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PRESS RELEASE

Secretary of State Jim Condos Statement on Voter Fraud Claims by President Trump

Montpelier – In response to continued assertions by President Trump that 3 – 5 million people voted illegally in the November elections, Secretary of State Jim Condos issued the following statement:

Voting is a Constitutional right at the very core of our democracy. The President is sworn to uphold the Constitution. It is the height of irresponsible behavior and an affront to our system of free and fair elections for the President of the United States to make wild voter fraud claims with absolutely no proof. It undermines our democracy and disparages hundreds of thousands of hard-working local election officials across our great nation. He should retract those statements immediately.

It is hard to believe the President does not have the information in his hands to make an informed judgment about the non-existence of voter fraud by the millions. At best, it is a dereliction of duty. At worst, it is a strategic lie. A lie which cannot be allowed to stand because it normalizes and reinforces our worst fears about our democracy – that our votes don't matter. This may be foreshadowing of attempts from Washington, DC to roll back voting rights by imposing unnecessary restrictions on that Constitutional right. Such attempts by states are being overturned by court after court as discriminatory and based in partisan politics.

This is not a partisan issue. Both Speaker Paul Ryan and Senator Lindsay Graham, leaders from the President's own party, have called for an end to such claims. The National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS; the majority of whom are Republicans) have condemned candidate and President Elect Trump for these statements, citing the integrity of their elections systems.

This morning, the President called for an investigation into voter fraud, which is a welcome development provided it is conducted in an open, fair and nonpartisan way. Those of us who administer elections for a living are well aware that study after study has shown that widespread voter fraud is a myth. However, calling for an investigation now to try to support the President's own alternative facts is not enough. To undo at least some of the damage, President Trump must issue an immediate retraction of his voter fraud statements.

The NASS winter meeting takes place in Washington, DC in February. I am sure all of the Secretaries of State would welcome a discussion on election integrity with you or any of your staff and would be happy to provide you with more information on the inner workings of each state's election systems.

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