

America: Land of Shady Elections

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By Carl Gibson

If a country proclaimed itself as the standard-bearer for democracy around the world, while a son of one of the country's presidential candidates owned voting machines in a state known for swinging elections, would you take that country's claims seriously? Would you believe that nation's claims of love for democracy if a team of UN observers were sent to that nation's polling locations on Election Day to monitor a hyper-partisan voter intimidation group?

We've all heard of the Golden Rule — no, not the “do unto others” law that Jesus spoke of in the New Testament — I'm referring to the more well-known “He who has the gold, makes the rules” one. In this case, the one with the gold is [Tagg Romney](#), son of presidential candidate Mitt Romney. Tagg also recently made headlines after saying he wanted to “[take a swing](#)” at the President of the United States for calling his dad a liar.

Tagg is [managing partner](#) of Solamere Capital, which is a subsidiary of financial firms owned by [Allen Stanford](#), a guy doing 110 years behind bars for an \$8 billion Ponzi scheme. Solamere is tied to many private equity-owned firms, one of which is HIG Capital's [Hart Intercivic](#), a voting machine company whose products will be used in Ohio on Nov. 6. This is worse than when the owner of Diebold, who [makes easily-hackable voting machines, promised](#) to deliver Ohio to George W. Bush in 2004.

In a nutshell, the budding vulture capitalist Republican son of the vulture capitalist Republican running for president is part-owner of voting machines in a state that is a must-win for any Republican seeking the presidency. By any reasonable standard, this conflict of interest is cause for an investigation by the Federal Election Commission, the FBI, and is a national security concern for the Department of Homeland Security, all of which have a mandate to ensure that vote counts will not be tampered with on Election Day.

When you combine this troublesome detail with the many new unfair voter ID laws [around the United States](#) that are estimated to disenfranchise millions of [Democratic-leaning](#) voters on election day, this election could very well be a farce. Far-right politicians in [Ohio](#), [Virginia](#), [Arizona](#) and [Florida](#) have done their very best to suppress the Democratic vote by purging voter rolls, giving Latino voters wrong information on when to vote, and even [adjusting early voting rules](#) to favor Republican-leaning counties over Democratic-leaning counties.

The threat of a farce election is so great that lawyers for the ACLU, NAACP and other advocates have asked UN observers to come to the beacon of democracy, the United States, and [monitor our elections](#). This is in response to a Houston-based group called [True The Vote](#) that trains thousands of volunteers in a pledge to stop “voter fraud,” largely through aggressive intimidation tactics. True The Vote's strategy is basically to give copies

of voter rolls to poll-watchers, and encourage them to relentlessly question election officials when someone comes into a polling location whom they don't think should be there. While partisan groups like True The Vote are crying "voter fraud" as their excuse to make it harder for students, seniors, people of color, poor people and other traditionally left-leaning constituencies to go vote, the only acts of [voter fraud](#) that actually occur are [being committed](#) by the [far-right](#).

We need to be just as aggressive in demanding accountability for the crooks who are trying to rig this election in their favor as often as possible, before we're stuck with an illegitimate presidency and arguing over a few hundred votes in rigged courts.

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