After the elections:
What changed, what did not change
and what lies ahead?

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Rice University

December 11, 2020
THE RESULTS: A SPLIT DECISION

Democrats Capture the White House & Gain in the Senate
Republicans Gain in the House & States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WHITE HOUSE</th>
<th>U.S. SENATE</th>
<th>U.S. HOUSE</th>
<th>STATE LEG. CHAMBERS</th>
<th>GOVS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFTER (So Far)</td>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>50R* – 48D</td>
<td>225D – 210R</td>
<td>61R – 37D</td>
<td>27R – 23D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NET GAIN</td>
<td>FLIP</td>
<td>D+1</td>
<td>R+11</td>
<td>R+2</td>
<td>R+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IN THE STATES: A “NO CHANGE” ELECTION

Fewest Legislative Chamber Switches Since 1946

(2 in 2020, 2 in 2019)
**HIGHEST VOTER TURNOUT SINCE 1900**

*U.S. Voter Turnout as % of Eligible Voters*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Turnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>62.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>56.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SPENDING ON THE 2020 ELECTIONS CRUSHED ALL PRIOR RECORDS

Total Election Spending (Open Secrets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Presidential</th>
<th>Congressional</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>$5.3B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>$6.3B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>$6.5B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>$13.9B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Trump and Biden supporters differ over importance of the economy, health care – and particularly the coronavirus

% registered voters who say each is ‘very important’ to their vote in the 2020 presidential election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Biden/Lean Biden</th>
<th>Trump/Lean Trump</th>
<th>All voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supreme Court appointments</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The coronavirus outbreak</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign policy</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on registered voters.

**Pew Research Center**
Both Trump and Biden supporters say if the other wins, it would result in lasting harm to the country

% of **Trump supporters** who say they would ____ about the direction of the country if Joe Biden was elected president

- Not be very concerned: 4%
- Be very concerned, but Biden’s election **would not** lead to lasting harm to the U.S.: 8%
- Be very concerned about the country’s direction, and Biden’s election **would** lead to lasting harm to the U.S.: 89%

% of **Biden supporters** who say they would ____ about the direction of the country if Donald Trump was reelected president

- Not be very concerned: 1%
- Be very concerned, but Trump’s election **would not** lead to lasting harm to the U.S.: 8%
- Be very concerned about the country’s direction, and Trump’s election **would** lead to lasting harm to the U.S.: 90%

Note: Based on registered voters. No answer responses not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Majorities in both parties say nation’s partisan divisions are increasing

% who say divisions between Republicans and Democrats in this country today are...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Decreasing</th>
<th>Increasing</th>
<th>Staying the same</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep/Lean Rep</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dem/Lean Dem</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: No answer responses not shown.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Far more Democrats than Republicans expect partisan relations to get better

% who say relations between Republicans and Democrats in Washington will ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Get better</th>
<th>Stay about the same</th>
<th>Get worse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep/Lean Rep</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dem/Lean Dem</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: No answer responses not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Trump, Biden supporters say their candidate should address concerns of *all* Americans if they win

% of registered voters who say if their preferred candidate is re/elected, they should primarily focus on addressing the concerns of...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Those who voted for him, without worrying too much about the concerns of those who didn’t vote for him</th>
<th>All Americans, even if it means disappointing some of his supporters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Among those who support ...</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trump/Lean Trump</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biden/Lean Biden</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on registered voters. No answer responses not shown.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Republicans mention masks or mask wearing more often than Democrats when asked how COVID-19 pandemic has made their life difficult or challenging

*In an open ended question, % in each group who mentioned the following words or terms*

**Dem/Lean Dem**
- 21% Family
- 21 Work
- 16 Friend
- 14 People
- 13 Able
- 13 Home
- 12 Time
- 12 Job
- **10 Mask**
- 9 Social

**Rep/Lean Rep**
- **19% Mask**
- 17 Work
- 17 Family
- 14 Wear
- 13 Wear mask
- 12 Home
- 11 Able
- 11 People
- 11 Time
- 10 Friend

31% of references to masks express concern that others are not wearing masks or taking the pandemic seriously (just 5% for Rep/Lean Rep)

27% of references to masks express skepticism about masks and/or the severity of the pandemic in general (just 3% for Dem/Lean Dem)

