

PROGRESS MICHIGAN PRESENTS A SPECIAL REPORT:

Michigan Republicans

*and*

# THE BIG LIE

*How Michigan Republican County Parties are still hanging onto the myth of election fraud.*



# Summary

While some Michigan Republican officials would like us to believe their party is moving on from the 2020 election, an examination of online activity in the Republican grassroots base—its county parties—shows that is not the case. The Big Lie, a conspiracy theory about widespread voter fraud that resulted in the election being stolen from former President Trump, is absolutely still a driving force for Michigan Republicans.

An analysis of Michigan Republican County Party Facebook pages and groups from Nov. 3, 2020 to June 30, 2021 reveals how far-fetched the idea that Republicans are moving on from the 2020 election truly is, instead showing just how hard they are clinging to The Big Lie. A majority of these pages and groups (64 percent) have alluded to the 2020 election being “stolen,” massive voter fraud, and/or the need for an election audit. Among active pages, meaning on average they post at least once a week, that number rockets up to 98 percent.

In addition to right-wing figures who became known simply for their involvement in The Big Lie circus such as Mellissa Carone, right-wing conspiracy theorists such as Patrick Colbeck and Mike Lindell make frequent appearances on Michigan Republican County Party Facebook pages. Lindell’s so-called (and long-debunked) documentary “Absolute Proof,” about “evidence” of mass election fraud, has been used for movie nights in multiple county groups.

Colbeck, a former member of the Michigan Senate, has made spouting conspiracy theories about the 2020 election his mission in life since November. Colbeck is perhaps the most prominent source of election conspiracy related content seen on these

pages, with numerous shares of articles from his website. He has also been invited to speak and been either a driving force or a presence at multiple events across the state, most notably an early June event pitched as “Decision Day” in Antrim County where conspiracy theories ran rampant amid a push for a statewide so-called forensic audit.

Often, the information shared is fact-checked or censored by Facebook itself, leading several moderators of groups and pages to post disclaimers apologizing and saying they are screening submitted posts in order to keep the page from getting shut down.

But this push for The Big Lie goes beyond sharing misinformation and spreading conspiracy theories online, migrating to offline calls to action in the form of calls to legislators, “Stop the Steal” rallies, and even organized efforts to attend the events in the nation’s Capitol on January 6th, which resulted in a violent insurrection to pressure Congress to overturn the results of the election.

There are many posts about what action can be taken to overturn the results of the election, both before and after the Capitol insurrection, and while many pages shared a condemnation of the violence at the Capitol on January 6th, other posts continue to hint at violent remedies to the “stolen election.” One particularly noteworthy post references an armed uprising in Athens, Tennessee, in 1946 where citizens rioted because of election fraud with the statement “good to know.”

This review, and the examples provided in this report, bring to mind a question: If Republicans are willing to say all of this on public Facebook pages, what are they willing to say in private?

# By the Numbers

*98 percent of active Michigan Republican County Party Facebook pages or groups have posted about The Big Lie since the election*

72

existing Michigan Republican County Party Facebook pages or groups

64

are currently in use

42

are active (they post at least once a week)

41

have posted about the election being stolen, election fraud, or the need for an election audit at some stage since November

11

have posted about the election being stolen, election fraud, or the need for an election audit recently (within the last two months)

# See for Yourself

Talk of election fraud and audits, as well as calls to overturn the election, began before the election was officially called for Biden, and were led by Republican elected officials.



**Alger County Republican Party "Official"**

November 7, 2020 · 🌐

"The ongoing turmoil surrounding the recent general election underscores my fervent desire, and our state's need, for a fair and honest result," said Sen. Ed McBroom, R-Vulcan, chairman of the Senate Oversight Committee.



DETROITNEWS.COM

**Michigan Republicans: Election fight 'not over' despite Biden's lead**

"We need to pursue these irregularities and we need people to be patient and ...

After the election was called for Biden, cries of fraud, audits, and changing the results didn't cease. Many groups echoed Trump's calls of a "stolen election" and they grasped at every straw they could for ways to overturn the results. Michigan's elected Republicans joined in this effort, continuing to add fuel to the fire.



