

DGA: “Sea Wall,” “Firewall,” “Bulwarks” — GOP attempts to restrict voting and undermine democracy draw national attention to 2022 governor’s races

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As Republican gubernatorial candidates attempt to [undermine democracy](#), recent coverage from the New York Times, Washington Post, and MSNBC emphasizes the [urgency](#) of electing Democratic governors in 2022.

After the New York Times recently [called](#) Govs. Tony Evers, Gretchen Whitmer, and Tom Wolf a **“sea wall against a rising Republican tide of voting restrictions,”** MSNBC’s Chris Hayes is [labeling](#) Democratic governors as a **“firewall,”** and Washington Post opinion columnist Greg Sargent [echoes](#) that they are **“bulwarks”** against election subversion.

Republican gubernatorial candidates in [all three states](#) have pushed election conspiracy theories and attempted to [suppress voting rights](#). And with Republican majorities in the state legislatures, the risk that this rhetoric turns into action is dire. On MSNBC, Hayes stressed that **“a Republican governor will enable a coup in 2024”** if Democrats lose in 2022. Sargent and MSNBC’s Lawrence O’Donnell also [warned](#) against Republican governors overturning a 2024 presidential loss.

Govs. Evers, Whitmer, Wolf have all worked to [protect and expand](#) voting rights. **“We are not afraid of people participating in the political process,”** said Michigan Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist on MSNBC yesterday. **“Democrats are coming up with ways to expand voting, not**

schemes to suppress it, and that's all we are seeing.”

Watch the MSNBC coverage [here](#) and [here](#) and read key excerpts from the Washington Post opinion article below:

Washington Post: [Opinion: The Trump threat may soon get worse. Here's the under-the-radar reason for it.](#)

The sunny reading of the threat posed by Donald Trump goes like this: Yes, Trump hatched multiple schemes to overturn the 2020 election, but their implausibility, his incompetence and the unwillingness of Republicans to play along suggest there's little to fear from a rerun in 2024.

We should hope that's true. But it would be folly to count on this without taking active steps to prevent the contrary outcome — and three political races in key swing states that you're probably not following illustrate the point with new urgency.

We're talking about the 2022 gubernatorial races in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Michigan. The New York Times reports that Democrats are quietly worried about these races, in part because GOP governors in those states will be able to dramatically ramp up the anti-democratic tactics.

In all three states there are GOP-controlled legislatures, and if any of the three Democratic governors in them — Tony Evers (Wis.), Tom Wolf (Pa.) and Gretchen Whitmer (Mich.) — are replaced with a Republican, it will mean unified GOP control.

Most obviously, that will mean ramped up voter suppression and other anti-majoritarian tactics. Indeed, as the Times notes, GOP lawmakers and candidates for governor in these places are pushing more such proposals, making these Democratic governors bulwarks against more deeply entrenched minority rule.

But perhaps more important is what this means for future election subversion. In these states, Republicans are pushing various efforts to “audit” or “recount” the 2020 voting, which should be seen as dry runs for manufacturing pretexts for subverting future outcomes.

GOP governors would make it easier for Republicans to do just that, by, say, overturning a 2024 presidential loss in their state. As the Times notes, a GOP governor could refuse to certify a slate of electors for a Democratic winner of the

popular vote, or send rogue electors for the GOP candidate, in defiance of the popular vote, for Congress to count.

[...]

“Although it would require many guardrails to fail,” Genevieve Nadeau, counsel at Protect Democracy, told me, “it is theoretically possible that a governor, with the support of a legislature of the same party, could certify a result contrary to the popular vote and that Congress would then count those electoral votes.”

[...]

What’s more, any discussion of this is incomplete without noting that other Republicans are running on versions of Trump’s “big lie” about 2020, or even on an open vow that future losses should be subject to overturning. More such Republicans will be in key positions in 2024.

Indeed, these gubernatorial contests will help test how worried we should be about the threat. The media should hound the living heck out of GOP candidates in those races until they unequivocally renounce any intention of certifying electors in defiance of the popular vote.

It may fall on Democrats to force this issue to the fore, to get the media focused on it. “Democratic candidates should — and will — keep this fight front and center,” Ben Wiker, the Democratic Party chair in Wisconsin, tells me.

Democratic voters in those states should focus on this as well. Wikler points to early positive signs, noting that the issue is “already galvanizing volunteers and activists in a way I wouldn’t have thought possible in a midterm.”

Here’s a prediction: If GOP gubernatorial candidates are pressed in this regard, some will fudge their answers. To keep the Trump rump happy, they will say something like: “If the 2024 election is conducted with integrity and with no signs of fraud, then of course I would certify the proper electors.”

That’s a dodge, and they shouldn’t be allowed to get away with it. And if they do say this, then perhaps those who are sanguine about the continuing threat might rethink matters.