

CNN's *The Arena with Kasie Hunt*

07/16/26

4:08:47 p.m.

2 minutes and 39 seconds

KASIE HUNT: I mean, congressman. The reality is Republicans won the Senate. They won the House. They won the White House in 2024. So, you know, casting doubt on the elections process, generally speaking, seems at odds with, you know, what happened if you're a Republican at that point. How are people who are not the President thinking about his fixation on this? I mean, does this do Republicans who are trying to hang on to their seats in your former chamber any good at all?

GARRETT GRAVES: Kasie, look, I think as long as we're focused on election integrity, then the answer to the question is yes, and I hope that the President is out there, focusing on that issue. I hope that he does reveal new evidence that then would discount all of the comments and statements that folks have made previously, and actually show his cards, show the evidence indicating that foreign countries are stepping in trying to influence elections. And look, this isn't far-fetched. We've watched China come in and influence U.S. AI policy. We've watched Russia come in and influence U.S. energy policy. It's not far-fetched, but the takeaway here is that these countries that are not our friends didn't want President Trump to be President of the United States.

CHARLES BLOW: But we've always we've always known that they try to influence. The question was whether or not they tampered with the tallying of the vote, whether or not they tampered with any kind of mechanisms of the vote, and that is what the commission found that they didn't do. So, if he comes out and says what we already know, which is that foreign actors wanted to influence — they also — Russia wanted to influence on his behalf. We all know that. So, the idea that just figuring out — presenting more evidence of influence does absolutely nothing other than to poison the American public's view of the election system in this country, and who benefits from that? The only people who benefit from that is Donald Trump and Republicans who are more likely to believe this than anyone else in the electorate.

GRAVES: And that's why I like what Karoline Leavitt said when she said that there was new evidence, so that's what I'm looking forward to hearing, what the White House brings up, and I'll tell you something else that I hope he brings up. I hope he brings up Voter ID laws. I have to show my ID to get on the airplane today, and I hope that he brings that up as well in terms of improving election integrity.

BLOW: You know why poor people never get on an airplane?

GRAVES: Okay, they —

BLOW: Because they can't afford it.

GRAVES: You know what they do, Charles? They go to the doctor, they go buy —

BLOW: I — you don't — you don't have to show government ID to go to the doctor.

GRAVES: — um, actually, every time I go to the doctor, I do.

BLOW: That's your doctor. Have you been a poor person in America who had to go to the doctor? You do not have to show a government ID every time you go to the doctor.

GRAVES: Um, we can go through all the things —

BLOW: Just in — just in case you don't know that.

GRAVES: — ummmm —

BLOW: Thank you.

GRAVES: — just — if we're going to go through — Charles, if we're going to go through all the things you have to do to show an ID, there is absolutely no discrimination. There are ways to get IDs —

BLOW: Okay.

GRAVES: — without causing financial harm on people.

BLOW: Pretending there's no discrimination —

HUNT: This — this is a — this is a —

BLOW: — is crazy.

HUNT: — critical debate that, of course, is being had broadly. But I'd like to keep us focused on what we're going to see tonight.