

TBWS Episode 200 – Cleta Mitchell

Announcer ([00:04](#)):

Welcome to the Bill Walton Show featuring conversations with leaders, entrepreneurs, artists, and thinkers, fresh perspectives on money, culture, politics, and human flourishing. Interesting people, interesting things.

Bill Walton ([00:24](#)):

Welcome to the Bill Walton Show. I'm Bill Walton. What we want to get into in this episode is to show why we all need to get involved with how our elections are conducted. Election process isn't a very sexy topic, but getting how we vote right is essential, especially if we want to preserve our democratic election system and keep our republic. Using the pretext of COVID, a web of well-funded organizations working with Democrat lawmakers and partisan judges systematically changed state election laws in 2020. No matter what word you use to characterize it, the election process was massively tilted to favor the Democrat candidates, including Joe Biden.

([01:13](#)):

Joining me to talk about what's at stake in 2022, which is right around the corner, and what to do about it, is a great American, Cleta Mitchell, who has spent a lifetime fighting for free and fair elections, calling out the left's tactics, and encouraging Americans to take an active role in their local elections. She's a senior legal fellow at the Conservative Partnership Institute and leads the Election Integrity Network there and hosts a terrific podcast, Who's Counting. Cleta practices what she calls political law, which includes election campaign, election law, campaign finance law, there's a whole list here, lobbying regulations, financial disclosures, ethics rules, basically the business and regulation of politics and policy. Cleta, welcome. Delighted to have you.

Cleta Mitchell ([02:05](#)):

Thank you so much, Bill. It's nice to be with you. Thank you for having me.

Bill Walton ([02:10](#)):

We all know what's at stake in 2022. We've been talking about existential elections now for several cycles, but I think this is a very big one. We're all very concerned that we have a free and fair election coming up in about a month and a half. To recap, what happened in 2020 that so radically changed how Americans vote?

Cleta Mitchell ([02:35](#)):

Well, gosh, there's a lot to unpack there, Bill. Let me just say this. Voting has already started in multiple states, including Virginia which has 45 days of early voting. Absentee ballots have been sent out all over the country. So we no longer have Election Day. We have election two months. We have election season. That's something that the left, with the complicit help of Republicans who have unwittingly voted for things like these massive extensions of early voting and voting by mail, no excuse absentee voting, so that our election process has essentially been wrenched away from its moorings. For a hundred years, election administration had been working to protect the secret ballot to make sure that people could vote without undue influence influencing their vote. There were ward [inaudible 00:03:43], there were no secret ballots. The Australian ballot was the genesis of the secret ballot, and that didn't come to the United States until the late 19th, early 20th century.

Bill Walton ([03:50](#)):

The Australian ballot, what was the name?

Cleta Mitchell ([03:52](#)):

It's called the Australian ballot. They were the first to have a secret ballot. Up until then, people, either in New England, they stood up and said who they were voting for in town hall meetings and in the big cities [inaudible 00:04:08].

Bill Walton ([04:08](#)):

As a former penal colony, maybe they had some-

Cleta Mitchell ([04:12](#)):

I don't know, but it is interesting. The point is, the left has systematically over the last decades spent literally billions of dollars. Go to the Capital Research Center website. They have lots of information about all the money that's been spent by the left. Then they took that to whole new levels in 2020 to take the laws that they hadn't been able to get changed in the legislature and to basically sue and settle lawsuits against... For instance, I'll give you an example, multiple suits filed in North Carolina. Well, guess who's supposed to be defending the law in North Carolina? The attorney general who is a left-wing Democrat. So they sue the state Election Board controlled by Democrats because whoever has the governor's office controls the election board defended by somebody who doesn't really defend the suits. Then they basically just concede. Marc Elias, he's the great mastermind-

Bill Walton ([05:13](#)):

Marc Elias, isn't he George Soros's lawyer?

