

# **The Mood of the American Voter on the Eve of the 2020 Presidential Election**

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**October 20, 2020**

# **The Current State of the U.S. Election**

# CHANGE ELECTIONS ARE INCREASING...

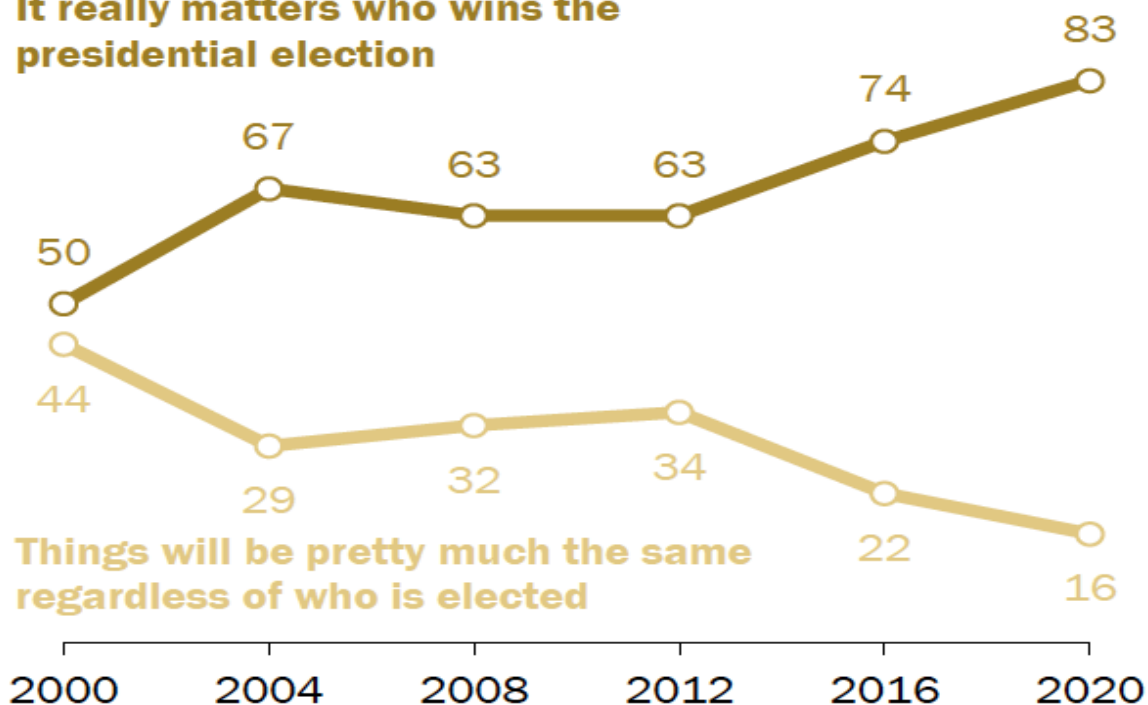
## *Change in Control of House, Senate and/or White House*



