



Records reveal few noncitizen votes in Va.

Despite lack of evidence, Youngkin fuels fears and touts purge of voter rolls

BY GREGORY S. SCHNEIDER AND LAURA VOZZELLA

RICHMOND — Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin (R) has been warning that illegal immigration poses a threat to democracy as he campaigns this fall for former president Donald Trump, boasting about purging 6,303 noncitizens from the state's voter rolls during his first 2½ years in office. “Noncitizens will be prosecuted if they vote,” Youngkin cautioned last month during a telephone rally with Trump in which the former president spoke of an “invasion” by criminal immigrants and claimed his opponents will “cheat” to defeat him.

But a review of state court records and interviews with elections officials found no evidence that any noncitizens have tried to vote during his term in Virginia, which does not allow residents who are not citizens to vote in any elections. As few as three people have been prosecuted for illegal voting of any kind in Virginia between Jan. 1, 2022, and July of this year, the records showed. None of those cases involved a question of citizenship.

Most of the 6,303-name purge stemmed from errors on paperwork at the Department of Motor Vehicles, officials said. In many cases, legal citizens simply forgot to check a box indicating citizenship, registrars and other elections officials said. In other cases, rather than trying to evade detection, people flagged themselves as noncitizens while filling out the voter registration forms that the DMV automatically generates. SEE VIRGINIA ON A7

In the dark of night, Milton barrels in



JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

Chris Williams runs through a rainstorm to pack his car Wednesday while preparing to evacuate his apartment in Fort Myers, Fla. “What we’re looking at is a storm of the century,” Tampa Mayor Jane Castor said as she issued a final plea to residents to seek safety.

During fraught campaign, back-to-back storms get instantly politicized

BY TOLUSE OLORUNNIPA AND JOSH DAWSEY

As President Joe Biden delivered a solemn warning Wednesday about Hurricane Milton — urging Floridians to heed local officials and brace for “the storm of the century” — he paused before offering another admonition, one chiefly aimed at Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump.

“The last few weeks, there’s been a reckless, irresponsible, relentless promotion of disinformation and outright lies that are disturbing people,” Biden said from the White House, blaming

Trump for leading an “onslaught of lies” about the storms. “It’s ridiculous, and it’s got to stop.”

The moment, coming after Trump had blasted Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris for their disaster management and hours before Milton was set to make landfall, highlighted how two massive storm systems have collided with the final stage of the presidential campaign, amplifying the nation’s sharpest political divisions as millions prepare to go to the polls.

For a turbulent presidential race that has already been jolted by a felony conviction, assassination attempts and a late-stage

candidate switch, the arrival of back-to-back monster hurricanes is testing the nation’s political fabric even as it challenges the government’s ability to mount a comprehensive response.

The storms have become particularly consequential for Harris, whose truncated presidential campaign is focused on introducing herself as a steady leader in contrast to Trump’s erratic governing style. In recent days, she has upended her campaign schedule to visit with victims of Hurricane Helene, joined multiple high-level briefings and held calls with local

officials across the Southeast. She has also blasted Trump as selfish and “extraordinarily irresponsible” for peddling falsehoods about the recovery effort.

Yet some of Harris’s decisions — including attending splashy fundraisers and political events after Helene made landfall, and participating in lighthearted interviews as Milton was bearing down on Florida — have opened her up to criticism from opponents aiming to cast the storm recovery effort as lackluster and disjointed.

As Trump was cycling through attacks over Hurricane SEE POLITICS ON A8

FLA. COAST HIT WITH DELUGE, TORNADOES

Storm makes landfall slightly south of Sarasota

This article is by Molly Hennessy-Fiske, Joshua Partlow, Bryan Pietsch, Holly Bailey and Joanna Slater

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. — Hurricane Milton slammed into Florida’s western coast Wednesday night as millions of people braced for the worst impacts of a ferocious storm that had already brought dangerous tornadoes, driving rain and lashing winds to the state even before it made landfall.

Milton barreled ashore at 8:30 p.m. in Siesta Key south of Tampa Bay as a Category 3 storm with maximum winds of 120 mph.

The hurricane’s path took it into a populous swath of Florida’s western coast that is home to the cities of Tampa, St. Petersburg, Sarasota and Fort Myers, threatening to devastate an area of the Gulf of Mexico that is witnessing its second major hurricane in two weeks. Hurricane Helene made landfall farther to the north shortly after 11 p.m. on Sept. 26.