Cleta Mitchell ([05:16](#)):

George Soros gave him \$80 million or \$100 million to start this process several years ago. They have 40 lawyers. They have a litigation network that we can only envy. So, yes, 2020 was a lawless election. It was an election conducted not in accordance with the law, and what laws there were they didn't follow. And they upended a lot of the laws. You're right, your reference to a partisan judiciary. I got to tell you, if there's one thing I'm really worried about, not only the election system, I'm worried about our judicial system because it's become so partisan and not in our favor. But I don't think they should be partisan one way or the other. I think they should just follow the law, but they don't do that.

Bill Walton ([06:04](#)):

[inaudible 00:06:06].

Cleta Mitchell ([06:07](#)):

I'll just say this one last thing. I just want to say this one last thing. When people ask me, "Was the 2020 election stolen?" here's what I say, it was a lawless election. For whatever reason, nobody has conducted any investigation of fraud.

Bill Walton ([06:22](#)):

Well, we haven't been allowed to.

Cleta Mitchell ([06:24](#)):

Not allowed to. No law enforcement. There's one law enforcement [inaudible 00:06:28]-

Bill Walton ([06:27](#)):

We're not allowed to talk about it.

Cleta Mitchell ([06:28](#)):

We can't talk about it. They kick us off everything and send the FBI after us. There was one law enforcement officer in America who did an investigation of voter fraud in 2020. It was the Racine County Sheriff's Office that investigated voter fraud in nursing homes in Racine, Wisconsin, and confirmed that indeed they voted illegally. The residents didn't vote. Somebody voted for them. And that's it. Of course, was anybody prosecuted? No, because the Democrat DA wouldn't do it, wouldn't take it on.

([07:05](#)):

But I will say this, I know what happened in Georgia. I've studied the audit from Arizona. I've seen the data from Wisconsin. I can tell you in those three states, this is a true and correct statement, there are more illegal votes that were cast and counted and included in the certified totals for each of those states in the margin of difference between President Trump and Joe Biden. That is likely true as well in Pennsylvania and Michigan. In Pennsylvania, there are 120,000 more votes certified in the presidential election than there are ballots. In Michigan, there are 102,000 more votes certified than there are ballots. And none of those match the number of people who voted.

Bill Walton ([07:48](#)):

Well, I think one of the reasons to win in November in 45 days or so, some of us have written a letter to the Republican leadership saying, "We can't let this go unrecognized, and we need to get serious about conducting some congressional investigations into all this, which we've not been able to do since 2020." So I'm hopeful we get big majorities, and I hope the Republican leadership takes some steps to clear the air.

Cleta Mitchell ([08:19](#)):

I'm not counting on that. Well, I think that's why citizens have [inaudible 00:08:22].

Bill Walton ([08:22](#)):

We've been doing this too long.

Cleta Mitchell ([08:24](#)):

Citizens have to take this into our own hands.

Bill Walton ([08:27](#)):

Give me his history lesson. How did we end up with this crazy system? Back in some good old day, we had a paper ballot. Then we all went to the polling hall on Election Day, and we put our ballot in the box. Then they counted the ballot, and they announced results usually pretty quickly. Didn't the Italians just go to the polls and put a paper ballot in a box? This is Italy. Italy's a mess. But they have a very simple system. How did we go from that to where we are?

Cleta Mitchell ([09:06](#)):

Well, honestly, remember that the left, I cannot even begin to tell you how many leftist organizations funded, by the way, not just by George Soros, but Chris Oechsli from the Capital Research Center says that all of these funders to this major network of left-wing groups in the election space have a common last name, Foundation. You have so many foundations: Ford Foundation, Rockefeller, a zillion foundations. They all have given money. And [inaudible 00:09:38]-

Bill Walton ([09:38](#)):

Oh, we have Zuckerberg, ACLU, League of Women Voters.

Cleta Mitchell ([09:38](#)):

They've given money to really wreck the system. They've basically gone into every aspect of our voting process from, as you say, voting on Election Day. "Oh, no, no, no, no. You can't do that. You have to have early voting." So you have states like Virginia, 45 days of early voting.

