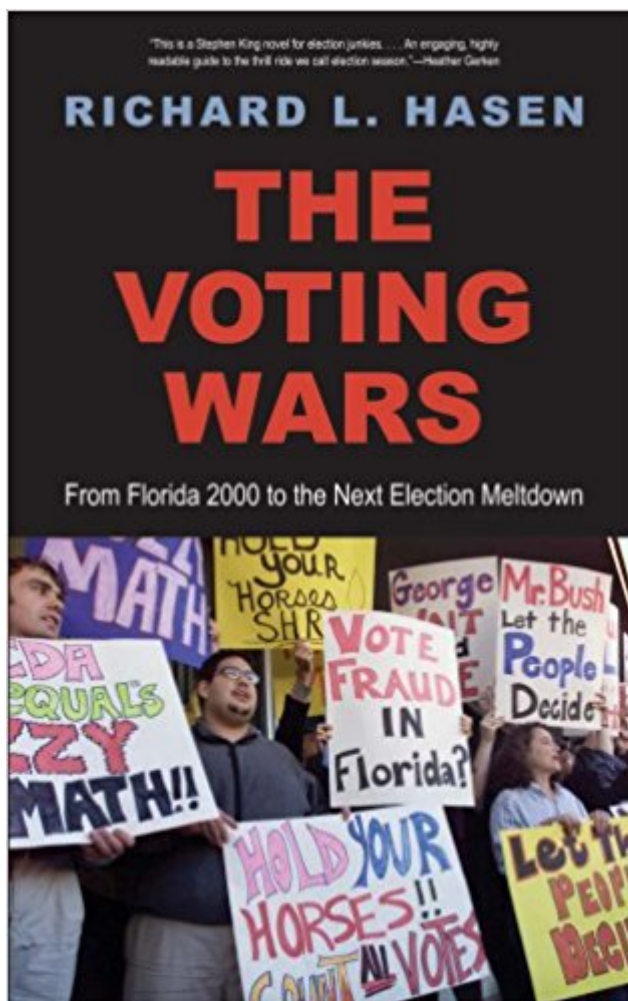


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# The Voting Wars: From Florida 2000 To The Next Election Meltdown



## Synopsis

In 2000, just a few hundred votes out of millions cast in the state of Florida separated Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush from his Democratic opponent, Al Gore. The outcome of the election rested on Florida's 25 electoral votes, and legal wrangling continued for 36 days. Then, abruptly, one of the most controversial Supreme Court decisions in U.S. history, *Bush v. Gore*, cut short the battle. Since the Florida debacle we have witnessed a partisan war over election rules. Election litigation has skyrocketed, and election time brings out inevitable accusations by political partisans of voter fraud and voter suppression. These allegations have shaken public confidence, as campaigns deploy "armies of lawyers" and the partisan press revs up when elections are expected to be close and the stakes are high. Richard L. Hasen, a respected authority on election law, chronicles and analyzes the battles over election rules from 2000 to the present. From a nonpartisan standpoint he explores the rising number of election-related lawsuits and charges of voter fraud as well as the decline of public confidence in fair results. He explains why future election disputes will be worse than previous ones—more acrimonious, more distorted by unsubstantiated allegations, and amplified by social media. No reader will fail to conclude with Hasen that election reform is an urgent priority, one that demands the attention of conscientious citizens and their elected representatives. Also available: *The Fraudulent Fraud Squad*, an e-excerpt from *The Voting Wars* Released February 2012 \$1.99

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## Customer Reviews

"This is a Stephen King novel for election junkies. No one has a better eye for the next big thing in election law than Rick Hasen. The Voting Wars provides an engaging, highly readable guide to the thrill ride we call election season." —Heather Gerken, author of The Democracy Index: Why Our Election System is Failing and How to Fix It (Heather Gerken)"One of the most disturbing recent US political developments is the rapid growth of election administration litigation. Professor Hasen has masterfully described this trend, showing how political parties seek to gain advantage through election recounts, voter id laws, absentee ballot procedures, and the like. Scholars, journalists and interested citizens will benefit from Hasen's insightful overview of this struggle and the potential for even more election related controversy and litigation in the future." —Bruce Cain, Heller Professor of Political Science, University of California, Berkeley (Bruce Cain)"Just in time for the election, Rick Hasen brings this essential reminder of all the lessons never learned after Bush v. Gore. If we don't course-correct our partisan voting systems and ever more partisan efforts to remedy them, Hasen reminds us that we are looking into the face of a democratic disaster." —Dahlia Lithwick, Senior Legal Correspondent, Slate magazine (Dahlia Lithwick)

Richard L. Hasen is Chancellor's Professor of Law and Political Science, University of California, Irvine School of Law. He lives in Studio City, CA.