# More voters say it 'really matters' who wins the presidency than at any point in the last 20 years

*% of registered voters who say ...*

**It really matters who wins the presidential election**

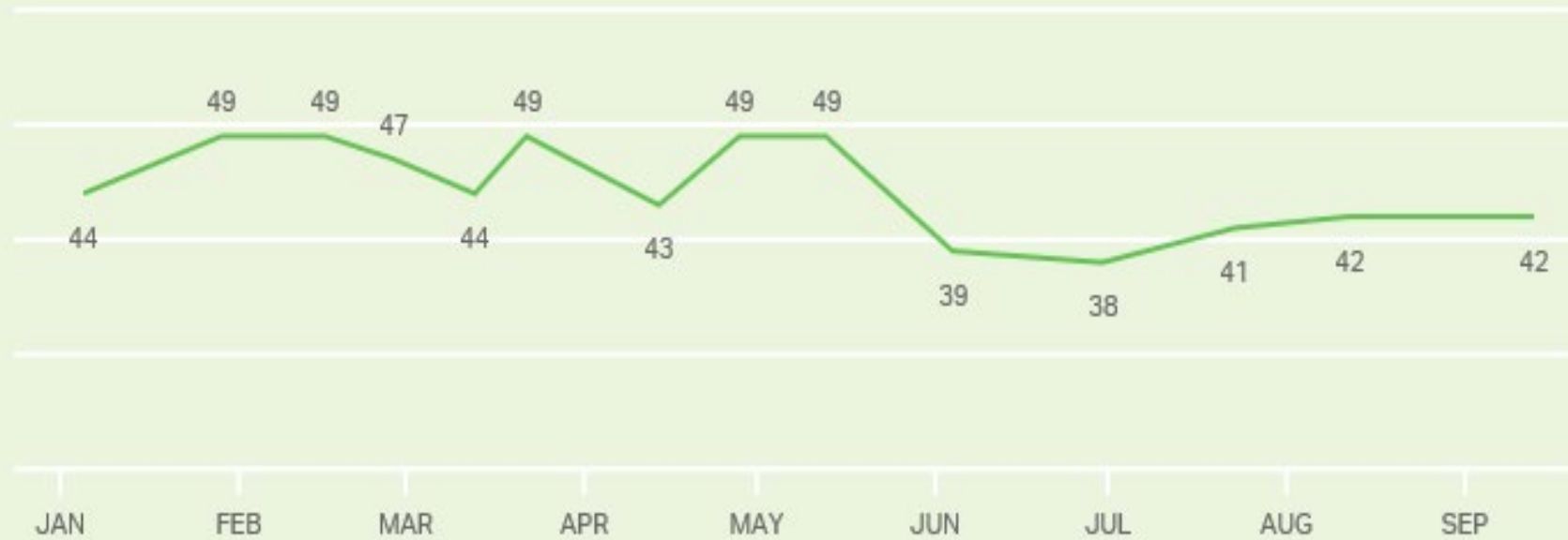


**Things will be pretty much the same regardless of who is elected**

Notes: Based on registered voters. Volunteered and don't know responses not shown. Data for prior years from June surveys.  
Source: Telephone survey of U.S. adults conducted July 23-Aug. 4, 2020.

## President Donald Trump's Job Approval in 2020

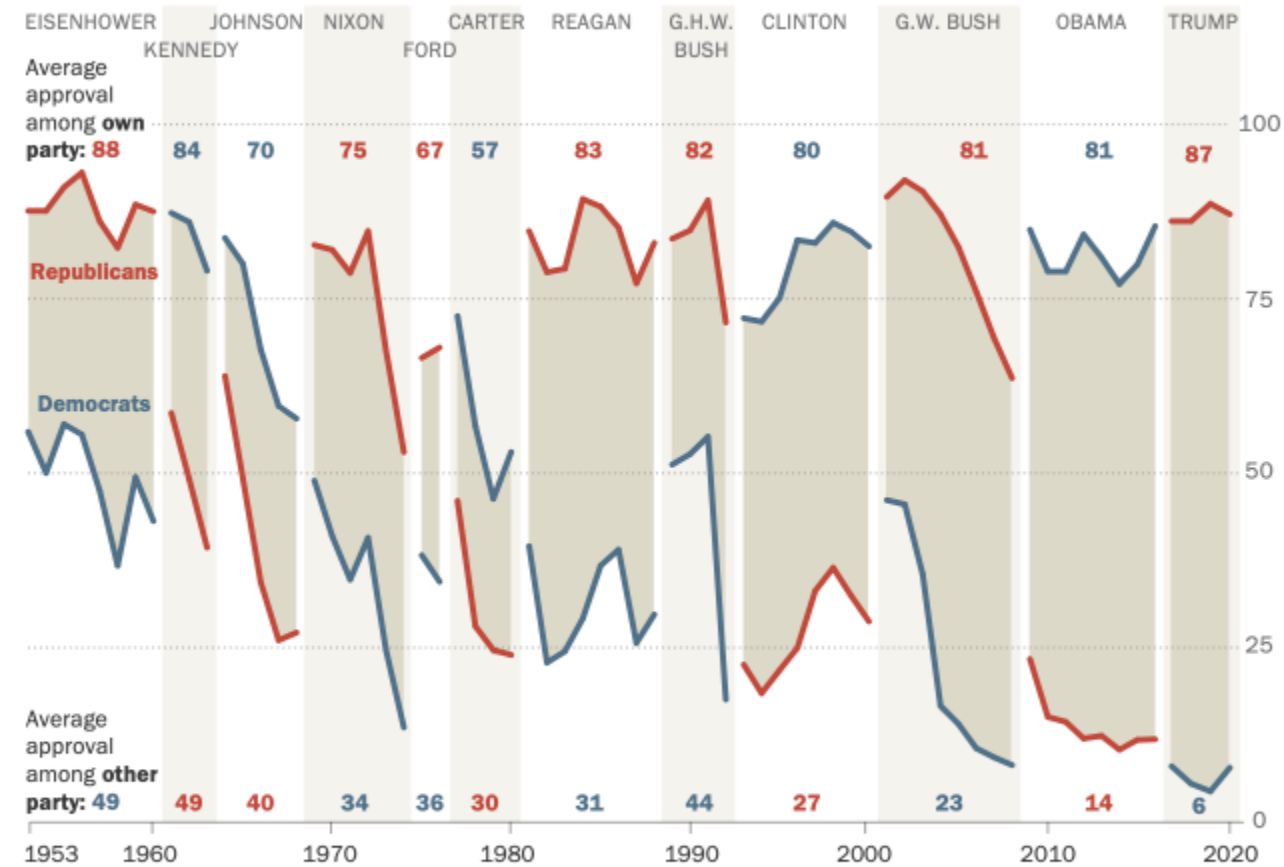
■ % Approve



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## Trump approval more polarized than for any other president since Eisenhower

% who approve of president's job performance, by party



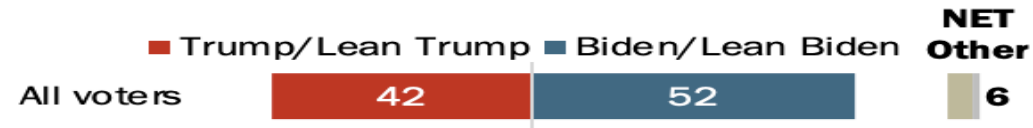
Note: Lines show yearly approval averages; data labels show administration averages. Because some earlier data did not include partisan leaning, Republicans and Democrats in this graphic do not include leaners.