Bill Walton ([10:02](#)):

Crazy.

Cleta Mitchell ([10:02](#)):

Now, let me tell you why that's such a bad idea. First of all, we all need to be operating under basically the same set of facts. We all know that things happen. People start paying attention and things happen in the days leading up to the election. But the other thing that is a real problem is you cannot have citizen observation for 45 days, meaningful observation. Our whole election system is based on the notion that we'll have citizens engaged as workers. We should have parody. Many statutes require parody between Democrats and Republicans as poll workers. We have citizen observers who watch so we have transparency. We watch the election process. That's very difficult to do when you have 45 days because people have other lives, and the left knows that. They want to take it all outside away from supervision and protection. And they've done all that.

Bill Walton ([11:01](#)):

But you do believe, and I agree, that grassroots people can overcome all this-

Cleta Mitchell ([11:04](#)):

Oh, yes.

Bill Walton ([11:04](#)):

... if we get people involved.

Cleta Mitchell ([11:04](#)):

Absolutely.

Bill Walton ([11:08](#)):

We can take our destiny into our own hands.

Cleta Mitchell ([11:10](#)):

We can. We have a website called whoscounting.us. I wrote, and it's on our website, it's free, download it, the Citizen's Guide to Building an Election Integrity Infrastructure. Download that. It tells us how to start a local task force, how you can become a presence in your election office, how you can-

Bill Walton ([11:31](#)):

Is this on your website?

Cleta Mitchell ([11:34](#)):

On my website, yes.

Bill Walton ([11:35](#)):

Repeat it again. Let's make sure we get that out there.

Cleta Mitchell ([11:38](#)):

It's www.whoscounting, W-H-O-S-C-O-U-N-T-I-N-G, whoscounting.us, whoscounting.us. We have the Citizen's Guide. We've just published, I think we're up to 20, they're five to seven-minute videos. They're training videos. It's the masterclass in election integrity. It takes each component of the Citizen's Guide and has about five minutes of "Here's how you do that." I will tell you two things. It made a difference in Virginia in 2021. Having thousands of citizens engaged as poll workers and poll watchers made a big difference. We didn't see some of the shenanigans that we saw in Virginia in 2020. Trust me, there were shenanigans. Now we've expanded that all over the country where we have statewide coalitions in a number of states of groups that meet weekly on the phone, on Zoom. They're building local task forces, and they're recruiting people. Guess what? The left hates it. They hate it. So I know we must be over the target.

Bill Walton ([12:54](#)):

We must like it because we're doing something right. You've got a coalition of groups that are working on this. So if somebody listening or watching of this doesn't really want to go it alone, we've got Heritage Action. We've got the Tea Party Patriots. Who else is organizing people in the states?

Cleta Mitchell ([13:13](#)):

I don't know of anybody else that's organizing the way we're organizing. I work with them. I work with them. Heritage Action focuses primarily on state legislation, and they take the lead on that, which is really important. Tea Party Patriots has helped us enormously as we have conducted these summits. Jenny Beth Martin has gone through the states and gone around the state and held training sessions. I'll tell you, the Virginia Institute for Public Policy, Lynn Taylor, she is coordinating... We're all following the model that they put together in Virginia in 2021. So she's giving support to these state coalitions. We have national working groups. We have a national working group on teaching people about absentee voting and the US Post Office. If you go to our website, www.whoscounting-

Bill Walton ([14:07](#)):

[inaudible 00:14:07] that we've got the US Post Office-

Cleta Mitchell ([14:09](#)):

... find out-

Bill Walton ([14:14](#)):

I'm sorry. Give us the address one more time.

Cleta Mitchell ([14:17](#)):

Yeah, www.whoscounting.us.

Bill Walton ([14:23](#)):

www.whoscounting.us. Well, the idea we've got the post office involved in our elections is just stunning.

Cleta Mitchell ([14:29](#)):

The biggest precinct in the country. The post office is the biggest.

