

NBC's *Today*

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7:00:51 a.m. [TEASE]

31 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Doubling Down]

CRAIG MELVIN: Doubling down. President Trump using a rare primetime address to issue new warnings about election security ahead of the midterms.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: These disclosures reveal an election system so broken and so vulnerable that no one can possibly defend it.

MELVIN: The President repeating false claims about widespread fraud and interference in 2020, and launching a new campaign against voting by mail. We're live at the White House with the latest and the reaction from both sides of the aisle.

(....)

7:11:57 a.m.

2 minutes and 52 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Trump Doubles Down on Election Interference Claims]

LAURA JARRETT: Also, this morning, reaction pouring in to President Trump's rare primetime address to the nation, using his speech to revive false claims about the 2020 election and raising questions about election integrity ahead of the midterms this November. NBC's senior White House correspondent Gabe Gutierrez has that story for us. Gabe, good morning.

GABE GUTIERREZ: Laura, good morning. The President has questioned election integrity before, but these claims are taking on new urgency with the midterms less than four months away. Despite evidence to the contrary, the President is now laying out a wide-ranging conspiracy theory about his 2020 election loss to Joe Biden. Overnight, President Trump ramping up his claims about election security. The White House posting newly declassified, but heavily redacted documents.

TRUMP: Put together, these disclosures reveal an election system so broken and so vulnerable that no one can possibly defend it.

GUTIERREZ: The President, describing efforts by China to access U.S. voter rolls, though much of that information is publicly available. While China denies it, Trump alleges the country targeted his 2020 campaign –

TRUMP: They fought like hell not to have it – Donald Trump to win.

GUTIERREZ: – adding that members of what he calls the Deep State tried to cover it up.

TRUMP: And our intelligence agency worked to actively suppress and downplay information about the extent of China's sinister election meddling.

GUTIERREZ: But one of the documents released overnight refers to Chinese efforts to target Joe Biden's campaign, and, for years, U.S. intelligence assessments have shown that American voting systems have been a target of foreign adversaries. Years of recounts, audits, lawsuits, and reviews have not found evidence of enough fraud to overturn Trump's 2020 loss.

TRUMP: Our purpose in disclosing this information is not to weaken confidence in elections, but to earn that confidence by confronting vulnerabilities and correcting them very, very quickly.

GUTIERREZ: The President also pointing to a review of state voter rolls and public records by the Department of Homeland Security.

TRUMP: They identified approximately 278,000 noncitizens who are registered to vote in federal elections.

GUTIERREZ: But election experts say the database that may have been used for that analysis often flags newly naturalized citizens as non-citizen voters. Meanwhile, the President is pushing Congress to pass sweeping legislation, known as the SAVE America Act, that would require voter I.D. and proof of citizenship.

TRUMP: How easy is that to do, unless you want to cheat?

GUTIERREZ: The bill faces long odds in the Senate, in part because of concerns it would make it harder for Americans to vote.

SENATOR TOM TILLIS (R-NC): What we're going to do if we continue down this path is convince the American people that you can't count on your election results, and that is dangerous.

(....)

8:04:45 a.m.

2 minutes and 39 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: News at 8; Trump Doubles Down on Election Interference Claims]

JARRETT: To Washington now, President Trump using a rare primetime address last night to raise doubts about the legitimacy of U.S. elections, part of his appeal for more restrictive voting laws ahead of the midterm elections. NBC's senior White House correspondent Gabe Gutierrez has all of the details. Gabe, good morning.

GUTIERREZ: Good morning. The President argues he's aiming not to weaken confidence in elections, but instead to confront and correct vulnerabilities. Still, despite vast evidence to the contrary, he's now laying out a wide-ranging piracy theory about his 2020 election loss. Overnight, President Trump ramping up his claims about election security. The White House posting newly declassified, but heavily redacted, documents.

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JARRETT: Gabe at the White House, thank you.