Source: Annual totals of survey data from Pew Research Center American Trends panel (2017-2020), Pew Research Center phone surveys (1993-2017), and Gallup organization (1953-1993).

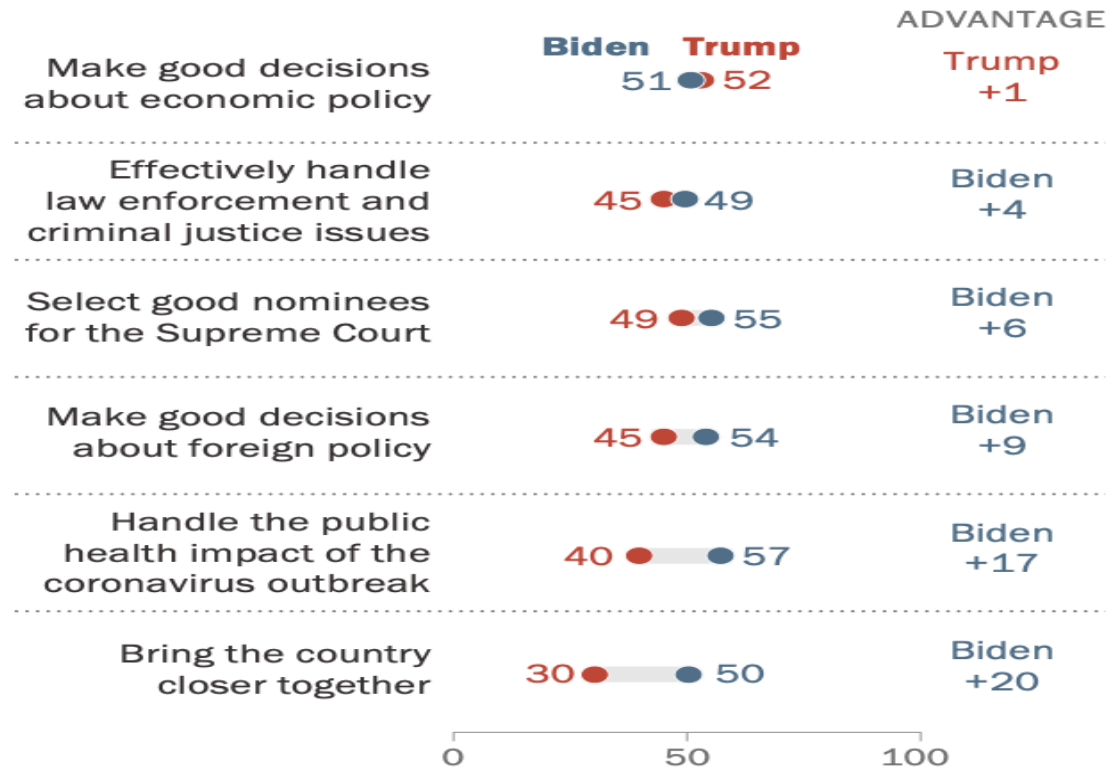
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## Biden has overall lead over Trump and holds advantages on most issues

*% of registered voters who say, if the election were held today, they would vote for ...*



*% of registered voters who are **very/somewhat confident** that \_\_\_\_\_ can do each of the following*