Bill Walton ([14:33](#)):

One of the points I think we need to make clear is that elections are still primarily a local and state-

Cleta Mitchell ([14:39](#)):

Oh, they're totally local-

Bill Walton ([14:40](#)):

... business.

Cleta Mitchell ([14:40](#)):

All voting takes place at the local level. That's why we have to have people at the local level.

Bill Walton ([14:46](#)):

It may seem tedious, but going down, poll watching, doing all the things that people need to do to watch the bad guys is essential, and so we need to participate. But there's some threats to this. Didn't President Biden issue, I'm looking at this, an executive order in March of 2021? This is really chilling. He directed every federal agency to develop and submit a plan about how that agency was going to use its program to register and mobilize voters in 2022. Of course, we know he means Democrat voters. What's happening with this?

Cleta Mitchell ([15:25](#)):

Well, I've been working with a working group on that. Russ Vought, from Citizens Renewing America, Russ used to be at Heritage Action and then he went into the administration and became President Trump's director of the Office of Management and Budget. So Russ's organization, Citizens Renewing America, has taken the lead on fighting the Biden executive order. In fact, I just saw today a letter that 17 attorneys general have signed to the White House demanding that he rescind the order. They're not going to do that. But I think that might be in preparation for litigation.

Bill Walton ([16:07](#)):

We don't know the state of play though. Haven't we [inaudible 00:16:08].

Cleta Mitchell ([16:08](#)):

We don't because they won't... We filed FOIA requests, and they won't turn over these plans that you just read about. Those are public documents, and they won't turn them over.

Bill Walton ([16:17](#)):

This is being run by our old friend, Susan Rice.

Cleta Mitchell ([16:19](#)):

Correct. That's exactly right. She's the one who's running the whole program. They're handing out grants of our tax money to qualified groups. Well, guess what you have to do to be qualified? You have to be acceptable to Susan Rice, which means you have to be a lefty.

Bill Walton ([16:42](#)):

I'm always excited when I talk with you, although I'm also sort of feeling a little overwhelmed sometimes. The other thing the Democrats have successfully done is they've gotten a lot of federal funding to support what they're doing. We tend to be hardy citizens doing it for free.

Cleta Mitchell ([17:00](#)):

Well, it's true. But the fact is, it can become overwhelming and daunting. Sometimes I would think, does this really matter? Getting people engaged and going to election offices and being at the meetings, reading the minutes, really being engaged 24/7, not just at election time, although that's really important, but 365 days a year we need to watch what they're doing because the left is there. If you think they're not there, they are there. Just like parents going to school board meetings, we need to be there, too. But the left and the full force of the Democrats and the left and the media have come down on me and on our election integrity work and our summits. What does that tell me? That tells me-

Bill Walton ([17:52](#)):

You're doing the right thing.

Cleta Mitchell ([17:52](#)):

... we're doing the right thing. In my view, when they come after what we're doing, double down, double down. It means we're on the right track. So I'm begging people to sign up to be a poll watcher, be a poll worker. Wherever you are, there's a place for you to do that, so you should do that. If you want to be a Democratic poll worker, the DNC has a site. This is not a partisan issue.

Bill Walton ([18:15](#)):

Yeah, have [inaudible 00:18:17].

Cleta Mitchell ([18:16](#)):

The RNC has a sign up. We're going to have that on our website in the next week, the sign up, both the Democrat and the Republican sign up. Do that. We need you. Uncle Sam, "We need you. I want you."

Bill Walton ([18:31](#)):

Your podcast is terrific. You had Hans von Spakovsky.

Cleta Mitchell ([18:33](#)):

Hans von Spakovsky. It's a mouthful.

Bill Walton ([18:39](#)):

He needs to shorten his name.

Cleta Mitchell ([18:40](#)):

He's Russian.

Bill Walton ([18:43](#)):

It might be briefly useful to touch on what he's got there. He's got a guide to what the individual states' landscape looks like in terms of voting process. What's that about?

