

her today for receiving this esteemed recognition. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating her on receiving this award, and in wishing her nothing but continued success.

**TRUMP'S VOTER FRAUD COMMISSION IS A FRAUD AND SHOULD BE DISBANDED NOW**

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 11, 2017*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, unable to cope with the brutal fact that he lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by 2.9 million votes, the largest vote deficit of any president in American history, Donald Trump tweeted that he would have won the popular vote but for "millions of people who voted illegally."

Instead of producing any credible evidence to support this claim, a hoax that has been repeatedly and decisively debunked by experts, the President doubled down and issued an Executive Order establishing the "Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity" (PACEI), appointing Kris Kobach, anti-immigration warrior and poster-child for voter fraud conspiratorialists everywhere, to lead the Commission.

It would be more accurate to characterize the PACEI as the "Presidential Advisory Commission on Vote Suppression." Voter suppression is real but the oft-repeated claim that American elections are rife with voter fraud is a myth.

According to a comprehensive 2014 study published in The Washington Post, out of more than a billion votes cast between 2000 and 2014, only 31 credible instances of impersonation fraud were found, and even this tiny number was likely inflated because the study's author counted not just voter fraud prosecutions or convictions but all credible claims. Numerous other reports have reached the same conclusion.

Any lingering doubt regarding the true purpose of the PACEI should be laid to rest by the request made by Commissioner Kobach on June 28, 2017 when he wrote each of the nation's state secretaries of state requesting that they provide the Commission with "the full first and last names of all registrants, middle names or initials if available, addresses, dates of birth, political party (if recorded in your state), last four digits of social security number if available, voter history (elections voted in) from 2006 onward, active/inactive status, cancelled status, information regarding any felony convictions, information regarding voter registration in another state, information regarding military status, and overseas citizen information."

The information requested by the Commission will not prevent voter fraud. It will violate rather than protect voter privacy.

And it will make it easier to craft legislation and devise campaign strategies intended to suppress the vote in urban clusters and among targeted demographic groups, particularly minority voters.

It is important that all voters, and the people of the 18th Congressional District of Texas whom I am privileged to represent, be fully protected.

While supplying only public voter information may seem secure, the sad fact is that it is not. There is no publicly accessible database of voter registration information in any of the 50 states or the District of Columbia.

That is because information of this kind is protected from public disclosure under the settled principle of 'collective privacy' recognized by the Supreme Court in the landmark decision of *NAACP v. Alabama*, 377 U.S. 288, 84 S. Ct. 1302, 12 L. Ed. 2d 325 (1964), which held that compelled disclosure of affiliation with groups engaged in advocacy may constitute an impermissible chilling effect on the freedom of association guaranteed by the First Amendment, a holding that has been affirmed repeatedly.

Accordingly, neither Texas nor any state can, consistent with the U.S. Constitution, supply the voter information requested by the PACEI.

Indeed, if the information sought was as public in nature as PACEI contends, there simply would be no need for it to request the information from state governments.

Trump's voter suppression commission is a solution in search of a problem.

Contrary to what Trump and Kobach would have the public believe, American elections are not rife with widespread voter fraud. Studies have shown that it is more likely an American "will be struck by lightning than that he will impersonate another voter at the polls."

No, the major ill affecting our election system is not that too many people vote due to voter fraud, but that too many people are prevented from voting due to vote suppression schemes such as discriminatory photo identification requirements, curtailment of early voting, too few polling stations leading to long lines and excessive wait times, and purging of election rolls.

Even in the wholly unimaginable event that the commission created by Donald Trump and led by Kris Kobach could be trusted enough for states to cooperate by sharing their voter data, there is no reasonable basis for assuming that information would be kept secure and the privacy of voters protected.

Recent cyberattacks have made clear the vulnerability of large central databases to cyberattack. An information security breach at the Department of Veterans Affairs compromised sensitive personal data of 26.5 million persons and cost the VA between \$100 million to \$500 million to remediate; another occurring at the Office of Personnel Management impacted 22 million current and former federal employees, many of whom held sensitive security clearances; and the attack on Yahoo, the mother of all security breaches, resulted in 1.5 billion user accounts being compromised.

Because large centralized databases are targets of opportunities for criminals, terrorists, and foreign adversaries, it would be the height of recklessness for Texas or any state to provide the PACEI with personal information of millions of persons via unsecured email to be stored in undersecured databases on undersecured servers.

One of the biggest strengths of the American election system is its decentralized nature.

Aggregating all voter data into one centralized database with questionable security protections makes that data highly vulnerable to a cyberattack that could lead to the personal

information of hundreds of millions of Americans being stolen and misused.

Voter privacy and the integrity of the secret ballot are integral to American democracy. Voter privacy rights should and must be protected.

This is especially true since we know for certain that adversaries like Russia are actively involved in cyberwarfare campaigns to undermine our democracy.

There is no denying that our election system is under assault, but not in the way Trump imagines.

Instead of wasting taxpayer money to fund an investigation into voter fraud, which is as mythical as a unicorn, American democracy would be better served by focusing on and correcting the real problem with our elections—voter suppression and external, illegal, and international interference in our national elections.

I am not opposed to employing reasonable, legitimate, and workable means to safeguard the integrity of our electoral system and to protect the precious right to vote. But Trump's Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity is incapable of doing either and thus should be disbanded and dissolved immediately.

**RECOGNIZING THE UPPER PENINSULA CHAMPIONSHIP RODEO**

**HON. JACK BERGMAN**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 11, 2017*

Mr. BERGMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to recognize the Upper Peninsula Championship Rodeo upon the occasion of its 50th Anniversary. We Michiganders are so proud of the rodeo's half-century of world-class entertainment, turnkey production, and commitment to confronting domestic violence.

This tradition began in 1968 to showcase the rich agricultural production and culture of the Upper Peninsula. Originally established as the "Iron River Area Championship Rodeo," the name was changed to "Upper Peninsula Championship Rodeo" when Michigan state Senator Joe Mack introduced a resolution proclaiming Iron River to be the "Rodeo Capital of the Upper Peninsula." To anyone who visits the wonderful city of Iron River, it is immediately clear that the bustling community takes great pride in hosting the only professional rodeo in Michigan.

Throughout its proud history, the Upper Peninsula Championship Rodeo has featured some of the First District's greatest musicians, athletes, and citizens of the last half-century. The rodeo consistently brings folks from across Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula together to enjoy a weekend of community, culture, and competition. Moreover, each year, the economic benefits brought to Iron River cannot be understated as thousands of people travel to the region. The Upper Peninsula Championship Rodeo is about more than just competition, it's a charitable event committed to bringing public awareness to the issue of domestic violence. By raising money for local organizations working to better our communities, the rodeo has set a positive example of what can be achieved when a social event becomes a force for good in the community.