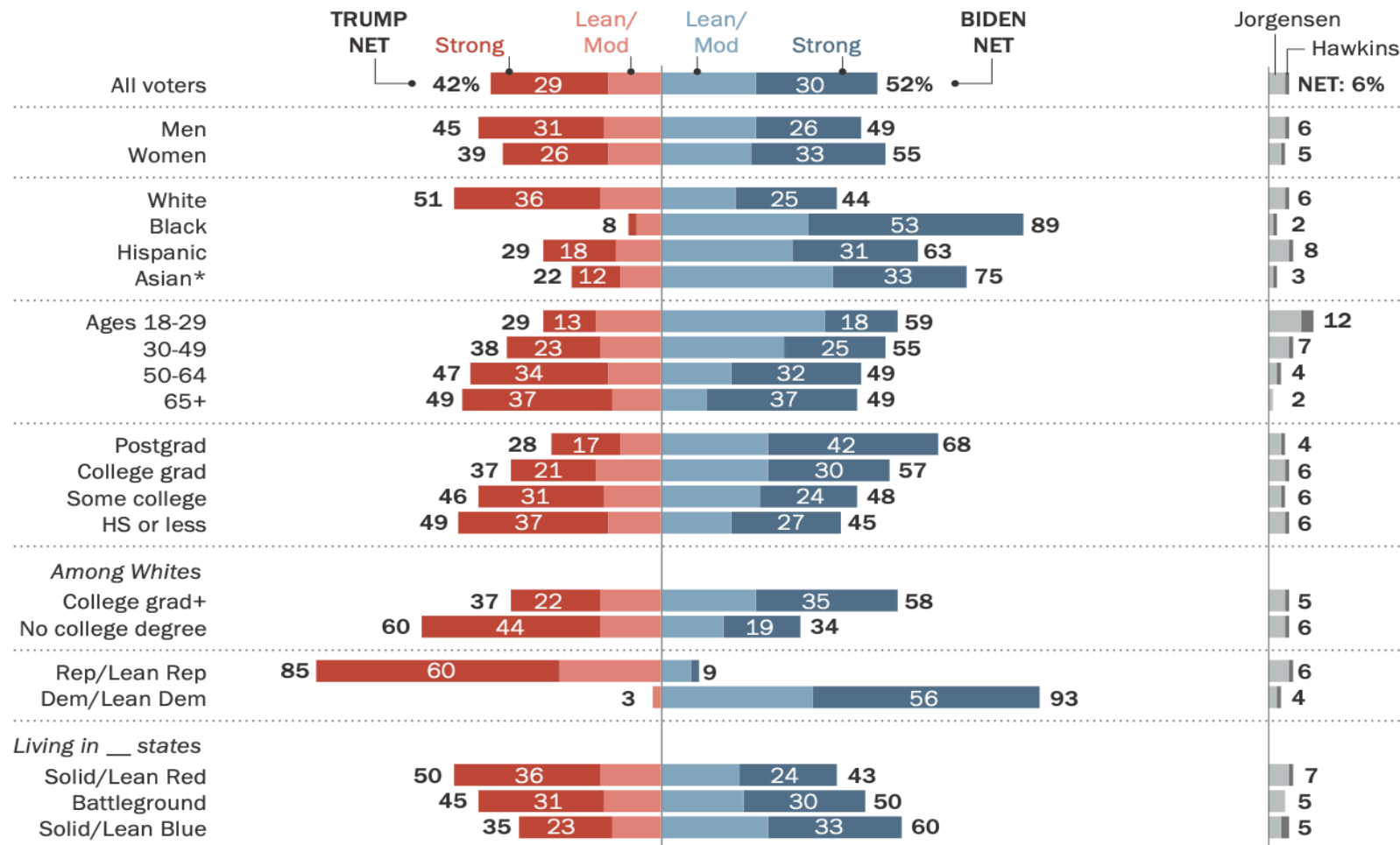
Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 30-Oct. 5, 2020.

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# Trump leads among White voters, trails by wide margins among Black, Hispanic and Asian voters

% of registered voters who would vote for \_\_\_ if the 2020 presidential election were being held today



\*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Notes: Based on registered voters. No answer responses not shown. "Other" candidates include those who say they are voting for Jorgensen, Hawkins or someone else. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race. See appendix for details about battleground states.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 30-Oct. 5, 2020.



# WHO BENEFITS FROM HIGHER TURNOUT?... THAT DEPENDS

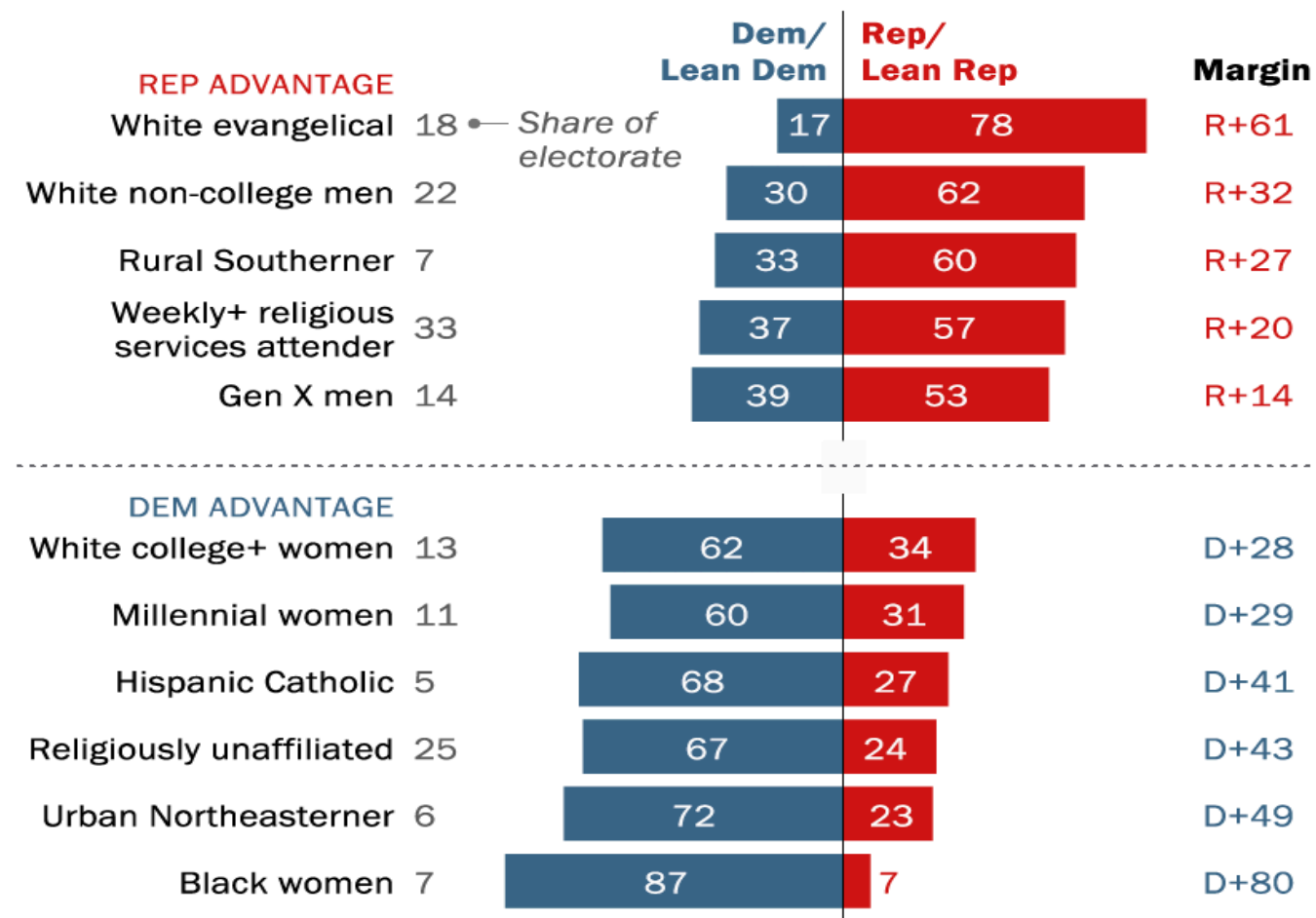
## Eligible Citizens Who Didn't Vote in 2016

