



# RECORDS SHOW PRESSURE BY TRUMP, ALLIES ON ARIZONA OFFICIALS

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Newly released records show the top Republicans in Arizona's largest county dodged calls from Donald Trump and his allies in the aftermath of the 2020 election, as the then-president sought to prevent the certification of Joe Biden's victory in key battleground states.

The records — including voicemails and text messages — shed light on another state where Trump, his attorneys and others mounted a behind-the-scenes pressure campaign on Republican officials overseeing elections. Days before Congress certified Biden's win on Jan. 6, Trump pressed Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to find enough votes to overturn Biden's win there.

Trump tried to reach Clint Hickman, then the chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, on Jan. 3, shortly before midnight in Washington and hours after news broke of Trump's call with Raffensperger.

"Hello, sir. This is the White House operator I was calling to let you know that the president's available to take your call if you're free," the White House operator said in a voicemail. "If you could please give us a call back, sir, that'd be great. You have a good evening."

Hickman told The Arizona Republic, which first received the records from Maricopa County, that he did not return the phone call. He said he presumed Trump would try to pressure him to change election results or discuss election conspiracies as he had done with Raffensperger.

"I'm not going to tape a president, so I'm not going to talk to a president. ... I didn't want to have a very rough call to my home on a Sunday night," Hickman told the Republic.

Hickman and the rest of the Board of Supervisors, which is controlled 4-1 by Republicans, have aggressively defended the vote count in Maricopa County, which includes Phoenix and 60% of Arizona's voters. They have maintained the outcome was not affected by fraud or irregularities.

State Senate Republicans used their subpoena power to take control of all 2.1 million ballots and the machines that counted them. A firm led by a Trump supporter who has shared far-fetched conspiracy theories is overseeing an audit for the Senate GOP.

The most aggressive pressure came from Arizona Republican Party Chairwoman Kelli Ward, who tried to convince Republicans on the board to question the election results, even as the officials tried to instill confidence in the them. At one point, she texted Hickman, "We need you to stop the counting."

She tried to convince Hickman and Supervisors Steve Chucri and Bill Gates to call Trump attorney Sidney Powell, who filed lawsuits around the country alleging the election conspiracies. The lawsuits were all thrown out.

Early Nov. 20, when the board was scheduled to certify Maricopa County's election results, Ward texted Gates, "Can we talk today now that the lawsuit is over? There are so many abnormalities that must be adjudicated. I know the Republican board doesn't want to be remembered as the entity who led the charge to certify a fraudulent election."

After sending information alleging fraud — and shortly before the board voted to accept the election results — she texted him, "Sounds like your fellow Repubs are throwing in the towel. Very sad. And unAmerican."

She texted Chucri, "Seems you're playing for the wrong team and people will remember. WRONG team."

The records also include voicemails from Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani trying to reach several of the GOP supervisors. Chucri met with Giuliani when he was in Phoenix to air Trump's baseless fraud theories.

"If you get a chance, would you please give me a call," Giuliani said in a message to Gates. "I have a few things I'd like to talk over with you. Maybe we can get this thing fixed up. You know, I really think it's a shame that Republicans sort of are both in this kind of situation. And I think there may be a nice way to resolve this for everybody."