

Ain't that peculiar

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November 29, 2020

Spectator USA has posted Patrick Basham's column "Reasons why the 2020 presidential election is deeply puzzling." Subhead: "If only cranks find the tabulations strange, put me down as a crank." I've asked our friends at Spectator USA to make the column accessible, but at the moment it is behind their (semipermeable) paywall. Basham is not a crank. He is founding director of the Democracy Institute and was an adjunct scholar with Cato's Center for Representative Government.

In his Spectator column Basham first spells out anomalies in the stated results of the 2020 presidential election. He observes, for example, "President Trump received more votes than any previous incumbent seeking reelection. He got 11 million more votes than in 2016, the third largest rise in support ever for an incumbent. By way of comparison, President Obama was comfortably reelected in 2012 with 3.5 million fewer votes than he received in 2008."

The anomalies may be just that, but Basham then turns to nine peculiarities that "lack compelling explanations[.]" Here are the first six of the nine:

- 1. Late on election night, with Trump comfortably ahead, many swing states stopped counting ballots. In most cases, observers were removed from the counting facilities. Counting generally continued without the observers*
- 2. Statistically abnormal vote counts were the new normal when counting resumed. They were unusually large in size (hundreds of thousands) and had an unusually high (90 percent and above) Biden-to-Trump ratio*
- 3. Late arriving ballots were counted. In Pennsylvania, 23,000 absentee ballots have impossible postal return dates and another 86,000 have such extraordinary return dates they raise serious questions*
- 4. The failure to match signatures on mail-in ballots. The destruction of mail in ballot envelopes, which must contain signatures*
- 5. Historically low absentee ballot rejection rates despite the massive expansion of mail voting. Such is Biden's narrow margin that, as political analyst Robert Barnes observes, 'If the states simply imposed the same absentee ballot rejection rate as recent cycles, then Trump wins the election'*
- 6. Missing votes. In Delaware County, Pennsylvania, 50,000 votes held on 47 USB cards are missing*

Basham's "peculiarities" include a mix of phenomena differing in nature. Some may be explicable, some may not be "peculiar" at all. Each requires a citation of states (as in number 6) and evidence beyond mere assertion, but what does Basham have wrong?