

New Mexico: Otero County Commissioners Threatened with Jail for Refusing to Certify Election

written by GEG | June 20, 2022



New Mexico: Otero County Commissioners refused to certify recent primary election results because the machines used in the election do not comply with New Mexico law. The Commissioners faced pressure from the state's Supreme Court and were threatened by New Mexico Secretary of State's Office with jail if they continued to refuse. They voted 2-to-1 to certify the election. Commissioner Vickie Marquardt said that she would rather vote for the certification, begrudgingly, than be removed from office, imprisoned and replaced by an appointee of the Governor.

On the same day, Otero Commissioner Couy Griffin was sentenced to 14 days in jail and a \$3,000 fine for his participation in the activities of January 6, that included shouting that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from Trump, climbing a toppled fence and another barrier to access the Capitol steps and using a bullhorn to lead the throngs in prayer. He voted to continue to refuse to certify the primary election, but was outnumbered.

After pressure from both New Mexico State leaders and the New Mexico Supreme Court, Otero County commissioners voted 2 to 1 to certify the results of the 2022 primary election despite their past refusal to do so – a move government officials said ran afoul of state law.

The vote came Friday during an emergency meeting held after the board declined to certify the results at a Monday special meeting.

They expressed concerns with "ghost" votes where multiple ballots appeared to be filed from a home where all residents were allegedly dead and mistrust of Dominion voting machines.

County Commission Chairwoman and District 3 Commissioner Vickie Marquardt said County Clerk Robyn Holmes allayed the concerns about deceased voters.

She said the commission and people of Otero County must continue to hold the State accountable for what she called government overreach that compelled the board to certify the results, despite lingering suspicion of the voting machines.

Those doubts first arose when volunteer group New Mexico Audit Force attempted to prove voter fraud in Otero County but displayed no credible evidence, records show, and when Echo Mail began a similar audit that was halted as the county was investigated for misuse of public funds in its contract with the company.

Otero County planned to start a committee, Marquardt said, with other elected officials, state lawmakers and representatives from Dominion and that the company still had “some tough questions to answer.”

At times during her remarks before casting a yes vote, Marquardt’s voice cracked with emotion as she remained defiant even while voting to affirm the election.

She said she was voting yes after threats from the New Mexico Secretary of State’s Office that commissioners could be jailed if they continued to refuse to certify the election.

Marquardt said she’d rather vote for the certification, begrudgingly, than be removed from office, imprisoned and replaced by an appointee of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham’s choosing.

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