The 2020 Elections

Kathryn Pearson
Associate Professor of Political Science
University of Minnesota
Biden beats Trump

Harris Is First Woman Elected Vice President
Joseph R. Biden Jr. was elected the 46th president of the United States on Nov. 7. Mr. Biden defeated President Trump after winning Pennsylvania, which put his total of Electoral College votes above the 270 he needed to clinch the presidency.
Partisan Divides

Source: New York Times
Unprecedented: no concession from the losing candidate.

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 17s
We have claimed, for Electoral Vote purposes, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (which won’t allow legal observers) the State of Georgia, and the State of North Carolina, each one of which has a BIG Trump lead. Additionally, we hereby claim the State of Michigan if, in fact,.....

STOP THE COUNT!

8:12 AM · 11/5/20 · Twitter for iPhone

97.3K Retweets 257K Quote Tweets 556K Likes
ELECTION OFFICIALS NATIONALY FIND NO FRAUD

Fighting a False Claim
The president and his allies have baselessly claimed that rampant voter fraud stole victory from him. State officials say there were no irregularities that affected the outcome.

Justice Signals Likely Reprieve For Health Act
Two Conservatives Say With Liberal Faction

RANSHA
Kansas did not experience any widespread, systematic issues with voter fraud, intimidation, irregularities or voting problems.

The office of Secretary of State Scott Scheels, a Republican

MICHIGAN
We have not seen any evidence of fraud or fare play in the actual administration of the election. What we have seen is that it was smooth, transparent, and secure.

The office of Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat

MINNESOTA
I don’t know of a single case where someone argued that a vote counted when it shouldn’t have or didn’t count when it should. There was no fraud.

Secretary of State Steve Simon, a Democrat

PENNSYLVANIA
There’s a great human capacity for inventing things that aren’t true about elections,” said Frank LaRose, a Republican secretary who oversees elections in the state. “The conspiracy theories and rumors and all these things run rampant.

Secretary of State Frank LaRose, a Republican

Many of the claims against the commonwealth have already been dismissed, and repeating these false attacks is reckless. No active lawsuit even alleges, and no evidence presented so far has shown, widespread problems.

The office of Attorney General Josh Shapiro, a Democrat

It’s just throwing grass at the fence at this point. See what sticks.

The office of Secretary of State Kathy Hochul, a Republican

Trump Marshals Federal Power
To Overturn His Election Defeat

El Paso Buckles Under Strain as Infections Soar

LePai of Tuesday — and a lot less than doubling its supply of mobile hospital units, or ICUs, from 30 beds to 60.

By BILL GOODMAN U.S. Hits Record High

Democrats Repeal Trump’s Tax Cuts

WASHINGTON — President Trump’s tax cuts are due to expire on Tuesday, and a lot less than doubling its supply of mobile hospital units, or ICUs, from 30 beds to 60. In a speech to a joint session of Congress, Mr. Biden said that the cuts were no longer serving a useful purpose.

By PETER BAKER

Washington Post

Secretary of State Mike Pemses is set to defend the vote.

Report by ENGLISH SPEAKERS as well as the heads of the three agencies that control the federal government’s budget were among those who took part today in a joint session of Congress. Mr. Biden said that the cuts were no longer serving a useful purpose.
Why does the Fake News Media continuously assume that Joe Biden will ascend to the Presidency, not even allowing our side to show, which we are just getting ready to do, how badly shattered and violated our great Constitution has been in the 2020 Election. It was attacked,..

8:46 PM · 11/15/20 · Twitter for iPhone

26.1K Retweets 3,551 Quote Tweet 109K Likes

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 50m

Replying to @realDonaldTrump

...perhaps like never before! From large numbers of Poll Watchers that were thrown out of vote counting rooms in many of our States, to millions of ballots that have been altered by Democrats, only for Democrats, to voting after the Election was over, to using Radical Left

This claim about election fraud is disputed

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump · 50m

...owned Dominion Voting Systems, turned down by Texas and many others because it was not good or secure, those responsible for the safeguarding of our Constitution cannot allow the Fake results of the 2020 Mail-In Election to stand. The World is watching!

This claim about election fraud is disputed
Washington Edition

Today, mostly cloudy, showers for some, high 73. Tonight, mostly cloudy, showers in areas, fog, low 64. Tomorrow, mostly cloudy, showers, high 77. Weather map, Page A24.

