and industrial properties to be taxed based on market value and dedicates revenue for education and local government funding. **REJECTED**

**Proposition 16 – (Affirmative Action)** - Repeals Proposition 209 (1966), which says that the state cannot discriminate or grant preferential treatment based on race, sex, color, ethnicity or nation origin in public employment, education or contracting. **REJECTED**

**Proposition 17 - (Voting)** - Restores the right to vote to people convicted of felonies who are on parole. **APPROVED**

**Proposition 18 – (Voting)** – Allows 17 year-olds who will be 18 at the time of the next general election to vote in primaries and special elections. **REJECTED**

**Proposition 19 – (Taxes)** – Changes tax assessment transfers and inheritance rules and allocate revenue savings to wildfire agencies and counties. **APPROVED**

**Proposition 20 – (Law Enforcement)** – Makes changes to policies related to criminal sentencing charges, prison release, and DNA collection. **REJECTED**

**Proposition 21- (Housing)** – Expands local governments’ power to use rent control. **REJECTED**

**Proposition 22 – (Business)** – Considers app-based drivers to be independent contractors and enacts several labor policies related to app-based companies. **APPROVED**

**Proposition 23 – (Healthcare)** – Requires physician on-site at dialysis clinics and consent from the state for a clinic to close. **REJECTED**

**Proposition 24 – (Business)** – Expands the provisions of the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) and creates the California Privacy Protection Agency to implement and enforce the CCPA. **APPROVED**

**Proposition 25 – (Trials)** – Replaces cash bail with risk assessments for suspects awaiting trial. **REJECTED**

**REPLACEMENT FOR SENATOR- NOW VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT KAMALA HARRIS**

Another issue of interest for us in California is **who will Governor Newsom select as the replacement for Kamala Harris**, who held one of the two U.S. Senate positions in/from California and is the only Black woman currently serving in the U.S. Senate. The Governor has several outstanding choices from whom to select, including Karen Bass, U. S. Representative for the 37<sup>th</sup> District—Los Angeles and Barbara Lee, U.S. Representative for the 13<sup>th</sup> District—Oakland. There are many who advocate that the Governor should replace Kamala Harris with another Black woman so as to continue the same level of representation in the Senate. News reports reveal the names of others on whose behalf the Governor is being lobbied and who may be in consideration for the position, including Xavier Becerra, California Attorney General; Alex Padilla, Secretary of State; and Robert Garcia, Mayor of Long Beach.

### **CENSUS –**

The Trump administration is trying to impact who can be counted in the current Census. Per a *Los Angeles Times* article on December 1, 2020, in determining the Census count, it has long been the rule that the federal government has sought to count everyone living in the United States on a date certain, regardless of citizenship status. Those numbers are then used to determine how many seats in the House of Representatives each state will have for the next ten years. The numbers also affect federal formulas for 1.5 trillion in annual federal spending. However, some conservatives believe that the count should exclude noncitizens. Trump has sought to make citizenship status an issue in the current Census, first by adding a question on the Census form about legal status, which the U.S. Supreme Court disallowed, and now, by trying to impact the final count number pursuant to a July 2020 memo in which Trump asserted “that when it comes to congressional reapportionment, ‘it is the policy of the United States to exclude from the apportionment base aliens who are not in a lawful immigration status under the Immigration and Nationality Act.’” In a lawsuit challenging that memo filed by a coalition of [U.S. states](#) led by [New York](#), along with several cities and other organizations suing to block action on the memo, a three judge district court ruled that the order was illegal and blocked the Department of Commerce from providing the President with information about the number of people who are in the United States illegally when the Department furnishes him with a state-by-state breakdown of the population for use in the

allocation of seats in the House of Representatives. The Trump administration appealed that decision to the U.S. Supreme Court in *Trump vs. New York* asking it to set the matter for argument expeditiously since the Department of Commerce is supposed to deliver census data to the President by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Argument before the Supreme Court was held on Monday, December 1<sup>st</sup> and based upon their questions, the justices seemed to doubt “the legality of excluding millions of long time residents from the census count.” However, “if the President’s scheme is found to be lawful, California, Texas and Florida each might lose at least one seat ([but] with more than 2 million migrants living in the state, California could lose up to three seats) to which they otherwise would be entitled, while Alabama, Minnesota and Ohio could each gain a seat.”

