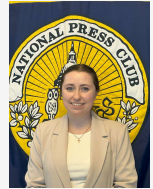




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[What is the plan to prevent the National Guard, ICE, and others from 2026 voting intimidation?](#)

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(Adopted from Transcript of Question by Bob Weiner at MSNBC Live Event, with question taped for YouTube by Ali Velshi and Stephanie Ruhle podcast).

On MSNBC's shows, and programs on other networks, we hear a similar refrain from political leaders: The most important thing everyone can do to reverse the anti-democracy tide is to VOTE, in huge numbers in 2026, and again 2028. Rachel Maddow always runs protest clips from around the country, which are critical to mobilization, but we need more than that.

What is the plan by pro-democracy forces to prevent and protect against what show guests have said is the likelihood of Republican forces sending the National Guard and ICE to intimidate polling places and ballot boxes in 2026? That's the key question -- along with stopping them from gathering ballots after the votes.

Larry Sabato of UVA told Stephanie Ruhl, "You're closing your eyes if you don't speculate" about troops from red states being deployed to suppress the vote in blue states while enhancing their own. With President Trump's rhetoric about the "enemy within" calling cities "training" grounds including to assure what he calls a "fair vote," and trying to push the military generals into his orbit despite their stone faces at the Quantico rally -- you have to ask some questions.

We regularly hear about the problem, but have not heard any concrete plan to counter it effectively. We hear little beyond the need for mass mobilization of protests. There is no guarantee those will stop the voter intimidation and suppression, harassment, detainments, and even ballots -- and people -- from being scooped up. The biggest possible threat is a stop to fair and free elections.

Recent federal court rulings blocking National Guard deployments for immigration enforcement in Oregon and Illinois prove both that overreach is being attempted and that legal remedies can work. The question is whether pro-democracy forces are preparing similar strategies specifically for election protection. Will fences be in place (as the Capitol uses now since Jan 6 for key events) in major voting sites to protect voters and ballots at local voting places?

Are the lawyers ready to surround and do emergency injunctions against the Guard, ICE and their allies? Can they move fast enough to assure the courts allow local law enforcement to protect people from harassment, suppression, and other interference?

Are the DNC and the local parties ready? Are the ACLU and other effective legal organizations ready?

Ty Cobb, Trump's former White House Lawyer, told Stephanie Ruhl on her show, in a remarkable coming out interview, that deploying the Guard for training in blue states "isn't accidental." He said Trump will use section 12406 of the National Guard Act which permits the president to send the Guard if there is an "invasion" and will use the Insurrection Act to give presidential power to use military troops, contrary to the Posse Comitatus Act which bars the military from local law enforcement.

Is anyone ready to do a pre-empt like Oregon and Illinois Attorneys General just did on the Guard? However, this time to get a ruling to block the president from inaccurately declaring a non-existent "emergency" or "invasion" around voting time?

With President Trump declaring Antifa a terrorist group, despite no leadership, has anyone moved to declare the Oathkeepers and Proud Boys as terrorists, who do have organizational structures, the way they proved they were on video January 6? Have pro-democracy advocates taken steps to stop people who participated and were convicted, but pardoned, from new crimes in the 2026 elections? Shouldn't they be watched since nothing stops new convictions if they gather weapons illegally (Some pardoned Jan 6 people have in fact been convicted later for new crimes).

We've heard a lot of good and helpful statements on the shows about the expected danger of the Guard, ICE, Oathkeepers, Proud Boys, and other extreme right groups conducting likely suppression of the upcoming 2026 vote. However democracy forces, crucially, have no strategy to actually stop them. What is the concrete plan? That really is the ball game. It appears that is where the administration intends those agencies and organizations to go, with the training and planning clearly occurring now. If we can answer and act, timed appropriately and with sophistication to ensure non-violence, we'll accomplish what Al Sharpton declares, "We gotcha."

Robert Weiner is former spokesman in the Clinton and Bush White Houses and for 4-Star Gen. Barry McCaffrey, the US House Government Operations Committee, and was senior staff for Congressmen John Conyers, Charles Rangel, Claude Pepper, Ed Koch, and Sen. Ted Kennedy. He is a winner of the National Press Club President's Award for his ongoing program recruiting young journalists to co-author opinion articles in major papers (1000+ articles in major papers).

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