**Barry County Republican Party**

November 8, 2020 · 🌐



**Donald J. Trump** ✓

November 8, 2020 · 🌐

"We believe these people are thieves. The big city machines are corrupt. This was a stolen election. Best pollster in Britain wrote this morning that this clearly was a stolen election, that it's impossible to imagine that Biden outran Obama in some of these states. Where it mattered, they stole what they had to steal. Newt Gingrich



**Eaton County Republican Party**

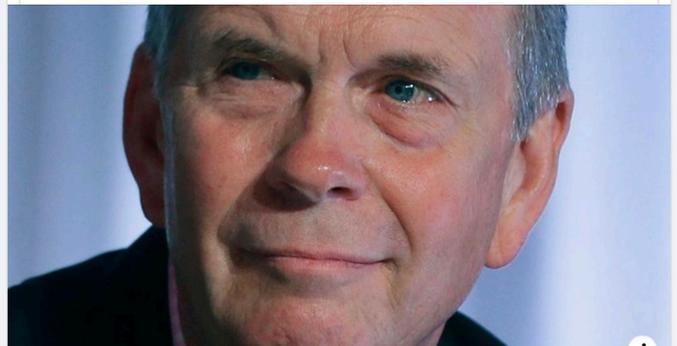
December 10, 2020 · 🌐



**Tim Walberg** ✓

December 10, 2020 · 🌐

Thank you Congressman [Tim Walberg](#). So glad to see a GOP leader stand up!



DETROITNEWS.COM

**Walberg, Bergman signal support for Texas suit seeking to overturn Michigan election results**

“Stop the Steal” events started popping up all over the state and continued for months after the election, culminating in the ultimate “Stop the Steal” event at the Capitol on January 6<sup>th</sup>, which was promoted by county parties, and turned into a violent insurrection.

**Marquette County Republican Party**  
November 13, 2020 · 🌐

Stop the steal rally in Marquette tomorrow at Shopko 2:00 see you there!

**The Bay County Republican Party**  
January 6 · 🌐

Lots of Conservatives in DC there to STOP THE STEAL.



99 11 Comments 18 Shares

**Emmet County Republican Party**  
November 30, 2020 · 🌐

**Alcona County Republicans**  
November 30, 2020 · 🌐

**STOP THE STEAL**  
Michigan GOP House Representative Matt Hall, refuses to Have The Oversight Committee Schedule Hearings On Election Fraud (he Chairs the committee) ...similar to the hearings in Pennsylvania and Arizona. Call Him (517) 373-1787 and . Email him today: MattHall@house.mi.gov Demand he holds a hearing on MI election fraud. Demand the Evidence be heard and seen.

**Charlevoix County Republicans**  
December 27, 2020 · 🌐

The President is calling on all Patriots to be in DC on January 6th to #StopTheSteal. Attend if you can. Lots of carpools and charter busses being organized. Message us if you need help finding one or would like to offer a carpool/bus. Now is the time to take back our country and Stop The Steal. It's now or never! 🇺🇸

**Donald J. Trump** ✓  
December 27, 2020 · 🌐

See you in Washington, DC, on January 6th. Don't miss it. Information to follow!

After the violence at the Capitol failed to result in overturning the results of the election, talk of election fraud, a stolen election, and calls for election audits still didn't stop. County parties still clung to conspiracy theorists preaching election fraud, and began to focus in on audits as the way to prove the election was stolen and overturn the results.

**Republican Party of Kalamazoo County**  
March 21 · 🌐

Was there election fraud in the November election? Join the Calhoun County TEA Party, as they host a Townhall to explore what occurred over the weeks of the November election.

When: Tuesday, March 23, 5:30 to 8:00. (Pizza at 5:30; program at 6 pm). Where: Kingdom Builders Worldwide (Formerly Southeastern Jr. H.S), 50 Spencer St., Battle Creek, MI. 49014

Moderator will be Renk, host of the Live With Renk radio show. Speakers include: Former State Senator Patrick Colbeck, an election challenger at the TCF Center in Detroit. He'll share his observations of the vote-counting chaos.

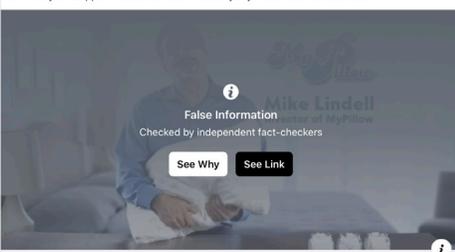
Also speaking: Attorney Matthew DePerno, who brought legal action against Antrim County resulting in the investigation, exposing the Dominion Voting Machine vulnerabilities to fraud, and the switching of 6000 votes from Trump to Biden. Senator John Bizon, who'll provide an update of the current senate business regarding this subject matter.