ELECTION 2020

Trump again says he may not abide by election results

Democratic officials strategize about potential options

by Philip Rucker, Amy Gardner and Annie Linskey

President Trump reiterat[ed Thursday that he may not honor the results should he lose reelection, reaffirming his extraordinary refusal to commit to a peaceful transition of power and putting the nation at risk. He said he might not accept the results if they show him losing to Democratic nominee Joe Biden. He said it was imperative to quickly fill the Supreme Court vacancy created by the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg because the nation's high court could determine the winner of the election. He also said he was considering a lawsuit to question the number of voters casting ballots during the pandemic.
Political Context: The Fundamentals Matter (even in a very strange election)

- Incumbency?
- State of the Nation
- Electoral College and Political Geography
- Narrowly – and deeply – divided electorate
## INCUMBENTS

Since the founding, sitting incumbent presidents have run for reelection 31 times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Adams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Jefferson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Madison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Monroe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>J.Q. Adams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Van Buren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>Harrison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>McKinley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>T. Roosevelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Taft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Hoover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>F.D. Roosevelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>F.D. Roosevelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>F.D. Roosevelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Truman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Eisenhower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Nixon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Ford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Reagan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>G.H.W. Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Clinton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>G.W. Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Obama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Trump</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 Wins  
11 Losses

They have won about twice as often as they have lost. (65%)
Referendum on President Trump
United States Records Its Worst Week Yet for Virus Cases

By Lauren Leatherby  Oct. 30, 2020
Do Americans approve of Trump’s response to the coronavirus crisis?

A calculation of the share of all Americans who approve of the president’s handling of the coronavirus outbreak.
Consistent Presidential Disapproval, 2017-Present
National Exit Polls: *preliminary estimates* from exit polls of 15,590 voters conducted by Edison Research for the National Election Pool. These surveys interviewed voters outside of polling places or early voting sites, or by phone (to account for mail-in voters).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Was your vote for president mainly:</th>
<th>52</th>
<th>47</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For your candidate</td>
<td>71% of voters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against his opponent</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who's ahead in the national polls?

An updating average of 2020 presidential general election polls, accounting for each poll’s quality, sample size and recency.

- Biden 52.1%
- Trump 43.0%

OCT. 27 LEADER
Biden +9.1
The Polls Were Off in 2020 – Again!

- Once again, polls underestimated support for Trump and other Republicans

- 2016 explanations:
  - State polls didn’t properly weight (account for) respondents without a college degree
    - 18 point gap among whites with/without college degrees in vote choice
  - Large number of undecided voters appeared to break sharply to Trump in the final stretch

- What happened in 2020? Possibilities:
  - Pollsters were wrong about what happened in 2016 and so the fixes left them no better off
  - Survey research has gotten even more challenging since 2016, and whatever steps pollsters took to improve after 2016 were canceled out by a new set of problems
  - Biden supporters more likely to respond to polls
  - Higher turnout than expected
National Exit Polls: How Different Groups Voted

The numbers on this page are preliminary estimates from exit polls conducted by Edison Research for the National Election Pool. These surveys interviewed voters outside of polling places or early voting sites, or by phone (to account for mail-in voters).

Results from interviews with 15,590 voters are shown below. These numbers will be updated as more data becomes available, and they will eventually be adjusted to match the actual vote count.

While exit polls offer an initial indication of how groups voted on election night, they are not perfect. The polls are not precise enough to distinguish between, say, 53 percent support or 50 percent support from a certain group. Like any survey, they are subject to sampling error, and they rely on estimates of how many people voted in each group.

Demographic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donald Trump</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph R. Biden</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you male or female?

Donald Trump 48% of voters

Joseph R. Biden 52%
On most political matters, do you consider yourself:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trump</th>
<th>Biden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liberal 24% of voters</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate 40%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative 37%</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No matter how you voted today, do you usually think of yourself as a:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trump</th>
<th>Biden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat 37% of voters</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican 35%</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent or something else 28%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender and Race in 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you white or nonwhite?</th>
<th>Donald Trump</th>
<th>Joseph R. Biden Jr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67% of voters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonwhite</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your gender and racial or ethnic heritage?</th>
<th>Donald Trump</th>
<th>Joseph R. Biden Jr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White men</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35% of voters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White women</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black men</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black women</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino men</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino women</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other races</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How independents, Latino voters and Catholics shifted from 2016 and swung states for Biden and Trump