State/2016		Non-College White	College White	Non-White
Trump Opportunities: Rust Belt	MI	1,563,809	412,191	643,000
	MN	786,284	210,716	259,000
	NH	220,282	68,924	24,795
	PA	2,289,875	603,125	695,000
	WI	819,356	160,644	306,000
Biden Opportunities: Sun Belt	AZ	683,831	228,169	904,000
	FL	2,565,664	719,336	2,565,000
	GA	1,171,614	327,386	1,303,000
	NC	1,105,431	320,569	834,000
	TX	2,665,119	812,881	4,274,000

# **A Demographically Divided, Highly Partisan Electorate**

# A study in contrasts: Republican and Democratic strengths and weaknesses in party identification

% of registered voters in each group who identify as ...



Notes: Based on registered voters. Figures show combined 2018 and 2019 data. Don't know responses not shown. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic; Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Annual totals of Pew Research Center survey data (U.S. adults).

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## Most of the growth in the electorate since 2000 has come from Hispanic, Black and Asian eligible voters

*U.S. eligible voter population change, 2000 to 2018*

	2018 eligible voter population	Change, 2000- 2018	% of total increase
Hispanic	29,831,000	15,544,000	39%
Black	29,210,000	6,884,000	17
Asian	10,302,000	5,663,000	14
Other	6,793,000	2,431,000	6
Net non-White 76%			
White	157,538,000	9,774,000	24
<hr/>			
Total	233,675,000	40,298,000	

Note: Eligible voters are adult U.S. citizens. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Differences between numbers and percentage increases are computed before the underlying estimates are rounded.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2018 American Community Survey and 2000 decennial census.

"The Changing Racial and Ethnic Composition of the U.S. Electorate"

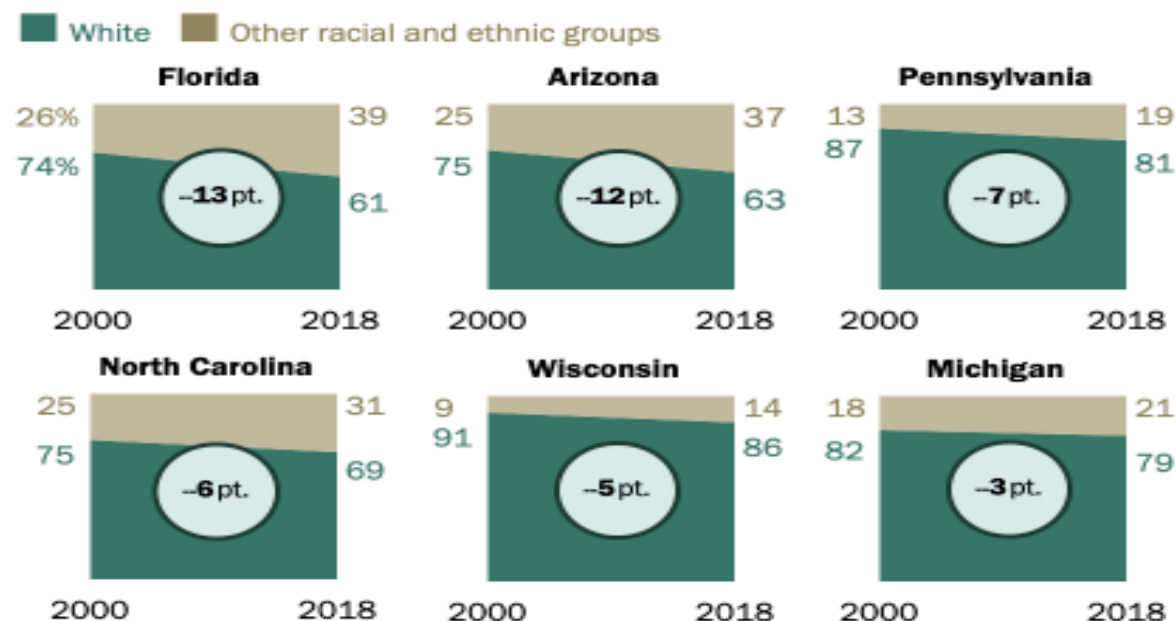
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## Pace of racial and ethnic change varies widely across key battleground states

