



## **WILL ELECTION BE ‘RIGGED’? TWO SIDES DISAGREE**

Republicans at Sunday rally fear it will be; Democrats say no

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Wisconsin voters attending rallies over the weekend proved divided by party affiliation in how worried they were that the presidential election could be “rigged.”

But politicians on both sides of the aisle expressed confidence the election will be tallied fair and square.

Republican candidate Donald Trump has talked since August of the presidential election's potential for being rigged and has said he won't necessarily accept Tuesday's results if he does not win.

A number of people interviewed Saturday at a GOP rally in Mukwonago said they're definitely worried that Tuesday's election could indeed be rigged.

As they waited in the sunshine at Field Park for GOP vice presidential nominee Mike Pence, House Speaker Paul Ryan, Gov. Scott Walker and U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, among others, to speak, all those interviewed said they believed the election process is likely rigged, both locally and on a national scale.

"I definitely think it is (nationally)" said Mark Sabatinelli of the Town of Mukwonago. "Just look at how they've taken away voter ID rights in different states. A lot of these states had them all these years and all of a sudden, now that the election's somewhat close, they take those rights away."

Asked about Wisconsin elections, Sabatinelli replied, "It's rigged, and it's been in the past. I remember years ago when I lived in Milwaukee, there were buses coming up from Illinois, cars coming from Illinois to vote."

Sabatinelli fears that early voting trends are opening up even more opportunity for fraud. "Especially in Milwaukee — it gives them more of a chance to keep going through," he said of possible fraudulent voters. "I just don't think you need to vote that far in advance. If you really cared about it, do it on that Tuesday."

Terry Woodman, of Madison, said a past experience as a poll watcher made her even more skeptical of election integrity.

"What people were bringing in for IDs was ridiculous as far as proof of who they were and their residency," said Woodman. "I also saw them bring in people who lived in a rehab place. Not that they don't have rights, but shouldn't they be voting where they normally live and not where they're temporarily living in a rehab place? How do we know they're not voting in both? It's that way with students as well. If someone goes to a campus but their hometown is an hour or two away, what would prevent them from voting in both places?"

On the other hand, every person interviewed at a Democratic get-out-the-vote rally on Sunday in Milwaukee said they weren't worried at all about election results.

"Rigged? Not at all," said George Stone of Wauwatosa, who was among volunteers crowded into a field office on Martin Luther King Drive, to hear a pep talk by Democratic vice presidential candidate Tim Kaine and former U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold, who is vying to win back his Senate seat from Johnson.

“That’s a totally bogus issue,” said Stone. “When Trump loses significantly, and I think it will be close to a landslide, he’ll need an excuse for his followers.”

Jenny Mendenhall, of Milwaukee’s Bay View neighborhood, said her only concern is that everyone has a fair chance to vote. “I don’t think there’s major voter fraud,” she said.

Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow, who attended the GOP rally, said he’s confident there are “systems in place” to ensure the count will be “99 percent accurate.”

“Everybody’s ready. When I was in the Legislature, we put together some good legislation to make sure everybody’s vote was counted,” said Farrow, a Republican who served in both the state Assembly and Senate before becoming Waukesha County exec in 2015.

“This is going to be the first true test of the photo ID,” said Farrow. “This will be a testament to what’s going on.”

House Speaker U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan told reporters after the Mukwonago event he’s not concerned about the upcoming election being rigged because of America’s “decentralized system” whereby votes are regulated by election officials at the municipal, county and state levels.

“Does fraud occur here and there? Of course it does, but it’s a decentralized system, so I’m not worried about that,” said Ryan.

In Milwaukee on Sunday, Kaine brought up Trump’s remarks about election fraud.

“Donald Trump goes around saying it’s rigged, and he’s not even going to accept the outcome,” said Kaine. “Look, he’s not going to accept or take responsibility for anything because he never does. But afterward, if we win and he whines, the bigger we win by, the more everybody will see it’s just the whining of a sore loser.”

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, a Democrat, said after the event, “I think if there’s any election rigging going on, it’s the millions and millions of dollars that are being spent from secret sources – that’s a danger to democracy. I haven’t seen any busloads (of ineligible voters). I think there are people who like to conjure up visions of people doing this, but I have not witnessed it.”