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OPINION | COMMENTARY

Blue-State Voter 'Suppression'

Where's the outcry over Democrats' earlier poll-closing hours and ID rules?

By [Karl Rove](#)

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Stacey Abrams speaks in Duluth, Ga., Nov. 1, 2020.

PHOTO: JOHN BAZEMORE/ASSOCIATED PRESS



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Moves by Republican legislators to reform state election laws are drawing incendiary accusations from Democrats. Former Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams denounced them as “Jim Crow in a suit and tie.” Vice President [Kamala Harris](#) declared, “It’s all voter suppression by any other name.” The Democratic Governors Association calls GOP efforts “a direct attack on our democracy.” Such cant is unfounded and damaging to the nation’s political culture.

In Georgia, Republican legislators are close to passing a bill that expands the state’s early-voting period by four days. What a clever GOP suppression technique—provide voters with more opportunities to cast ballots.

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The legislation would also require Georgians to vote in their home precinct or risk having their ballot disqualified, and it would forbid outside groups to send duplicate applications for mail-in absentee ballots to voters who've already applied for one. Both are sensible protections.

Democrats are particularly upset with requiring Georgians voting by mail to provide the number from their driver's license, free state-provided ID or other generally accepted identification.

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If this is racist, then New Jersey, Virginia and California are suppression hotbeds. New Jersey requires a driver's license number or the last four digits of a Social Security number for online voter registration, while Virginia requires both a photo ID card and your Social Security number. California—hardly a red stronghold—also requires ID to register. Where are the bitter denunciations of these state's racist (Democratic) governors and legislatures?

Ms. Abrams and her allies also oppose efforts to toughen signature verification requirements for mail-in ballots. But what about Colorado? The increasingly blue Mile

High State has what's likely the toughest such procedures in the country, which is important since it conducts elections primarily by mail.

Last fall, roughly 1 of every 112 ballots—29,000 altogether—was rejected because the signature didn't match the one on file with election officials. This was after voters were allowed to “cure” problems by responding to a text asking for a copy of—you guessed it—their driver's license or other photo I.D. bearing their signature. More than 11,000 did so. When will Colorado's Democratic governor and legislature be branded vote suppressors?

They were certainly on the ball in Iowa, where Democrats unanimously opposed the election reforms Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds recently signed. Among other things, Democrats criticized the new Hawkeye State law for closing poll locations at 8 p.m. rather than 9 p.m., while keeping opening time at 7 a.m. Yet Democrats have been mysteriously quiet when it comes to rules enforcing the same opening and closing times set by the Democratic governments of California, Delaware, Massachusetts and Rhode Island; the Democratic governors of Michigan, Minnesota and Pennsylvania; the Democratic Legislature of Maryland and the Democratic mayor and City Council of Washington. More urgently, when will Ms. Abrams and her associates castigate the Democratic suppressors who run Colorado and Hawaii, where polls close at 7 p.m.? That's a whole additional hour lost!

The Iowa law also drew fire for reducing the number of early voting days to 20 from 29. If this is evidence of suppression, what should we call the District of Columbia, Delaware, Hawaii, Maryland, New York, Wisconsin and 15 other states, all with shorter in-person voting periods than Iowa? And what about Connecticut, Delaware and New Jersey, none of which have early in-person voting at all? Will Ms. Abrams and Ms. Harris condemn these blue state as centers of voter suppression?

Both Georgia and Iowa are continuing no-excuse mail-in absentee voting, a favorite of Ms. Abrams, Ms. Harris and the Democratic left's anti-“suppression” brigade. But if they're really concerned about protecting this essential tool of democracy, they've missed a

couple of suppression efforts. New York state is one of 15 that doesn't allow no-excuse absentee voting, along with fellow deep-blue Connecticut and Delaware. If attempts to constrain or limit no-excuse mail-in voting are prima facie evidence of racism, what does it say about states whose statutes don't allow it at all? Calling Gov. Andrew Cuomo — voting scandal on aisle 3!

But something tells me there's no chance Ms. Abrams and Ms. Harris will condemn the absence of democracy in these Democratic states. Republican attempts to take reasonable and prudent actions to prevent future election messes are now routinely condemned as racist and antidemocratic while prominent Democrats are silent on these same practices in blue states, aided and abetted on both their attacks and selective silence by media allies.

I wonder why.

Mr. Rove helped organize the political-action committee American Crossroads and is author of "The Triumph of William McKinley" (Simon & Schuster, 2015).

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