“What we’re looking at is a storm of the century,” Tampa Mayor Jane Castor said Wednesday morning as she issued a final plea to residents to seek safety. Helene, which killed more than 230 people in several southeastern states, including at least 27 in Florida, was already the worst that many in the city had experienced in their lifetimes, she said. But it “was a walk in the park compared to what Milton’s going to bring our way.”

The hurricane was expected to produce a massive storm surge of up to 15 feet in some places, along with torrential rain and violent winds before it tears eastward. SEE MILTON ON A9

Disaster aid FAQ: U.S. agencies are facing a funding crunch. A8

Protecting the frail: Thousands were being ferried to safety. A9

ELECTION 2024

Trump targets migrants in a new town

BY HANNAH KNOWLES AND JOSH DAWSEY

CHARLEROI, PA. — Donald Trump was eager to tell a new horror story about this tiny Rust Belt borough where hundreds of Haitians arrived in recent years to fill factory jobs. “Have you heard of it?” he asked, introducing a place that would become part of his anti-immigrant closing argument.

“The town is virtually bankrupt,” Trump continued at a recent rally. (It wasn’t.) “This flood of illegal aliens is also bringing massive crime,” he said. (They weren’t, and they have at least temporary authorization to live

Situation in Pa. borough is warped, weaponized as he taps into anger

in the United States, town and factory officials said.) “Charleroi, what a beautiful name. But it’s not so beautiful now.”

The Republican presidential nominee had sketched a misleading caricature. But he also tapped into real tensions and a powerful anger in Charleroi and far beyond — stemming from a widespread conviction that America did too much for newcomers and not

enough for citizens.

“I don’t believe everything he says, but I don’t think America has the resources to keep helping outside people,” said Charleroi resident Leighanna Girvin, 33.

“That’s why I’m going to vote for Trump,” she added — her first-ever vote for president.

Trump is concluding his third-straight White House run with a heavy focus on vilifying immigrants for many of the country’s problems — regardless of the facts. He has spread misinformation about Venezuelan gangs. SEE TRUMP ON A6

Lawsuit: GOP effort challenges ballots from Americans abroad. A5

The true death toll may be impossible to know until the war is over. These are the stories of those whose deaths have not yet been recorded.



FAMILY PHOTOS

GAZA’S UNCOUNTED DEAD

BY RUBY MELLEN, HAJAR HARB, MIRIAM BERGER, LOVEDAY MORRIS AND JÚLIA LEDUR

One minute, Haya Shabaka was brewing tea in her sister Abeer’s Gaza City home. The next, she and her relatives were plunged into darkness, said Abeer, who was in the other room when an Israeli strike hit their building on Dec. 6.

“I felt that we were all underground,” Abeer recounted. “I heard my mother scream, but I did not know where she was. I saw Haya. She looked like she was asleep.”

Abeer said she screamed and screamed until help came, and she was eventually pulled from the rubble. Her mother and sister are still buried underneath.

“I wish I had been killed with them,” Abeer said. The Israeli military said it was targeting a gathering of militants.

Without their Haya and their mother’s bodies, or confirmation of their deaths, the family was unable to register. SEE GAZA ON A14

Blue House, red Senate? U.S. may see first double flip.

BY MARIANNA SOTOMAYOR, LIZ GOODWIN AND PAUL KANE

Congress may be headed for an Election Day double flip.

With less than four weeks to go, Republicans appear poised to win the Senate, which is currently controlled by the Democrats. The Democrats, meanwhile, seem to have a slight edge in the race for the Republican-controlled House.

If the polls and predictions

prove right — and that is still a big if — it would be the first such flip, a historic and fitting outcome for a political era marked by slim margins and deep division.

A scenario where voters flip the majorities in both the House and Senate, but in opposite partisan directions, could lead to gridlock as a new president attempts to govern next year. Congress faces crucial deadlines to fund the government and avoid defaulting on federal debt in coming weeks. Narrow, divided majorities in

Congress could make meeting them far more difficult.

In the final weeks, both parties are trying hard to break through to undecided and independent voters. In many swing districts and states, that means moderating messaging on key issues like abortion and immigration, and trying to paint opponents as extreme.

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Wisconsin: Harris works to reverse a steep decline in Black voting. A4

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LOCAL LIVING A divorced couple decided to cohabitate during the pandemic. Now they are getting remarried.

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