*% of electorate that is ...*



Note: Eligible voters are adult U.S. citizens. White adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. "Other racial and ethnic groups" include those who identify as Black, Asian, Hispanic, some other race or multiple races or ethnicities.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2018 American Community Survey and 2000 decennial census.

"The Changing Racial and Ethnic Composition of the U.S. Electorate"

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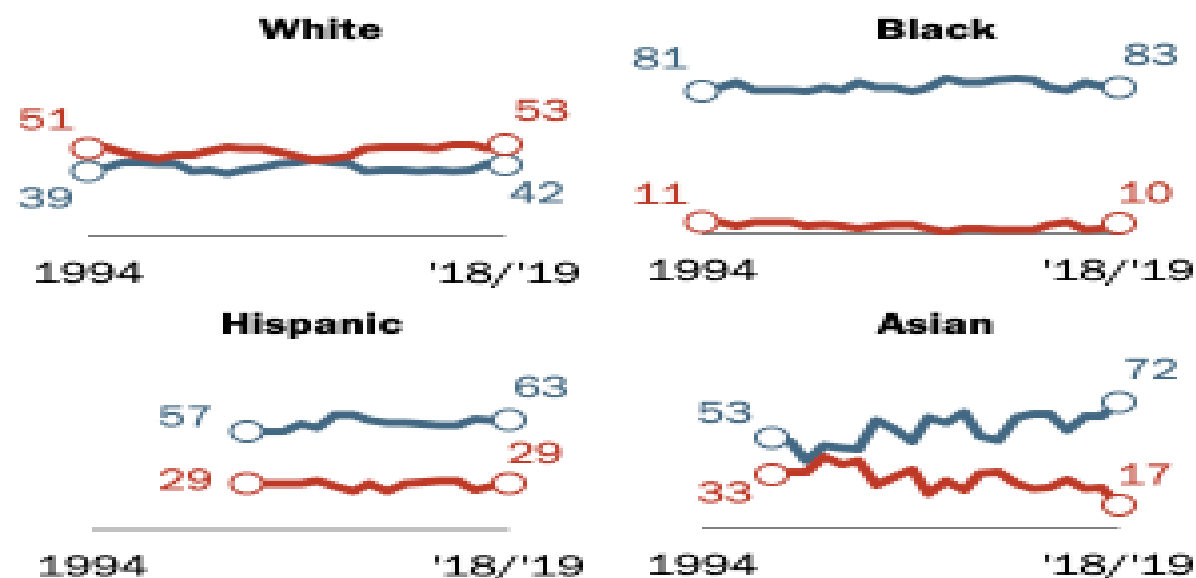
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## All major racial and ethnic voter groups lean Democratic, except Whites

*% of registered voters who identify as/lean toward ...*

■ Rep/lean Rep. ■ Dem/lean Dem.



\*Asian adults were interviewed in English only.

Note: Based on registered voters. Due to smaller sample sizes in 2018 and 2019, the data from those years has been combined. Respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Annual totals of Pew Research Center survey data (U.S. adults).

"The Changing Racial and Ethnic Composition of the U.S. Electorate"

