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Election 'Rigged'? What Does That Mean, Obama Asks

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(CN) - President Barack Obama told reporters at a news briefing Thursday afternoon that Donald Trump's claim that the presidential elections will be rigged in the wake of several court decisions overturning state voter ID laws is "ridiculous."

"I think all of us at some points in our lives have played sports or maybe just played in a schoolyard or a sandbox. And sometimes folks, if they lose, they start complaining that they got cheated. But I've never heard of somebody complaining about being cheated before the game was over, or before the score is even tallied.," the president said.

President Obama was responding to a question about Donald Trump's suggestion earlier this week that the November election will be rigged after several states were ordered by courts to repeal laws that restricted the types of voter IDs that would be accepted at polling places.

"I don't even really know where to start on answering this question," the president said, inspiring laughter among the reporters in the room.

"Of course the elections will not be rigged. What does that mean?" he said.

The president noted that the federal government does not run the election process. Rather, that's a function carried out by states and local governments. "They are the ones who set up the voting systems and the voting booths," he said.

"If Mr. Trump is suggesting that there is a conspiracy theory that is being propagated across the country, including in places like Texas, where typically it's not Democrats who are in charge of voting booths, that's ridiculous. That doesn't make any sense. And I don't think anybody would take that seriously," Obama said.

But he added that the federal government does take its responsibility to monitor and preserve the integrity of the voting process very seriously.

"If we see signs that a voting machine or system is vulnerable to hacking, then we inform those local authorities who are running the elections that they need to be careful," the president said. "If we see jurisdictions that are violating federal laws in terms of equal access and aren't providing ramps for disabled voters, or are discriminating in some fashion, or are otherwise violating civil rights laws, then the Justice Department will come in and take care of that."

He added: "This will be an election like every other election. ... So my suggestion would be go out there and try to win the election.

"If Mr. Trump is up 10 or 15 points on Election Day and ends up losing, then maybe he can raise some questions. That doesn't seem to be the case at the moment," the president said.

On a related note, the president said both Trump and Hillary Clinton should receive classified security briefings as presidential nominees because it's tradition and required by law.

He had been asked during a Pentagon press conference whether he is concerned about Trump getting classified security briefings as the Republican presidential nominee.

"They need to get a security briefing so that if they were to win, they are not starting from scratch in terms of being prepared for this office," Obama said, referring to both Trump and Hillary Clinton.

"What I will say is that they have been told these are classified briefings. And if they want to be President, they got to start acting like President, and that means being able to receive these briefings and not spread them around," the president said.

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