When reflecting on this matter, it is mindboggling how the President and others in his administration continue their efforts to impact the balance of power in a variety of ways as “it is no small matter, either, that the number of seats in Congress [for each state based upon the Census count] also determines how many electoral votes each states gets, which means that subtracting unauthorized residents from the ‘whole number of persons in each State’ would affect the composition of the electoral college as well.” “In reality, the Republican president is trying to use the Census to shift power from urban and immigrant-heavy regions to rural and traditionally more Republican areas,” which would assist him in his efforts to maintain his power base. This is truly incredible!! When we think about how the President has conducted himself since he has been in office, we are extremely aware of the fact that January 20, 2021, cannot get here soon enough!

In closing, I want to acknowledge the passing of two men who positively impacted society during their lifetimes: Mayor David Dinkins and Rafer Johnson. Mayor Dinkins was the first and, so far, the only Black Mayor of New York City (NYC), which is an accomplishment in and of itself. He served from 1990 to 1994. I initially met David Dinkins when he was Manhattan Borough President. We shared a mutual passion for the game of tennis and had a common interest in supporting political candidates who had an unwavering love for NYC. It is because of that commonality that I was able to experience the political astuteness of Mayor Dinkins and see him excel in his position as Manhattan Borough President and later as the Mayor of NYC.



Rafer Johnson was a world class athlete as well as the student body president at UCLA. He was the 1960 Olympic Decathlon gold medal winner and was also the first Black athlete to be the U.S. team flag bearer. He was one of the City's most treasured athletes who co-founded the California Special Olympics and served as its president for ten years. It is reported that he developed a very close friendship with Robert F. Kennedy and was present on the day that Kennedy was shot at the Ambassador Hotel. Because of his storied athleticism and accomplishments, Rafer Johnson was selected to carry the torch to light the Olympic flame in the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. It was a marvelous sight to see and I remember it well. We give thanks for the lives and the stellar accomplishments of these two outstanding men! Thank you for reading! (December 2020)

See the Following Addendum Regarding the Electoral College.

**\*NOTE:** Per ABC 13 Eyewitness News (out of Houston) dated December 1, 2020, which included information prepared by the Associated Press dated November 11, 2020, the following steps need to take place before the January 20, 2021 Inauguration takes place.

There are several key dates we still need to pay attention to between now and Inauguration Day. Under a system that has been tweaked periodically over two centuries, there is still a timeline during which the 538-member Electoral College formally selects the President. When American citizens voted for Biden or Trump, they were really voting for electors in their state. Those electors in most cases are committed to support the winning candidate in the state. The number of electors is equal to the number of electoral votes held by each state. State laws vary on how electors are selected, but generally a slate of electors for each party's candidate is chosen by state party leaders.

Dec. 1 was the last deadline for states to certify their votes. Now that certification is completed, here is a timeline of what happens leading up to [Inauguration Day](#) 2021:

- **Dec. 8:** This is the deadline for resolving election disputes at the state level. All state recounts and court contests over presidential election

results are to be completed by this date. Trump's campaign is contesting the vote count in several states through legal challenges, but none of those efforts are expected to alter the outcome.

- **Dec. 14:** Electors vote by paper ballot in their respective states and the District of Columbia. Thirty-three states and D.C. have laws or party regulations requiring electors to vote the same way the popular vote goes in the state. In some states, rogue electors can be replaced or subjected to penalties, according to the Congressional Research Service. The votes for president and vice president are counted and the electors sign six "Certificates of the Vote." The certificates, along with other official papers, are sent by registered mail to various officials, including the president of the Senate.
- **Dec. 23:** The electors' ballots from all states must be received by the president of the Senate.
- **Jan. 3, 2021:** New Congress is seated.
- **Jan. 5, 2021:** Georgia Senate runoffs.
- **Jan. 6, 2021:** The House and Senate hold a joint session to count the electoral votes. If one ticket has received 270 or more electoral votes, the president of the Senate, currently Vice President Mike Pence, announces the results. (Biden already has won enough states to be awarded more than 270 electoral votes.)
- Members of Congress may object to returns from any state as they are announced. Objections must be made in writing by at least one member of the House and one in the Senate. If the objection meets certain requirements, each chamber meets separately to debate the objection for a maximum of two hours. Afterward, each chamber votes to accept or reject the objection. Back in joint session, the results of the respective votes are announced. Any objection to a state's electoral vote has to be approved by both houses in order for any contested votes to be excluded.
- If neither presidential candidate got at least 270 electoral votes, the House would decide the election, based on the 12th Amendment to the Constitution. If required, the House would elect the president. Each state delegation has one vote and it takes 26 votes to win.
- **Jan. 20, 2021:** Inauguration Day - Biden takes the oath of office.