Cleta Mitchell ([18:55](#)):

Well, they spent a year... In 2021, Heritage, under Hans's leadership, analyzed the election codes of all 50 states and the District of Columbia and against a certain... here's the gold standard, and then looked at each state's laws and came up with a scorecard. Now, they call it the Election Integrity Scorecard. I told them that's not the right name. It should just be the Election Law Scorecard. Because you can have the best laws in the world, but if the election administrators ignore the law, then you don't have integrity. So it takes both. He's analyzed the laws of all the 50 states and the District of Columbia. I urge people, I send them there. If you want to know what needs to be done in your state in terms of what is missing in the election code, just go there. They've already done the work for you.

Bill Walton ([19:47](#)):

Well, that-

Cleta Mitchell ([19:48](#)):

There are a lot of grassroots groups around the country who are preparing for the next legislative sessions. Like in Georgia, even though they passed a law in 2021 that the left hated, and remember all that brouhaha, there are citizens there working on additional changes as soon as the legislature comes back in January. So it's happening all over the country. We have to regain the territory that has been ceded to the left in our election codes, and we have to get it back.

Bill Walton ([20:22](#)):

I think that sounds like a final word. I think that's great. What else would you add to that? I just want to add the list of things. You can go onto that website. You want to know what you need. You need to verify voting rolls. You need voter ID requirements. You have signature verification for mail-in ballots. There's a whole list of things that are the gold standard for a free and fair election, a lawful election. I think that's where we got to... If you're talking with your friends about elections, that's the place to go to know how to get it right.

Cleta Mitchell ([20:55](#)):

Well, and I will tell you that I think that there are even some changes that I probably need to talk to Hans about that I hadn't thought about except for the experience I've witnessed this year. I will tell you, even though the laws may require verification of identity of those who vote by mail, because of the sheer volume of mail ballots, there is very little meaningful verification of identity of voters who vote by mail. That just isn't happening. I don't think it can happen. That's why we need to shrink the percentage of votes that are cast outside the supervision and protection of the in-person voting. That's going to be a heavy lift to explain to people why... It might sound good. But in reality, the more people vote in absentia, the harder it is to make sure that there's no fraud.

Bill Walton ([22:01](#)):

I want to wrap up. We've got five weeks till the November election. What should people be doing?

Cleta Mitchell ([22:06](#)):

Well, number one, the first day that you can vote in person, go vote in person. Claim your vote. Do that. Vote in person the first day it opens because we had too many people who showed up to vote in 2020 who were told, "Oh, Mrs. Jones, our records show you've already voted." So go vote in person the first day you can. Do not vote by mail. Just go claim your vote. The second thing is sign up to be a poll watcher. Sign up to be a poll worker. The election offices are looking for people. They may not say they are, but they may not think they want anybody who's not a Democrat. That's a big issue we're having. The RNC is actually suing jurisdictions over that right now. Get involved. Go watch the polls. Go be on an absentee ballot adjudication team. There are so many roles, so much work to do. Sign up for our website, download the Citizen's Guide, and it'll tell you everything you need to do.

Bill Walton ([23:02](#)):

Great. Cleta, Cleta Mitchell, thank you. She runs the Election Integrity Network and has a terrific podcast, Who's Counting. Cleta, hope to have you back later when we talk about all the good election outcomes in November.

Cleta Mitchell ([23:20](#)):

I hope so.

Bill Walton ([23:20](#)):

Yeah, okay.

Cleta Mitchell ([23:20](#)):

We're going to document everything we see this year. Thank you so much for having me, Bill.

Bill Walton ([23:22](#)):

Thanks. Talk soon. I hope you enjoyed the conversation. Want more? Click the subscribe button or head over to the billwaltonshow.com to choose from over a hundred episodes. You can also learn more about our guests on our interesting people page. And send us your comments. We read every one, and your thoughts help us guide the show. If it's easier for you to listen, check out our podcast page and subscribe there. In return, we'll keep you informed about what's true, what's right, and what's next. Thanks for joining.