



## **Election Rigging, Dark Money in Cantor's "Upset" Loss to Koch Stealth Candidate**

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Political races this November will feature an all-out battle for control of the US Senate. The "upset" Virginia primary defeat of Eric Cantor raised two critical election integrity issues that few in the mainstream media have covered, but which should set up serious red flags for those concerned about manipulations of the 2014 and 2016 elections.

The first alarm is the hidden connection that Professor David Brat's victory had to the Koch Brothers dark money network: hundreds of millions of dollars in "charitable contributions" to inoculate American academic institutions and media with extremist libertarian philosophy, promoting the Ayn Randian culture of greed while boosting radical Tea Party candidates. The net effect has been to undermine the civility of American politics, divide the Republican Party, stalemate Congress and hobble government institutions.

Most pundits reflecting on the Virginia race have myopically ignored the money-in-politics corruption, because outwardly, Cantor outspent Brat by a huge margin. Instead they focused analysis on immigration issues, intraparty Republican division, Cantor's complacency as a candidate, or the possibility of Democrats in the open primary crossing over to vote for his radical opponent.

David Brat was not just any economics professor. He was director of Randolph-Macon's Moral Foundations of Capitalism program, a curriculum underwritten by John Allison's BB&T Bank's charitable foundation. Allison is on the Board of Directors of the Ayn Rand Institute, which means Rand's thousand-page ode to antigovernment libertarian capitalism, *Atlas Shrugged*, is usually included in the curriculum. Allison is also the CEO of the Cato Institute, the Koch-funded, far-right think tank working closely with the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) to set back the social reform and safety net programs of the 20th century.

ALEC has promoted legislation for voter suppression and antilabor laws, and its legislative members have pushed extreme gerrymandering in states such as Wisconsin, North Carolina and Michigan.

Meanwhile Koch Industries and related front charities are engaged heavily in financial "sponsorship" of right-wing radio talk jocks who push climate change denial and play a heavy-handed role in supporting Koch-backed political candidates. A number of these, particularly Laura Ingraham and Mark Levin, vigorously boosted Brat's campaign while denigrating Cantor. Combined, these factors prove that Brat is not just a benign professor who luckily caught the Republican House Leader offguard; he is a construct and pawn of Koch industries' deliberate and methodical transformation of the Republican Party and American democracy.

### **Computerized Election Rigging - the "Hidden" Voter Suppression**

The Virginia primary not only displays the nefarious role of dark money in promoting extremism, it also raises yet again the question of vote rigging - specifically the proven vulnerability to error and insider manipulation of the computers that register and tabulate our votes.

Brat won by 7,000 votes. But at least 37,000 votes in Virginia district 7 were cast on ballotless Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) voting machines, providing *no ability to recount, audit, or verify that these votes were counted as cast*. Seventeen states use the same DRE technology in at least some of their districts.

Nationwide, electronic voting machines are programmed on proprietary software that cannot be publicly examined, and sold to voting districts by private corporations known to have lied to public officials, employed convicted felons, and maintain ties to right wing partisan and religious extremists.

As explained in the 2012 *Harper's Magazine* article, "How to Rig an Election":

"The virtual vote count can be manipulated in total secrecy. By means of proprietary, corporate-owned software, just one programmer could steal hundreds, thousands, potentially even millions of votes with the stroke of a key. It's the electoral equivalent of a drone strike."

The Virginia primary brings to the foreground how likely it may be that, if all else fails, this cabal of right-wing libertarian-anarchists could hack the voting machinery, as has been suspected in a number of recent elections. A prime example is the evident manipulation of the voting technology in the 2010 Democratic primary race in South Carolina.

In that remarkable election, Alvin Greene - an unemployed, often incoherent man facing obscenity charges - became the Democratic candidate for the US Senate. As described by election watchdog VoterGA, Greene ran absolutely no campaign; no debates or fundraisers, and did not even deploy a yard sign, yet he mysteriously - miraculously - beat former National Guard Colonel, judge, and four-term state legislator Vic Rawl, by a stunning 18 percent margin. This

ensured the landslide victory in November of Tea Party Republican and fundamentalist Christian, Jim DeMint.

Voters reported that "defective" Touch Screen machines "flipped" votes in the primary to Greene in a number of SC voting jurisdictions. Half of South Carolina's counties reported large disparities between absentee ballot counts and those tallied by the suspect machines on election day. According to VoterGA, *In 20 out of 24 SC counties, Rawl won the verifiable absentee vote tally but lost to Greene on the total computerized counts - statistically a highly improbable occurrence.*

Greene declined to explain where he got the \$10,400 needed to file as a candidate and denied that he was a GOP plant.

Immediately after the story of his controversial election broke again into the mainstream media, Jim DeMint abruptly resigned his Senate seat in December of 2012 and was hired to head up the Koch-backed rightist Heritage Foundation. Filmmaker Jason Smith made DeMint's scandalous 2010 election subject of an in-depth documentary on computerized election fraud, *I Voted?*

### **Why Has Nothing Been Done to Safeguard Our Elections?**

For decades, democracy activists have sounded the alarm on the dangerous spread of e-voting systems through dozens of books and films, and thousands of articles. The growing attention certainly has raised the risk to would-be criminals, and may have entirely thwarted some rigging attempts (in 2012, legal action and even counter-hacking was credited with preventing the stealing of the presidential race in Ohio). Unfortunately, during the quiet interim between elections, this issue falls back into obscurity.

