Example NAPA OP ED on Threats to the Election Workforce

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One of the most shocking and troubling revelations from the January 6 Commission hearings was to hear Georgia poll workers, [“Shaye” Moss and her mother, Ruby Freeman](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/congress/election-workers-targeted-trump-ruby-freeman-shaye-moss-say-s-nowhere-rcna34640), recount the lies and subsequent threats made about them during the 2020 presidential race. Their case was particularly egregious because those lies came directly from the incumbent president. But no less worrisome is learning that disinformation, lies, intimidation, and threats of violence towards election workers are [on the rise around the county](https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/local-election-officials-survey-march-2022). Those elections workers can be the Secretary of State, the State Election Director, professional local election employees, or volunteer poll workers.  In short, the previously almost invisible election workforce is increasingly under siege – with the intended result that the integrity of our elections is under siege too.

“Dirty tricks” and disinformation have been part of American elections from the beginning. However, they were typically local in scale or aimed at opposing candidates. This has changed with the ability of social media to spread lies widely and quickly, with content created by both domestic and foreign players for nefarious purposes.  And what is even newer is the level of erroneous charges aimed at the people who administer elections, and the number and level of threats to them that result.  A 2022 Brennan Center poll of local election officials found that [1 in 6 had experienced threats](https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/local-election-officials-survey-march-2022), and most felt that such threats had increased in recent years.

Most of us think we know how elections “work” – but we really don’t.  There are hundreds of details, including specific rules and best practices, to be addressed statewide and at each election site, for every election. And all those places are staffed by people who have chosen to help their fellow Americans in the important civic duty of voting. In some cases, their level of training or nonpartisan commitment may need to be reviewed and improved. But by large majorities, these are dedicated public servants who deserve to be respected and thanked, not harassed for political gain.

The management of elections in the United States is decentralized, administered by public service employees, and trained to operate under a combination of federal, state and local laws. The vast majority of election workers are those serving in the counties, cities, and towns across the country – red states and blue states.  They are often our neighbors or friends.  These are the people “on the ground” who are trained to make the system work in a nonpartisan and constitutional way.  But when their competence, professionalism, and adherence to the laws are called into question, we lose confidence not only in them as individuals, but also in both the election results and our election system as a whole.

If we, as a country, allow these attacks to continue, the system as we have known it will grind to a halt.

Running elections fairly and accurately is complicated. We need to urge our fellow citizens to be respectful of that complexity and to appreciate the efforts of those people who are the backbone of our US elections – the election workforce.