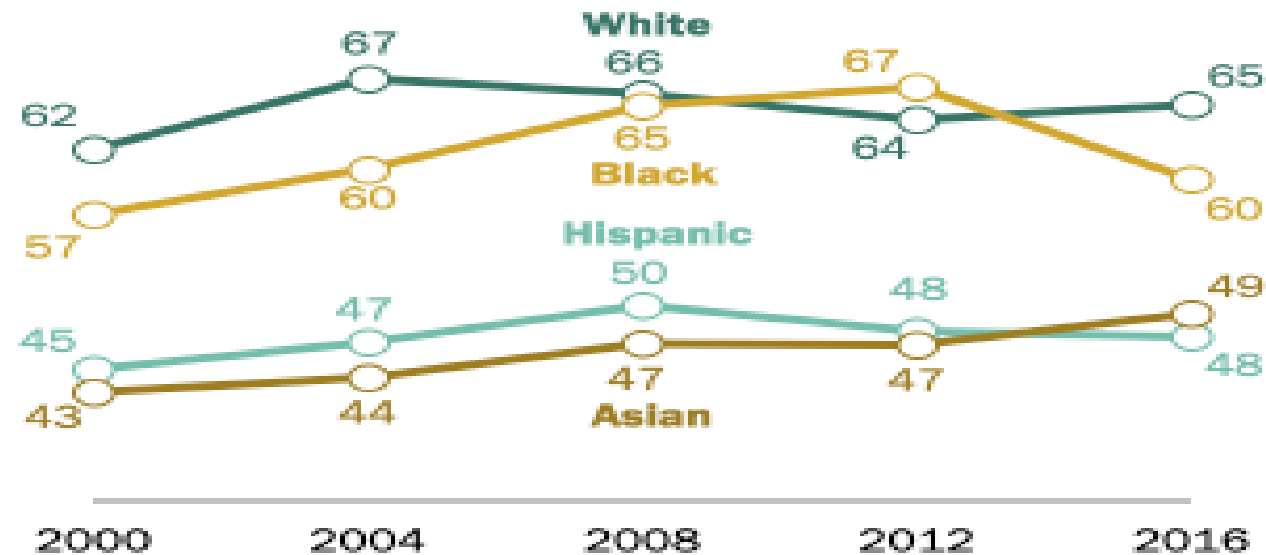
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## Higher voter turnout among White and Black voters in presidential elections

*% of \_\_\_ eligible voters who say they voted*



Note: Eligible voters are adult U.S. citizens. The 2000 Voting and Registration Supplement of the Current Population Survey collapses Asian and Pacific Islanders into one category. White, Black and Asian adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016 Current Population Survey, November Voting and Registration Supplement.

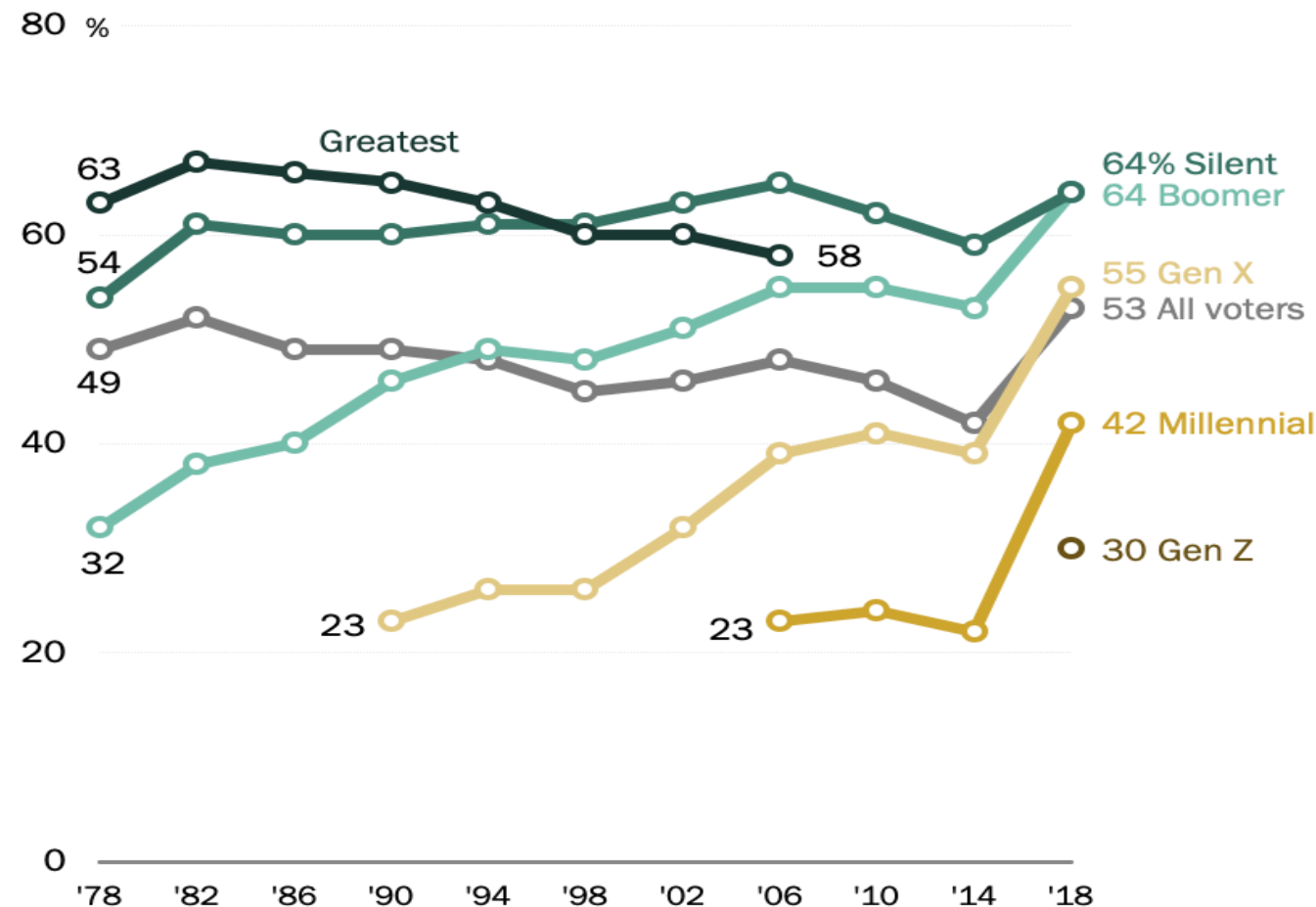
"The Changing Racial and Ethnic Composition of the U.S. Electorate"