There will opportunity to ask questions of the panel.

More Information : <https://wbckfm.com/was-there-election-fraud-in-the-.../>

**Gladwin County Republican Party**  
February 8 · 🌐

Ha ha!!!! It didn't take long for FB's hirelings to flag this TRUE video of the election fraud that definitely did happen!! Watch it and share it anyway because it is the TRUTH.



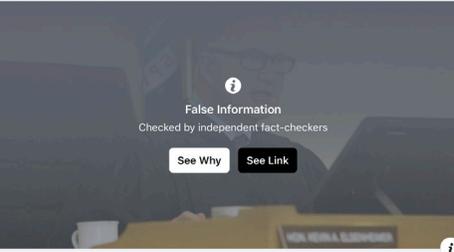
False Information  
Checked by independent fact-checkers

See Why See Link

WHD.COM  
Mike Lindell posts 'Absolute Proof' documentary on 2020 election  
MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell released on Friday a two-hour video documentary titled "Absolu..."

**Muskegon County Republican Party**  
March 16 · 🌐

<https://web.archive.org/.../judge-releases-dominion-.../>



False Information  
Checked by independent fact-checkers

See Why See Link

WEB ARCHIVE ORG  
Judge Releases Dominion Audit Report: System 'Designed' to 'Create Systemic Fraud' - best news here

**Washtenaw County Republicans**  
April 30 · 🌐

Join Washtenaw County Republican Party and help bring him back!! Do to [wash-gop.com](http://wash-gop.com) and click the get involve button. Become a member and get involved.



I'LL TAKE BACK WHAT'S MINE.

ELECTION THEFT

BEN GARRISON  
JOSEPH ROBBIN-IT BIDEN JR.

51 5 Comments 18 Shares

Recently, Republican Party officials have attempted to walk back their assertions of massive voter fraud and a “stolen election,” saying they’re moving on, but their base clearly has no intention of letting go of The Big Lie. Even after the Republican-controlled Senate Oversight Committee released a report declaring what hundreds of audits have already proved, that Michigan’s election was fair and secure, their base seems determined to pursue overturning the election.

**Cheboygan County Republicans**  
June 4 at 11:40 AM

**Election Integrity Fund and Force - Fund Raiser**  
**Decision Day: Come Hear the Evidence**  
**Saturday June 5, 2021 Watch Parties (Preshow; 1:30 Main event 2:00)**  
Michigan is a key battleground state for understanding the 2020 election events. Key national election integrity experts are coming to present the evidence in Antrim county. Speakers include:

Join us at a watch party near you, host your own watch party or watch from your home:

**Watch Parties (doors at 12:30 Antrim program at 2:00)**

- Rochester Christian Church, 4435 Rochester Rd. Rochester Hills, MI
- Shelby Gardens, 50265 Van Dyke Ave. Shelby Township, MI
- Joy Manor, 28999 Joy Rd. Westland, MI

Choose location when registering  
Prices start at \$1 and vary due to costs of facilities & food

**Host Your Own Watch Party**

- Sign up and make your donation of at least \$20
- Invite 10 or more friends and ask for \$15 donation

Goal is every watch party raises at least \$150 to help Election Integrity Fund & Force in actions to protect your vote

**Watch from your home**

- Scan the code to make your donation and gain access

You can also sign up for these options at ElectionIntegrityForce.com, watch from home at a later date or use donate only QR code above make a donation

Michigan Republican Precinct Delegates - Moderated by Republicans  
June 3 at 9:09 AM

**Muskegon County Republican Party**  
June 15 at 11:00 AM

MICHIGAN STATE CAPITOL  
**LET FREEDOM RING**  
MI FREEDOM ROAD RALLY

AMERICA NEEDS FAIR & TRANSPARENT ELECTIONS  
**JUNE 17TH, 2021 • 10AM-2PM**

TRANSFORMATION MICHIGAN & MI CAPITOL HOUSE OF PRAYER HOSTS A  
**PRAYER RALLY**

WE ARE CALLING ON ALL CHRISTIANS AND PATRIOTS TO JOIN US ON OUR STATE CAPITOL LAWN AND BE PART OF A "LET FREEDOM RING" ACCOMPANIED BY A ROAD RALLY WHERE PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE STATE OF MICHIGAN CAN MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD. TRUE "ELECTION INTEGRITY" CAN ONLY BE REALIZED IF "WE THE PEOPLE" ENCOURAGE OUR STATE LEGISLATORS TO TAKE ACTION TO BRING FORTH A TRUE FORENSIC AUDIT. OUR STATE AND NATION HANGS IN THE BALANCE. WE WILL BE PEOPLE OF PRAYER AND ACTION!