These are the biggest demographic shifts in the 2020 election

**Biden**
- Moderates: +12
- Independents/Others: +12
- Income $50,000-$99,999: +11
- White men: +7
- Catholics: +6

**Trump**
- Income $100,000+:
- Asians: +7
- Republicans: +6
- Black men: +6
- Age 30-44: +5
Record Voter Turnout: 66.4%

United States VEP Turnout Rates 1789-2018

Source: Michael McDonald
State Voting Laws Matter

- States vary greatly, with consequences for residents and the country
- Ease of voter registration and absentee ballots
- In Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, officials couldn’t begin processing and counting absentee ballots until Election Day
- In Michigan, clerks could begin processing ballots only the day before Election Day
2020 Turnout Rates

% of eligible voters casting votes

2020 Election to Crush Spending Records

OpenSecrets projects total federal spending in the 2020 election will near $14 billion, establishing itself as the most expensive election in U.S. history by a large margin.
U.S. Senate Elections

Democrats lost Alabama

Republicans lost CO, AZ

2 Georgia races move to runoffs

Republicans (likely) maintain majority party control

New York Times
MN Senator Tina Smith (D) Re-elected, 48.8% - 43.5%
Democrats lost at least 6 seats, but not the majority

Most incumbents reelected

Combination of incumbency advantage and partisan advantage
House Democrats' losses concentrated in vulnerable districts
(2020 elections as of Nov. 9)

Source: Sarah Binder
Republicans win toss-up House races with less funding

In nine of the most competitive House races, Democrats outraised GOP candidates by over $3 million. Of these races, six have been called and Republicans have won five.

![Bar chart showing total fundraising by Republicans and Democrats in competitive House races.](chart.png)
Biden did not have coattails

Trump did not seem to hurt Republican candidates
House Democrats' majority will likely be their slimmest of the postwar era*

* 8 seats yet to be called (Nov. 10, 2020)

Source: Sarah Binder
Women setting records

- 298 women House candidates
  - 204 Democratic women, 94 Republican women
- At least 117 (89D, 28R) women will serve in the U.S. House, a new record
- 24 (16D, 8R) women will serve in the U.S. Senate
Minnesota U.S. House

- Jim Hagedorn (1)
- **Michelle Fischbach** (7)
- Tom Emmer (6)
- Jim Stauber (8)
- Angie Craig (2)
- Dean Phillips (3)
- Betty McCollum (4)
- Ilhan Omar (5)
Rep. Collin Peterson (MN - 7) defeated

- MN – 7 voters supported Trump in 2016 and 2020 by around 30 points
- Michelle Fischbach spent $1.7 million, Peterson spent $1.8 million
- $13,796,314 in outside spending
  - $8.1 million in support of Fischbach
Minnesota

- Biden: 52.6%
- Trump: 45.4%
- 3rd party: 1.6%
- Turnout: 79.9%
Electoral margins, 2002-2020

In presidential or gubernatorial race each year

Suburban counties are Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Scott and Washington. Exurban counties are Chisago, Isanti, Le Sueur, Mille Lacs, Sibley, Sherburne and Wright. "Iron Range" is St. Louis, Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching and Lake counties.

Source: MN Secretary of State. Graph by David H. Montgomery.
Cumulative 2020 victory margin by MN county

Net votes gained by winner in counties won by Biden and Trump

Total: +545,563

Biden won

Hennepin: +326,365
Ramsey: +134,000
Dakota: +36,115

Total: +313,183

All others: +176,329

Trump won

Source: MN Secretary of State. Graph by David H. Montgomery | MPR News
Minnesota Legislature

- Republicans maintain control of Minnesota State Senate
  - 34-31-2

- “Efficiency gap” hurts DFL

- DFL maintains control of Minnesota State House, 70-64
- Republicans picked up seats
- Divided government
DFL faces "efficiency gap" in legislative races

A negative value means DFL candidates for the Minn. Legislature "wasted" more votes in uncompetitive races in a year than Republicans.

Source: Nicholas Stephanopoulos and Eric McGhee, MN Secretary of State.
Graph by David H. Montgomery | MPR News
President Biden and a Republican Senate (?)*

- Democrats’ agenda of economic stimulus, strengthening the ACA, and paring back 2017 tax cuts will be tough
- Biden will be the first president since George H.W. Bush to start without unified party control*
- House Democrats will need to make deals with Senate
- Intra-party divisions
- Budget deals will be necessary to keep the govt. running, debt—ceiling increase in the summer

*depends on 2 GA run-off elections
Conclusion

- Institutions and Rules Matter
  - The Electoral College shapes candidates’ strategies and outcomes
    - Advantages Republicans
    - Also shaped President Trump’s unsuccessful strategy of overturning an election
  - Senate filibuster – and deeply partisan politics - will hinder Biden

- Variation in state laws have significant implications for both votes and outcomes