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**Pittsburgh Post-**  
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The Trump reelection campaign sued Pennsylvania state and county elections officials Monday, saying mail ballot drop boxes were unconstitutional in the way they were used in the June 2 primary election and asking a federal court to bar them in November. "Defendants have sacrificed the sanctity of in-person voting at the altar of unmonitored mail-in voting and have exponentially enhanced the threat that fraudulent or otherwise ineligible ballots will be cast and counted in the forthcoming general election," says the suit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

Instances of voter fraud are rare, and there is virtually no evidence of successful widespread conspiracy to commit fraud via mail ballots. (An alleged effort in Paterson, N.J., last month quickly raised flags, and last week the state attorney general charged four men in the scheme.) The lawsuit says mail ballot drop boxes violate the state and federal constitutions because elections officials are making decisions outside of what the law allows, taking the power to make law away from the legislature. The suit also argues that state and county elections officials set up different rules and policies across the state, creating a patchwork system that violates constitutional guarantees of equal protection.

The Republican lawsuit comes as President Donald Trump has escalated his attacks on voting by mail, raising unfounded claims of voter fraud and invoking conspiracy theories about foreign interference in mail voting. While voting by mail generally has not been shown to benefit one party over the other, the issue has become partisan. In Pennsylvania most Democrats voted by mail in the primary, while most Republicans voted in person.

Joining the Trump campaign in the lawsuit are the Republican National Committee; Republican U.S. Reps. Glenn Thompson, Mike Kelly, John Joyce, and Guy Reschenthaler, all from Pennsylvania; and two Republican voters who want to serve as poll watchers in November. The defendants are Kathy Boockvar, Pennsylvania's secretary of state, and all 67 counties' boards of elections. The Pennsylvania Department of State, which oversees elections, declined to comment.

Democrats immediately accused Republicans of attempting to suppress votes. "Donald Trump and Washington Republicans are trying to suppress the voices of Pennsylvanians because they know the easier it is for everyday people to vote, the more likely it is that they will lose," Sinceré Harris, executive director of the state Democratic Party, said in a statement. Mail ballot drop boxes are largely new to the state. Pennsylvania long had a restrictive absentee ballot system in which only about 5% of votes were cast by mail. But a new law allowed any voter to request a mail ballot beginning with this year's primary. The coronavirus pandemic then fueled a massive surge in mail voting.

But it soon became clear that county elections offices were struggling to keep up with voter demand for mail ballots, and counties scrambled to set up drop box locations. Because Pennsylvania law requires mail ballots to be received by county elections officials by 8 p.m. on an election day, the idea behind the drop boxes was to allow voters to hand-deliver their ballots and know they had been received on time.

The lawsuit says this violates state law because ballots are supposed to be directly delivered to county elections offices. "Permitting absentee and mail-in ballots of nondisabled electors to be collected at locations other than the offices of the county boards of elections and/or through 'drop boxes' and other unmonitored and/or unsecured means and to be counted when not cast in the manner mandated by the Election Code allows illegal absent and mail-in voting, ballot harvesting, and other fraud to occur and/or go undetected, and will result in dilution of validly cast ballots," the suit says.

It also says some counties violated state election law by counting mail ballots that were sent without secrecy envelopes, which are placed inside mailing envelopes and help keep ballots anonymous. In addition, the lawsuit argues

the state should allow voters to serve as poll watchers in counties other than where they live.

The lawsuit is the latest in a series of legal challenges to electoral systems in Pennsylvania and elsewhere, as Democrats and Republicans try to change the rules before November. Democrats and liberal-leaning groups [have sought to extend mail ballot deadlines in Pennsylvania](#), for example, as well as other voting expansions in other states.