SPONSORED BY: TRANSFORMATION MICHIGAN & THE MICHIGAN HOUSE OF PRAYER

WITH A PRAYERFUL & PEACEFUL SPECIAL DELIVERY OF THOUSANDS OF AFFIDAVITS REQUESTING A FORENSIC AUDIT

**Alcona County Republicans**  
June 27 at 5:57 PM

Contact your Legislators and demand a Forensic Audit. Learn more here: <https://letsfixstuff.org/>

**Many of my colleagues support conducting a forensic audit. There's more support than you may realize but more to go! We need 56 votes in the House** 🇺🇸

**Steve Carra**  
June 23 at 1:30 PM

It's time for a forensic audit of the 2020 November election! 🇺🇸

**Gladwin County Republican Party**  
June 23 at 10:38 AM

Can you believe this??our own GOP Senators said this:  
'As for those who spread unfounded conspiracy theories or false information, the committee is also recommending that Attorney General Dana Nessel consider investigating them'... **See More**

WXYZ.COM  
**Senate Committee finds 'no evidence' of voter fraud in Michigan during 2020 election**

# Conclusion

While some Republican Party officials and lawmakers have begun expressing frustration at their party's unwillingness to let go of The Big Lie, they have only themselves to blame. From the very beginning, Republican elected and party officials have been a part of driving this conspiracy theory, often throwing fuel on the fire with vague remarks about the possibility of fraud or hacking.

The state's legislative leaders announced a joint hearing shortly after the election because of a supposed need to "ensure the integrity of our state elections." Four Michigan Republican congressmen signed onto a legal brief in December to back a Texas lawsuit seeking to invalidate Michigan's election results. Now-co-Chair of the Michigan Republican Party MeShawn Maddock and her husband Rep. Matt Maddock arranged for buses to take groups to the Capitol on January 6th, an event that turned into a riot intended to overturn the election, which Hillsdale County Republican Party Vice-chairman attended while allegedly carrying a gun, and which Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey was later caught calling a hoax. Marian Sheridan, grassroots vice-chair of the Michigan Republican Party encouraged people to sign affidavits demanding a statewide audit at the conspiracy-filled "Decision Day" event in Antrim County as recently as the start of June.

On June 23rd, the GOP-led Senate Oversight Committee produced a report saying there is no evidence of voter fraud, but Michigan Republicans still aren't letting go of The Big Lie. In the wake of the report, Rep. Daire Rendon released a statement saying she had evidence of systemic voter fraud, although she did not provide that evidence. Rep. Steve Carra has introduced a bill calling for a so-called "forensic audit"

of the 2020 election, and his bill has been backed by Rep. Robert Bezotte.

In addition to lawmakers refusing to get on board with their own party's supposed new narrative, and in stark contrast to their online efforts to garner support for their recent slate of anti-voter bills, there appears to be little attempt by the Michigan Republican Party to push out the Senate Oversight Committee's 2020 election report findings to their base. A week after its release, only a handful of county groups have shared it, and only so they could express outrage and conspiracy-laden pushback.

So what is the result of all this? Eight months after the election, we are still fighting anti-voter bills based on the idea of ensuring "election integrity." This two-faced language serves to reassure those in their base who believe The Big Lie wholeheartedly that these lawmakers and party officials agree that the results of the election weren't fair—which is why they need to restrict voting rights—while simultaneously allowing those same Republican lawmakers and party officials to save face in the media with those who know the myth that the election was stolen is exactly what we've come to call it: a big lie.

In the wake of both their blatant and wink-wink efforts to push The Big Lie, Michigan Republicans are left with a base that won't leave 2020 behind, but all Michiganders, regardless of political affiliation, continue to be affected by their misinformation. The Michigan Republican Party continues to push legislation based on public sentiment surrounding lies that they themselves have debunked, and as a result, voting rights in Michigan are under attack, and all Michiganders are at risk of losing their right to vote.

Michigan Republicans and The Big Lie:  
*How Michigan Republican County Parties  
are still hanging onto the myth of election fraud.*

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