

2020

# In Nevada, A Corrupt Cash-For-Votes Scheme Is Hiding In Plain Sight

*In tribal areas, Native American nonprofits illegally offered gift cards, electronics, and other 'prizes' in an effort to get out the vote—for Joe Biden.*

It should surprise no one that Nevada has problems with election security and voter fraud, especially after the state mailed an absentee ballot to every registered voter this year whether he requested one or not, then received back more than eight times as many mail-in ballots as they did in 2016. That's part of the reason Republicans in Nevada **filed another lawsuit on Tuesday** alleging widespread voter fraud and irregularities.

The mass mailing of unsolicited ballots is of course a recipe for fraud, even more so in a state where the voter rolls contain tens of thousands of people who haven't voted or updated their records in more than a decade. This is how you get dead people voting, as we **reported here at The Federalist** and as Tucker Carlson **noted last week**.

But there's another, less sensational but perhaps more consequential election scandal in Nevada that hasn't yet made headlines, even though it's been hiding in plain sight for weeks now. Under the guise of supposedly nonprofit, nonpartisan get-out-the-vote campaigns, Native American voter advocacy groups in Nevada handed out gift cards, electronics, clothing, and other items to voters in tribal areas, in many cases documenting the exchange of ballots for "prizes" on their own Facebook pages, sometimes even while wearing official Joe Biden campaign gear.

Simply put, this is illegal. Offering voters *anything* of value in exchange for their vote is **a violation of federal election law**, and in some cases punishable by up to two years in prison and as much as **\$10,000 in fines**. That includes raffles, free food, free T-shirts, and so on.

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Yet the Nevada Native Vote Project's **Fac** receiving something of value in exchange absentee ballot. In **one post**, two men display **425** visa gift cards they received after

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dropping off absentee ballots, presumably to someone who works for the Nevada Native Vote Project.



In another Facebook post, a spokeswoman for the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Bethany Sam, [appears on video inside a polling place](#) offering T-shirts, stickers, jewelry, and thousands of dollars in gift cards to voters. Some of these items appear to be part of a raffle, which Sam says voters can enter in person or by emailing or texting a picture of their absentee ballot, while other items are offered to anyone who shows up in person and votes.

Sam appears in [another video](#) wearing a Biden-Harris campaign mask with the Biden campaign bus behind her, talking about how important Native votes are to “swing” Washoe County (Biden won the county, [Donald Trump Just Won The Presidential Election](#)). In [another](#) video, she tells viewers about [polling places](#) with free Biden cookies. All these videos

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Reno-Sparks Indian Colony. (I called Sam to ask about this, and about the illegal raffles, but she never called me back.)

Raffling off gift cards—the equivalent of a cash giveaway—appears to have been widespread among Native American communities in Nevada. The Nevada Native Vote Project’s Facebook page lists dozens of gift card winners by name, all of them rewarded simply for their vote, as well as **advertisements for the raffles** and information on how to enter.



In addition to the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, other Native groups throughout Nevada—**Elko Indian Colony, Walker River Paiute Tribe, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, Moapa Band of Paiute**—hosted voter raffles of some sort, all of them sponsored by the Nevada Native Vote Project.

Others, like the **Las Vegas Tribal Commu**

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All of this raises some fairly obvious questions. Where did all these gift cards and prizes come from? Who paid for them? How much “free stuff” was given away? Who’s really behind this so-called GOTV effort?

The Nevada Native Vote Project is a nonprofit group, and its voter advocacy is supposed to be nonpartisan and politically unbiased. Yet the group’s Facebook page includes [a post](#) from a group called Native Organizers Alliance about the importance of voting, “because we live in places of political upheaval where the rightwing operates quite openly.” The post includes a political map of Nevada and Wisconsin, with arrows pointing to blue, Democrat-voting areas that say, “Natives live here.”

Funding for the Nevada Native Vote Projects appears to come from an umbrella group called [Native Vote](#) that’s [an initiative](#) of the National Congress of American Indians, or NCAI. The connections between such groups are not always obvious, but the logo on the T-shirts the Nevada Native Vote Project was handing out at polling places is the same logo on the [Native Vote website](#) (see screenshots below).

So where does NCAI get its funding? From a lot of places, including Native tribal groups, charitable foundations, and major corporations. It also gets millions in funding from the federal government. More than a half-dozen government “partners” are listed on NCAI’s [supporters page](#), including the Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, the Small Business Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency, among others. In 2018, these federal agencies provided a total of more than \$3 million to NCAI, according to the group’s [own disclosures](#).

It’s unclear whether taxpayer dollars went directly into Native Vote’s GOTV efforts or to purchase gift cards and other “prizes” for Native American voters, but the NCAI logo does appear on [Facebook posts](#) advertising illegal Election Day cash raffles in Nevada.

What’s clear, however, is that the GOTV efforts of Native Vote aren’t nonpartisan. Native Vote and NCAI have partnered in the past with a Native advocacy group called Four Directions, jointly producing a [voter guide in 2012](#) and last year partnering with Four Directions to co-host a presidential [forum](#) focused on Native American issues.

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This year, back in January, Four Directions co-hosted a [presidential forum](#) in Las Vegas with Nevada Tribal Nations. The “[donate](#)” [page](#) for that forum, and indeed for Four Directions’ [own website](#), goes through ActBlue, an online giving platform that funneled nearly \$1.6 billion to Democratic candidates in the 2018 midterms and has since become a [powerful fundraising tool for Democratic campaigns](#) and progressive organizations like Black Lives Matter.

## This Is Widespread, And Corporate Media Won’t Report It

There are about 60,000 eligible Native American voters in Nevada who make up about 3 percent of the state’s total voting population. That’s almost twice the current margin of Biden’s current lead over President Trump in Nevada. So the Native American vote really does matter, it could even be decisive. It therefore matters how many Native American votes were influenced by an illegal cash-for-votes scheme, especially if funding for it came from American taxpayers via the NCAI.

It also matters because this didn’t just happen in Nevada. It’s been more obvious about what they were doing in other states including gift card and electronics giveaways in [South Dakota](#), [Arizona](#), [Wisconsin](#), [Washington](#)

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All of this coordinated illegal activity, clearly designed to churn out votes for Biden and Democrats in tribal areas all across the country, is completely out in the open. You don't need special access or some secret source to find out about it. You just have to be curious, look around, and report it.

Unfortunately, mainstream media outlets are not curious and refuse to report on any of this stuff. What's described above is an egregious and totally transparent vote-buying scheme in Nevada that was likely undertaken on a similar scale across nearly a dozen other states, but you won't read about it in The New York Times, or hear about it on CNN.

That's not because the story is unimportant, but because, for the media establishment, it's inconvenient. No wonder these groups didn't try to hide what they were doing.

*John is the Political Editor at The Federalist. Follow him on [Twitter](#).*

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