While all elections are messy, complicated affairs, administering them this year has proven to be a monumental task, with Pennsylvania officials contending with new voting machines, high-interest presidential election turnout, the coronavirus, and the most significant election law changes in decades. The ongoing litigation means some details of how the November election is run may yet change in the four months before Election Day. That could have a significant impact on how votes are cast and counted. Even small differences matter. In 2016, Trump won the state by 44,000 votes, or less than 1% of the votes cast. – *Philadelphia Inquirer*

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To help it stay ahead of data demands driven by the early days of the pandemic, Comcast has accelerated capacity upgrades on its core and regional networks and has fast-tracked a relatively new AI-powered system called "Octave" to boost the performance of its access network. As network usage spiked in March and April as millions stayed at home, the operator more than tripled the number of network enhancements compared to the same timeframe a year earlier, Comcast EVP and Chief Network Officer Jan Hofmeyr explained in this [blog post](#).

Of note, Comcast added 1,700 new 100-gigabit links during this time, primarily between the backbone and its regional networks. Comcast has also taken advantage of the almost 700,000 diagnostic speed tests it conducts daily to determine which areas were seeing the greatest demand due to COVID-19. Per Comcast's [latest stats](#), the operator has seen a 32% increase in upstream traffic and a 11% jump in downstream traffic during the pandemic. "We basically added in three months the capacity we were planning to add for the entire year ... We believe we have the capacity we need for the rest of this year," Hofmeyr said in an interview.

Despite the accelerated addition of capacity in recent months, he also expects Comcast to return to a regular cadence under which it typically doubles the capacity of its network every 2.5 years. "We've always designed the network to be ahead of the traffic trends," he said. "More importantly, we design it to easily expand if we need to."

Hofmeyr said Comcast, which has deployed more than 33,000 route miles of new fiber in its core network since 2017, has been able to deploy that added capacity in the near term without disrupting service. Although Comcast needed people on the ground at the facilities to install new line cards and other physical equipment, it steered traffic around those areas during the upgrade process. Comcast made those capacity updates in an accelerated, compressed timeline, but was able to replicate that recipe throughout its network, Hofmeyr said.

With traffic now stabilizing, plateauing and even coming down in some instances, Hofmeyr said his team's attention is turning toward automation and the enhanced use of AI technologies in Comcast's core networks. Meanwhile, Comcast has been ramping up its use of AI technologies in its access networks. That's centered on the rollout of a relatively new platform, called Octave, that enables the MSO to rapidly pinpoint network anomalies and noise-activated issues by polling and analyzing anonymized data from gateways and modems. In addition to utilizing that data to locate and fix network impairments, Comcast is using it to boost the efficiency and performance of the access network.

With respect to data performance on the access network, Octave enables Comcast to dynamically set the maximum modulation profiles of individual cable modems based on current network conditions. That's a big change from having to drop all of the modems to a lowest common denominator modulation profile if just one modem in a given area is not capable of supporting a higher modulation due to noise or other plant conditions.

The feedback from Octave, for example, helps to ensure that modems or gateways that are capable of humming along at 4096-QAM can utilize that higher and more data-efficient modulation profile even if another modem in the group has to dip down to, say, 256-QAM because of LTE interference or some other type of network impairment that can cause noise to bleed back into the HFC network.

To enable this in real time with Octave, Comcast feeds anonymous polling data from tens of millions of devices on its access network to an AI decision engine. This engine analyzes the information and then sends commands to the cable modem termination system to dynamically set the highest supported modulation profiles of individual modems on the network. "We want to be able to optimize the delivery, based on the actual edge reality," Elad Nafshi, SVP of next generation access networks at Comcast, explained. "Now I can open up a whole bunch more capacity that is optimized by the time of day and optimized to the customer that I can act on in real time and ... fluctuate that delivery to ensure [customers] are getting the maximum efficiency down to the house."

Tony Werner, Comcast's president of technology, product and Xperience, [told Fast Company](#) that a version of Octave deployed prior to the pandemic increased download capacity across its network by 36%. When the pandemic hit, Comcast fast-tracked a version of Octave centered on the upstream. That resulted in a 20% increase in upstream capacity, the report said. Octave is "not just automating what smart engineers can do. It's going to places where they just couldn't process that amount of information and come up with solutions quick enough to do what [Octave] does," Werner told the publication.

