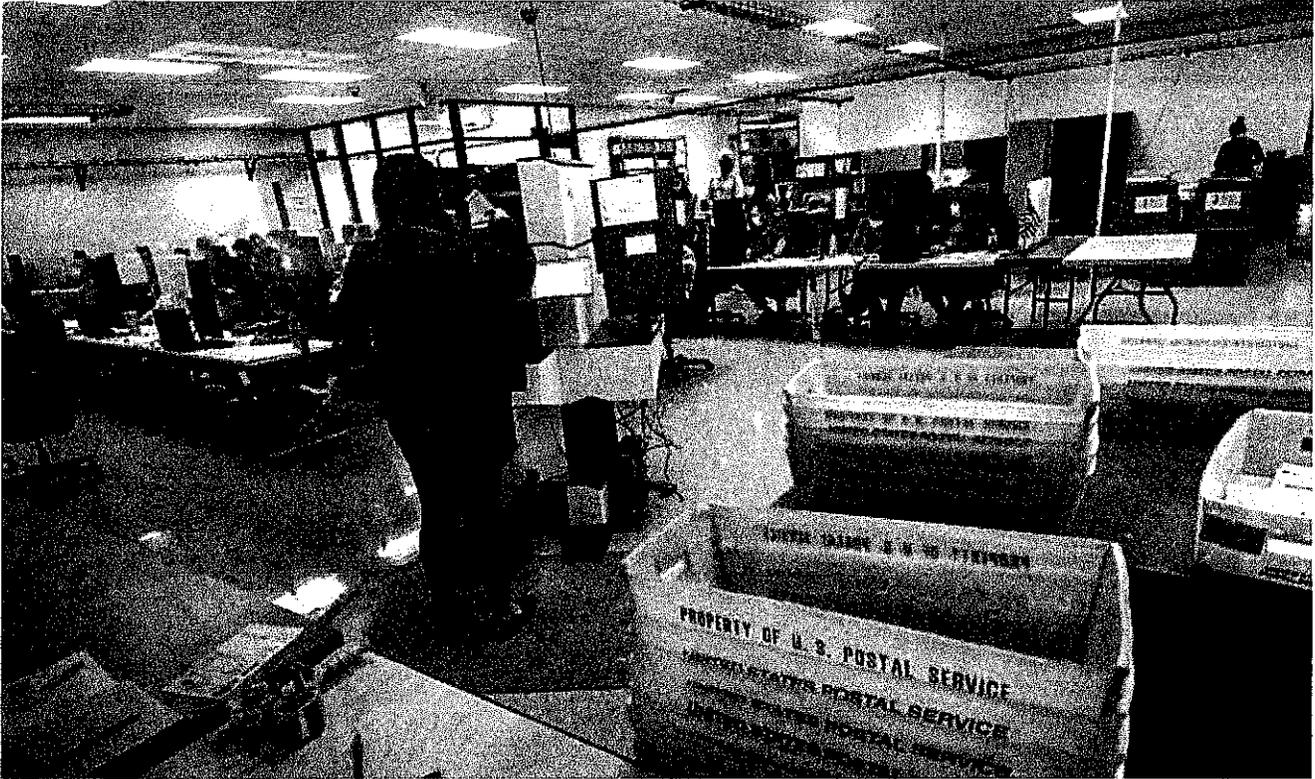


## THE EPOCH TIMES



Poll workers count ballots inside the Maricopa County Election Department in Phoenix, Ariz., on Nov. 5, 2020. (Olivier Tournon/AFP via Getty Images)

ELECTION INTEGRITY PREMIUM

# Arizona Senate Hires 4 Firms to Audit 2.1 Million Ballots From 2020 Election

BY ISABEL VAN BRUGEN | April 1, 2021 Updated: April 22, 2021

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The Republican-led Arizona state Senate on March 31 announced that four firms have been hired to audit election results and recount the 2.1 million ballots cast in Maricopa County's 2020 general election to ensure the legitimacy of President Joe Biden's win.

The announcement from state Sen. Karen Fann (R-Ariz.) comes just weeks after Arizona legislators ordered a recount of the ballots from the state's most populous county. The state Senate released a statement on March 18 saying it will conduct a "broad and detailed" audit, adding that it will test voting machines, scan ballots,

look for IT breaches, and perform a hand count.

Recounts are something state law doesn't allow except in narrow circumstances, but a judge's ruling (pdf) said the Senate has oversight powers that allow it to do whatever election review it wants.

The independent audit will be conducted by four out-of-state companies; Wake Technology Services, CyFIR, Digital Discovery, and Cyber Ninjas. A report is expected to be released in about 60 days, a statement from the state Senate says.

The Senate said Florida-based cybersecurity company Cyber Ninjas will be leading the audit, noting that it focuses on computer application security for financial services and government clients.

Wake Technology has performed hand-count audits in Pennsylvania and New Mexico, the Senate said, while CyFIR focuses on computer forensics and cyber attacks. According to Texas-based Digital Discovery's website, it focuses on digital forensics.

"The audit will validate every area of the voting process to ensure the integrity of the vote," the Senate wrote. "The scope of work will include, but is not limited to, scanning all the ballots, a full manual recount, auditing the registration and votes cast, the vote counts, and the electronic voting system."

The Senate said leadership will not be directly involved in the process to maintain integrity and transparency.

Two separate forensic audits of last year's election have already been conducted by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, however, the state Senate maintains that a separate audit must be carried out with a trusted group in order to restore faith in the voting system.

"Our people need to be assured that the Senate and Maricopa County can work together on this audit, to bring integrity to the election process," Fann said in a statement. "As Board Chair [Jack] Sellers and County Recorder [Stephen] Richer wrote in the Arizona Republic, 'Democracy cannot survive if its people do not believe elections are free and fair.'"

Fann previously told news outlets that pushing for a recount and audit of election results was “never about overturning the election, it was about the integrity of the Arizona election system.”

*Samuel Allegri and The Associated Press contributed to this report.*