

ATTORNEY GENERAL BONTA REMARKS:

Good afternoon. Thank you to my friend and formidable champion here in the United States Senate: Senator Alex Padilla — for gathering us here today for a critical discussion.

Let me just start with something fundamental: Democracy only works if people are free to vote — without intimidation, without interference, and without fear.

In recent months, we have seen troubling federal overreach. We've seen rhetoric and actions from the sitting President that threaten to undermine confidence in our democratic process and institutions and discourage civic participation, the lifeblood of our democracy.

We won't allow that to happen.

No President in recent history has been so hostile to free and fair elections. The President has tried to take control of elections, spread misinformation, and threatened folks working to keep elections secure.

He's shifted the focus of the federal government away from protecting voters and toward chasing unfounded claims of fraud.

Take, for example, the fact that the President and some of his allies have suggested deploying federal law enforcement to polling places — including references to ICE and the National Guard.

What he's trying to do is clear. He sees the writing on the wall. He knows that the people are seeing through his lies and that he and his Administration are deeply unpopular.

It's why he continues to stoke conspiracy theories about the 2020 election — an election that courts across the country upheld.

Instead of focusing on the real challenges Americans face — like affordability — Trump has manufactured an election integrity crisis and is using federal agencies to chase those misguided theories.

And it's all in an effort to keep the doubt alive so that he can use it to justify unprecedented and illegal interference, or to explain away electoral defeat.

But he's getting more and more desperate because of his current losing streak *in* office.

In a little over one year, California has taken Trump to court 58 times. And we've secured victories. Repeatedly. Over 80% of the time.

Including in our lawsuit against him for attempting to impose sweeping voting restrictions across the country. We secured a preliminary injunction against those restrictions and are arguing in favor of a permanent injunction tomorrow in Boston.

The message we're sending is clear: as long as Trump is a repeat offender, he'll be a repeat loser.

We won't tolerate efforts to interfere with our elections or frighten Americans away from the ballot box.

We're monitoring closely, preparing, and we're ready to act — again.

If Trump wants a lawful election, all he has to do is nothing.

In California, we're doing the opposite of voter suppression — we're expanding access, increasing transparency, and defending the right to vote.

We understand the facts: Our elections are secure. They're transparent. They're accessible. And they're governed by law — not federal intimidation or the President's whims.

We're prepared for the midterms. Voters will go to the polls. Elections will proceed. And the people won't be silenced.

If this administration exceeds its authority, deploys federal agents to intimidate voters, or attempts to override state election laws, we'll meet them in court.

In Trump's State of the Union last night, he once again failed to advance any message of hope or unity. He continued to peddle lies. He continued to demonstrate he can't accept a loss.

He wants his party to prevail seemingly by any means necessary, and it's why he's afraid of what's to come in nine months.

But in America, political power doesn't belong to a party or person — it belongs to the people.

So, we'll keep fighting to protect the freedom to vote.

We'll protect the integrity of our elections.

And we'll protect democracy itself — regardless of what Trump throws our way.

Thank you.