Much of the blame falls on the media, both mainstream and alternative. When election "upsets" and anomalies occur - such as Cantor's race in Virginia - media pundits and analysts engage in whatever contortions are necessary to rationalize and explain the outcome. Rarely do they question the faulty and vulnerable technology, even in shocking turnarounds that defy polling gravity.

As noted by Election Integrity journalist, Brad Friedman: "Three days ago, *The Washington Post* reported that Cantor's internal polling showed him 34 points ahead of Brat. Tonight, it's a given among the pundit class, that those numbers were simply wrong, and tonight's completely unverified computer-reported results are correct, showing Cantor losing instead by more than 11 points."

Progressive media has largely ignored the evidence that recent election "upsets" have favored extreme right-wing candidates so consistently that some Election Integrity activists have coined the phenomenon, the "red shift."

Alvin Greene's glaring election fraud was certainly not the first example. In 2002, the GOP regained control of the US Senate with the crucial defeat of popular Georgian Democratic Senator, Max Cleland, a Silver Star recipient who lost three limbs in Vietnam. Early polls had

given him a solid lead over his Republican opponent, Saxby Chambliss, who was supported by the Christian right and the NRA. Two days before the election, a Zogby poll gave Chambliss a one-point lead among likely voters, while the *Atlanta Journal - Constitution* reported that Cleland maintained a three-point advantage.

Cleland lost by seven points; a "red shift" of 10 points.

However, just prior to the election, Diebold Voting Machine employees had applied a mysterious, uncertified software "patch" to 5,000 voting machines that Georgia had purchased in May. Diebold consultant and whistleblower, Chris Hood, later confessed: "We were told that it was intended to fix the clock in the system, which it didn't do. The curious thing is the very swift, covert way this was done . . . It was an unauthorized patch, and they were trying to keep it secret from the state . . . We were told not to talk to county personnel about it."

Two years later, John Kerry lost his 2004 presidential bid in Ohio; a key swing state crucial to George Bush's reelection. A blitz of right-wing voter suppression and dirty tricks tactics were reported by thousands of voters, including voting machine anomalies and "flipped" votes. The Republican secretary of state, J. Kenneth Blackwell, a fundamentalist Christian who also served as cochair of Ohio's Committee to Re-Elect George W. Bush (yes, you just read that), oversaw the controversial election.

Four years later, Ohio attorney (and former Republican) Cliff Arnebeck began gathering evidence to file a racketeering claim against Karl Rove, which included the charge that Rove's computer operatives had masterminded the theft of the 2004 election. Specifically, the investigation focused on the unusual computer architecture of election night, designed by top GOP tech-guru (and zealous anti-abortion Christian) Michael Connell. It was discovered that this system funneled electronic vote data to the servers of a right-wing, Rove-connected company in Tennessee, which could have tampered with results before displaying them on the Ohio Secretary of State's website. Connell was fighting Arnebeck's subpoena to testify in open court against Rove, when he was killed in the crash of his single-engine Piper Saratoga he was piloting alone.

Lou Harris, long regarded as the father of modern political polling, stated: "Ohio was as dirty an election as America has ever seen."

John Kerry showed an insurmountable lead in exit polling late on Election Day. Yet the final vote tallies in 30 states deviated widely from the polls, with discrepancies favoring George W. Bush in all but nine. Some of the greatest disparities were concentrated in Ohio; in one precinct, exit polls indicated that Kerry should have received 67 percent of the vote, but the certified tally gave him only 38 percent. The odds of such an unexpected outcome occurring only as a result of sampling error are 1 in 867,205,553.

Other victories that contradicted the polls, where electronic vote rigging has been suspected, include Chuck Hagel's US Senate 1996 win in Nebraska, where it was discovered that Hagel had not disclosed his prior role as chairman of ES&S, the voting machine company that counted his own votes.

Computer manipulations triggered George W Bush's first win in 2000, where programmed purging of voter rolls was topped off by a rogue memory card in Volusia County, Florida. At midnight, the card mysteriously registered 16,000 "negative" votes for Al Gore, allowing Bush's cousin at Fox News to call the election for him at the order of Governor Jeb Bush.

### **Where Do We Go From Here?**

We can only speculate about the possibility of computerized rigging in the Virginia Republican primary - or in any election - but it would be insane not to embrace the truly overwhelming evidence that our system of voting is flawed and ripe for fraud and abuse by anyone with access - as proven by Argonne National Labs recent \$26 hack.

We must immediately stop using DRE voting systems that do not even afford the ability of a recount or audit. That is the very least we can do to somewhat safeguard important upcoming elections - but it is not enough. In European countries, election technology that offers no public transparency has been outlawed. A fully transparent paper-based system, counted in public on election night, is internationally considered the Gold Standard of democratic elections.

As November approaches, American voters still lack the ability to know with certainty who wins any given race, or the true results of ballot initiatives and referenda affecting some of the most vital issues of our day.

Election Integrity remains a dangerously overlooked vulnerability in the overall populist and progressive strategy. Democracy activists must take the steps necessary to implement real reform and safeguard future elections.