

Testimony Before the U.S. House Committee on House Administration

Subcommittee on Elections

Hearing on
“2022 Midterms Look Back Series: Election Observer Access”

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Good morning Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Sewell, and Members of the Subcommittee on Elections.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today on Election Observer Access, which has been a key focus of my work as the National Election Integrity Director at the Republican National Committee.

Despite what you might see in headlines and on social media, those who work to promote quality, responsible election observation know that it is actually an essential and time-honored aspect of our nation’s democratic process.

Working day in and day out to recruit, train, and shift volunteer poll watchers in a responsible manner might be referred to by some as the “blocking and tackling” of politics. I can tell you from experience that I view that as a fair – and perhaps even charitable – assessment.

As I have often said to volunteers – and as I have often heard from fellow workers in this space, both Democrat and Republican – the best and most successful day of election observation is an incredibly boring one.

However, that does not make this work any less important.

It is my belief, and I think the belief of members of this committee, that ensuring bipartisan election observation is a good and necessary plank of our nation’s obligation to administer free, fair, and transparent elections. Observation creates transparency. Transparency creates trust.

In other words, when both Democrat and Republican volunteers are welcomed as observers to the electoral process, both Democrat and Republican voters are more likely to trust the results of that process.

It also bears mentioning that election observation has been part of America’s political process since the 18th Century. Given that poll watching is a statutory party function in many states – in

other words, it is a legal responsibility for election administration – the Republican Party, and specifically the Republican National Committee, has a clear role to play in this process.

Meeting this moment successfully required the construction of a complex and comprehensive observation program. To carry that out, we recruited, evaluated, and hired 17 civic-minded individuals to work as Election Integrity Directors in 17 key states.

We then worked with the RNC's Legal and Communications Departments to create a comprehensive training program, including the distribution of uniform and state-specific training products like literature, presentations, and infrastructural resources. The RNC also provided counsel to all of our state Election Integrity Directors to ensure compliance with all state and federal laws. We created a tangible, organized program aimed at making it easy to vote and harder to cheat.

Once we had built this structure, we found that there were plenty of Americans who wanted to get involved in the civic process by learning how to be a poll observer. Our Election Integrity Directors connected with volunteers. The RNC vetted those volunteers, and we began training those who passed the vetting process to become election observers.

We conducted these trainings while constantly disseminating and adhering to the RNC's "poll-watching principles." For context, these are the principles that we required our volunteers to adhere to while conducting election observation. I'd like to submit them for the record, as follows:

1. Be respectful and courteous to other volunteers and election officials.
2. Follow instructions provided by election officials.
3. Do not interact with voters.
4. Do not disrupt, obstruct, or interfere with the voting process.
5. Know and follow your training, including on the applicable laws for election observers.
6. Direct any questions to appropriate election staff, and do so politely.
7. Carry required volunteer credentials or identification during entire shift.
8. Arrive on time and take notes.
9. Do not interact with media without prior approval.
10. Contact the [RNC's] Election Integrity Team immediately if you are ever in doubt about how to approach an issue or if you witness any potential election law violations.

These principles were the foundation of our program. Anyone who did not commit to these principles to conduct election observation in a courteous, respectful, and accountable way could not be part of our program. The RNC required all of its trainings to include these principles.

By Election Day, the RNC's election integrity program conducted 5,000 trainings. The RNC's election integrity program recruited, trained, and shifted over 80,000 poll watchers and poll workers across the country.

I want to be clear: that is a win for the political process. Any time that Americans – Democrat, Republican, or independent – volunteer by the thousands to help ensure that our political process works is a victory for the American people.

That is the story of our election integrity efforts. The RNC believes that election observation promotes transparency, and that transparency creates trust.

As the organization that manages the business of one of our nation's two major political parties, the RNC has an indispensable role to play in ensuring bipartisan election observation.

The RNC created a nationwide, accountable election observation program that recruited and trained volunteers in massive numbers.

I look forward to talking more about why election observation is important, why the RNC has an important role in promoting its ubiquity, and the work ahead to secure free, fair, and transparent elections.

Thank you all for your time.