I have been reading this book along with my Election Law text book for a course in law school. This book gives the background and adds a bit of a human element to the legal marshland that is election law. I believe this book would be fascinating even if I was not a law student (though, I should disclose that it is nearly impossible to imagine a life without law school and, therefore, impossible to really say what I would be interested in without it). I firmly believe that all Americans should try to understand our election system and this book is the closest I have come to achieving that goal for myself.

In his preface, Richard L. Hasen, hands us this: "The legitimacy of democratic government itself depends on faith in the rules for casting and counting votes, and in the fairness with which these rules are followed and enforced." Our system of voting and how we barely get by election after election manipulated by our elected officials enduring voter suppression to gerrymandering, missing ballots. Where are the voters in the scheme of things. "A lack of faith in elections becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy that undermines faith in democratic governance itself," states Hanson. If you

are concerned about what is happening in our country with regard to registering, voting, and counting, this book, incidentally a page turner of events we have witnessed, you may want to organize for change or ask for poll watchers from developing nations to help us out.

Suggesting reading for those interested in the voting process

Robert Kennedy, Jr. in June 2006 wrote an excellent article describing the grand theft of the 2004 Presidential election. His conclusions in this regard were based, first, upon the expert advice he received from Lou Harris, the pollster for his dad and uncle in their political campaigns. Lou Harris actually looked at the facts in the Ohio 2004 Presidential election. On that advice, so did Bobby Kennedy. Kennedy examined the dramatic exit poll discrepancies, the dramatic anomalies in which, according to Ken Blackwell's certified results, both Democrats and proponents of gay marriage in large numbers (more than the reported margin of Bush's victory) voted for George W. Bush rather than John Kerry. Kennedy's well researched and documented conclusion that the 2004 Presidential election was stolen preceded the discovery that the Republican computer serving apparatus in Chattanooga, TN, SmarTech, was interconnected with the Ohio Secretary of State's entire election operation in the 2004 election. It also preceded the discovery of the illegal destruction of some 1.5 million ballots from the 2004 Ohio election. Rick Hasen dismisses Bobby Kennedy's work on the basis of a superficial criticism from an unqualified critic. Thus, Hasen's "Voting Wars" misses Karl Rove's real war on democracy through corrupt funding, voter suppression and large scale vote count rigging. According to Hasen, Karl Rove's grand thefts of elections are outside the margin of reasonable litigation and are the stuff of wild conspiracy theorists. The book contains good material on the fraudulent attack upon Democratic voter fraud, which is why I did not give it a one-star rating.

Makes you wonder how obtuse our elected officials are! When all else fails - get a handle on the THINKING public, which is now a declining minority.

Superb acting and realistic depiction of the voting wars in 2000. This film is the best explanation for what happened and how it happened. Thank you producers, directors, and actors. Wonderful and riveting script.

Rick Hasen is America's most prolific and best informed observer of developments in election law. In *The Voting Wars*, he describes in captivating detail the shambles that is the American system of

election administration. Among other topics, he covers the travesty of Bush v. Gore and the 2000 Florida recount, the cynical efforts of the "Fraudulent Fraud Squad" to lower turnout among poor and minority voters, the left's conspiracy theories about rigged voting machines, and the alarmingly high likelihood of another electoral meltdown. Readers will be educated and entertained by the book--and also shocked by the partisanship and incompetence that infect American election administration to its core. Can anything be done about this sorry state of affairs? Absolutely. As Hasen points out, the U.S. could easily adopt a centralized nonpartisan system that would ensure that elections are administered professionally and consistently throughout the country. Almost all Western democracies have such systems and have avoided anything like the U.S.'s problems over the past decade. But will anything be done to improve the status quo? Hasen's pessimistic (but probably correct) answer is no. Neither party is eager to relinquish control over electoral matters to apolitical technocrats. Indeed, one party sees ballot access as a wedge issue that can energize its supporters and prevent its opponents from going to the polls in the first place. The state and local officials who currently run America's elections are also fiercely opposed to giving up their authority. We are left, then, in a terrible limbo--aware of our system's glaring flaws but entirely unable to fix them. Unfortunately, it will likely take another catastrophe on par with Florida in 2000 before our present impasse is broken.

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