Note: Each list contains the 10 words or phrases that appeared in the most survey responses from members of each party. Terms have been reduced to their root form (e.g., “wearing masks” to “wear mask”), and 339 common English words (e.g., “and,” “from”) were excluded.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Democrats and Republicans More Ideologically Divided than in the Past

Distribution of Democrats and Republicans on a 10-item scale of political values

1994
- Median Democrat: Consistently liberal
- Median Republican: Consistently conservative

2004
- Median Democrat: Consistently liberal
- Median Republican: Consistently conservative

2014
- Median Democrat: Consistently liberal
- Median Republican: Consistently conservative

Source: 2014 Political Polarization in the American Public
Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see Appendix A). The blue area in this chart represents the ideological distribution of Democrats; the red area of Republicans. The overlap of these two distributions is shaded purple. Republicans include Republican-leaning independents; Democrats include Democratic-leaning independents (see Appendix B).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Growing Minority Holds Consistent Ideological Views

On a 10-item scale of political values, % who are...

1994
- Consistently Liberal: 3
- Mostly Liberal: 18
- Mixed: 49%
- Mostly Conservative: 7
- Consistently Conservative: 23

2004
- Consistently Liberal: 8
- Mostly Liberal: 25
- Mixed: 49%
- Mostly Conservative: 15
- Consistently Conservative: 3

2014
- Consistently Liberal: 12
- Mostly Liberal: 22
- Mixed: 39%
- Mostly Conservative: 18
- Consistently Conservative: 9

Source: 2014 Political Polarization in the American Public
Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions. (See Appendix A for details on how the scale is constructed and how scores are grouped.)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Polarization Surge Among the Politically Engaged

Distribution of Democrats and Republicans on a 10-item scale of political values, by level of political engagement

Among the politically engaged

1994

Median Democrat

Consistently liberal

Consistently conservative

2004

Median Democrat

Consistently liberal

Consistently conservative

2014

Median Democrat

Consistently liberal

Consistently conservative

Among the less engaged

Median Democrat

Consistently liberal

Consistently conservative

Median Republican

Consistently liberal

Consistently conservative

Median Republican

Consistently liberal

Consistently conservative

Median Republican

Consistently liberal

Consistently conservative

Source: 2014 Political Polarization in the American Public
Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see Appendix A). Republicans include Republican-leaning independents; Democrats include Democratic-leaning independents (see Appendix B). Politically engaged are defined as those who are registered to vote, follow government and public affairs most of the time and say they vote always or nearly always.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Accepting the election results: Elections are for ‘losers’

• Research has shown that supporters of the winning candidate in an election consistently have more faith that the election was fair than supporters of the losing candidate.

  • This pattern is true of both Dems and Reps

  • When the parties’ fortunes flip in subsequent elections peoples answers flip, too.
Revision of state election laws

• Several battleground states, including Georgia are moving to restrict ‘convenience’ modes of voting e.g., mail-in voting and in-person early voting,

• Further enforcement of voter identification requirements e.g., photographic identification requirements

• Consequences of proposed changes:
  • Not obvious there are partisan advantages curtailing convenience voting.
  • Added cost to conducting elections
  • Long lines and waiting times to vote, lower rates of ballot completion.
Going forward:
Biden Policy Agenda

- Executive orders
- COVID-19 stimulus, vaccine distribution
- Economic recovery
- Climate change
  - Spending on clean ‘jobs’
- Infrastructure
  - Roads, rural broadband, state and local relief
- Taxes
- Health care
  - Public health Jobs Corps (e.g., vaccine distribution, testing)
Going forward: Redistricting

• Republicans control 67 of 99 state legislature chambers.

• Redistricting in 2020 will not be constrained by federal voting rights laws i.e., Shelby decision.

• Supreme Court is unlikely to restrain politically motivated redistricting plans.

• Expect the 2020 midterm Congressional election to be tilted heavily in favor or Republican candidates.
Remedies for polarization
Is polarization the new normal or just the old normal?


• 1850s-1870 witnessed significant polarization of a sectional, racial and class orientation.

• 1950 McCarthyism

• 1960s-1970s Vietnam
Congress as an inventive policymaker

- Northwest Ordinance Act (1787)
- Land Grant Colleges (Morrill Act 1862, 1890)
- The Highway Trust Fund (1956)
- Clean Water Act (1972)
- National Science Foundation (1950)
- St. Lawrence Seaway (1954)
Impulses in national policy making: 1800-200

Figure prepared by John A. Dearborn.