Nafshi said Octave has helped Comcast manage and optimize the four carriers it's running in the spectrum allocated to its DOCSIS 3.0-based upstream. (Comcast has not yet launched OFDMA-based DOCSIS 3.1 upstream channels.) Additionally, the AI-powered system has put Comcast in position to eventually add a fifth and possibly a sixth channel in the lower part of the 5MHz-42MHz spectrum band that's been set aside for the upstream. "Not only are we making better use of the four upstreams we had before, we're able to add additional upstream channels and, therefore, add additional upstream capacity," Nafshi said. -- *LightReading*

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Netflix Inc. said it would shift 2% of its cash holdings to banks and credit unions that primarily serve Black communities to improve these financial institutions' ability to offer loans to people and businesses. Many companies have moved to support organizations focused on social justice, education and racial inequality in the wake of nationwide protests sparked by the May 25 killing of George Floyd while in Minneapolis police custody. Nike Inc. and its Jordan Brand subsidiary earlier this month pledged \$140 million [to support such organizations](#).

Netflix itself has previously committed to donating \$5 million to organizations supporting Black artists as well as advocacy groups and businesses. The streaming service is now moving beyond donations, opting instead to take \$100 million of its \$5 billion in cash holdings—which it keeps in about 30 banks—to institutions serving Black communities. In a blog post Tuesday, Netflix said Black-owned or led financial institutions represent only 1% of the country's commercial-banking assets, according to FDIC data—a lack of access to capital resulting in a disadvantage. "It's pretty stark how undercapitalized some of these financial institutions are," said Netflix Chief Financial Officer Spencer Neumann in an interview. Racism, he added,

"creates these unequal economic opportunities, and capital isolation is one of them."

Netflix said it was already in the process of reallocating some of its cash before the death of Mr. Floyd but moved quickly to put the plan into motion after the racial-justice protests started. Netflix said \$35 million of its \$100 million commitment will be placed in two vehicles. The Black Economic Initiative, a newly created fund managed by the nonprofit Local Initiatives Support Corporation, will receive \$25 million to invest in Black financial institutions that serve low- and moderate-income communities.

Another \$10 million will go to the Hope Credit Union to "fuel economic opportunity in underserved communities across the Deep South," Netflix said. The company expects to allocate the remaining \$65 million before the end of the year. "It's really critical that leading voices like Netflix say it's important to invest in these institutions so we can then reinvest in these communities," Hope Chief Executive Bill Bynum said. "We will generate hundreds of mortgages, business loans, getting people out of debt traps with these resources. It is a game changer."

The idea came from Aaron Mitchell, a member of Netflix's executive recruiting team. Mr. Mitchell said Netflix had already been discussing diversity recruitment and the makeup of its top leadership, and the barriers to capital in Black communities arose in these conversations. Mr. Mitchell said he was inspired by the book "The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap" and reached out to its author, Mehrsa Baradaran, for guidance. Ms. Baradaran said she hoped Netflix's move will send a message to other corporations that "they can do something with capital and not just make statements on social media."

Mr. Mitchell said he brought up his idea to Mr. Neumann, who gave a thumbs-up. He then sent a proposal to Netflix Chief Executive Reed Hastings, who signed off on it. Mr. Hastings and his wife, Patty Quillin, said this month they were donating \$120 million to historically Black colleges and universities, with funds split among Morehouse and Spelman Colleges and the United Negro College Fund. -- *Wall Street Journal*

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PBS 12 (WHYY-TV) viewers who use an antenna should re-scan their televisions before July 3 to continue receiving the channel. The Philadelphia-area television station PBS-12 will change frequencies by Friday. Viewers who use an antenna to receive local channels will have to re-scan their televisions in order to keep watching PBS 12. To re-scan, go to the menu page on any television, select 'channels,' 'antenna,' or a similar subsection and click 'scan,' 'autotune,' or other similar options. The television will take several minutes to process. The FCC created a video with more detailed instructions.

No other channels will be affected by the frequency change. Cable and satellite subscribers do not need to re-scan to continue receiving the channel. The FCC is changing the frequency to make space on the airwaves for new technology like 5G and other mobile services. – **Bucks County Courier Times**

