

Local View: Beware of groundwork being laid to disrupt elections

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While the dark shadow of the war with Iran envelops us, writing on election security may seem impertinent — or maybe like spitting in the wind against more urgent worries. But let me connect war and voting.

Our talented and brave troops are fighting for and serving the goals of the country they love. Their professional military leadership is their source of safety and salvation. But that leadership is completely subject to the civilian direction of the president via our Constitution. The business of war also has a constitutional requirement for “we the people” to be involved through Congress. Lately, though, that has not been happening.

We owe our soldiers more.

Being clear on the direct link between the civilians we vote for to lead our military brings us to the importance of choices. Ultimately, it was a free and fair election in 2024 that reignited dangerous embers that did not go out after 2016 and 2020. It appears a majority in 2024 again thought it would be interesting to have our government run by a reality-show TV star hiring a cabinet of inexperienced loyalists and podcasters. This is what interesting looks like.

Here in Minnesota, we don't need further awareness of the incompetence and failures of President Donald Trump's third-largest agency, Homeland Security. We saw federal community terror, clearly and with horror.

Nearly 40% of our citizenry somehow sees the current government as competent. To the remaining 60%, this feels like losing. It doesn't feel "great."

Along with that last election, a full-throttle Republican Congress was elected to fan new flames of MAGA values. Without the cult-like obedience of direction from Trump by each of his agency heads and Congress, the president would not be able to so easily ignore laws and our Constitution.

Is your Minnesota congressional member pushing for accountability and inquiry or supporting chaos and inaction? Through intimidation and shameful compliance, the current Congress is possibly the most incendiary ingredient in this quagmire. Voting for Republican representatives resulted in Senate and House single-party rule. Autocrats like this arrangement. By

their inaction, congressional members negate the First Amendment powers they have to oversee and hold accountable the president and his hires. From the MAGA perspective, this is a ringing victory.

The coming election will be a chance for the 60% to speak up with their votes to hire qualified representatives. An accountable president may better lead our military — and our futures.

But there are far-right billionaires and think tanks very aware of this coming potential wave of midterm accountability by the people. They and congressional Republicans seem hellbent on disrupting the 2026 elections.

We are witnessing step one: controlling the “truth” via the purchase of social media, newsprint, and broadcast companies by oligarchs.

Step two is creating barriers to registration and voting. Trump seems to be positioning a justification of using the National Emergencies Powers Act to provide himself more unfettered powers. This would be a powerful tool to delay elections, seize ballots, and allow federal presence and Election-Day intimidation at polling places. Trump has demonstrated a lifetime of learning how to create chaos that could trigger this emergency power on a whim. Like an economic or security crisis. Or an active foreign war — with Cuba on deck.

ICE agents are being [quietly positioned](#) to be available throughout the country, including here in the Northland. Also, keep an eye on the U.S. Postal Service. New postmarking rules could delay otherwise qualifying mail-in ballots.

Twelve months ago, you may have read the above and considered it deranged or “fake news.” But we are not living in a cave. Look around and see that each of these plans is being attempted and carried out — enabled by Republican-majority politicians hired to protect and serve.

Call the man or woman you hired in Congress (202-224-3121). Or, if that feels like spitting in the wind, support a legitimate nonpartisan group working to protect our elections, like Democracy Docket (democracydocket.com), or a worthy voting and civil-rights effort of your choice.

On Saturday, March 28, in Duluth and neighboring communities, people have a chance to gather and march to speak for this growing concern at the third national No Kings Rally.

We can hire better representatives next time. Make your plan to vote. A tsunami may be coming to stop you.

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