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# Millennial turnout nearly doubled from 2014 to 2018

% of eligible voters who reported voting in midterm elections



Note: Eligible voters are U.S. citizens ages 18 and older. Due to age topcoding, the voter turnout rates for 2010-2018 for the Silent Generation are likely underestimated. Turnout rates for the Greatest Generation from 1994-2006 are also likely understated.  
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1978-2018 Current Population Survey November Supplements (IPUMS and U.S. Census Bureau).



# **Americans' Views on Issues**

### ***No Recession in 2 Years Before Election***

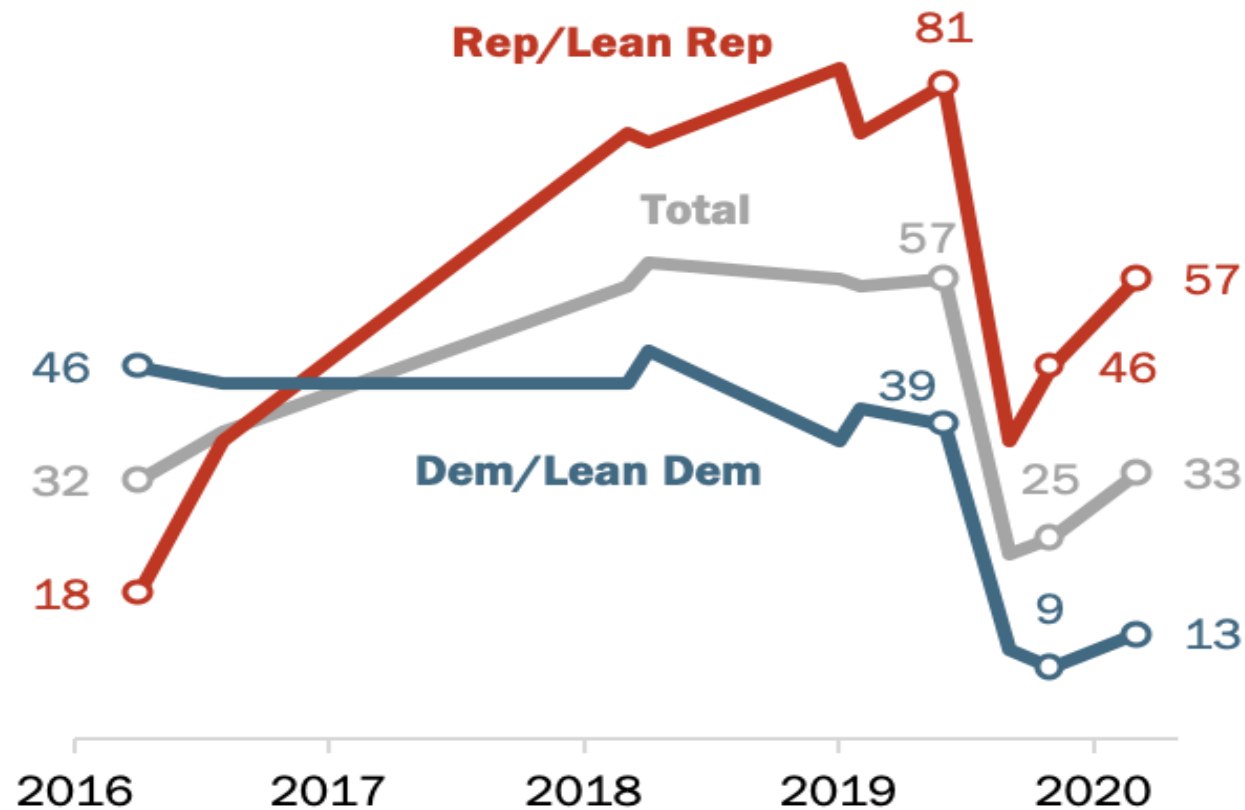
RECESSION?	President (Year)	REELECTION?
NO	Obama (2012)	YES
NO	Bush43 (2004)	YES
NO	Clinton (1996)	YES
NO	Reagan (1984)	YES
NO	Nixon (1972)	YES
NO	LBJ (1964)	YES
NO	IKE (1956)	YES
NO	Truman (1948)	YES
NO	FDR (1944)	YES
NO	FDR (1940)	YES
NO	FDR (1936)	YES
NO	Wilson (1916)	YES

### ***Recession in 2 Years Before Election***

RECESSION?	President (Year)	REELECTION?
YES	Bush41 (1992)	NO
YES	Carter (1980)	NO
YES	Ford (1976)	NO
YES	Hoover (1932)	NO
YES	Coolidge (1924)	YES
YES	Taft (1912)	NO

## Republicans' economic views turn more positive; less change among Democrats

*% who rate national economic conditions as excellent or good*

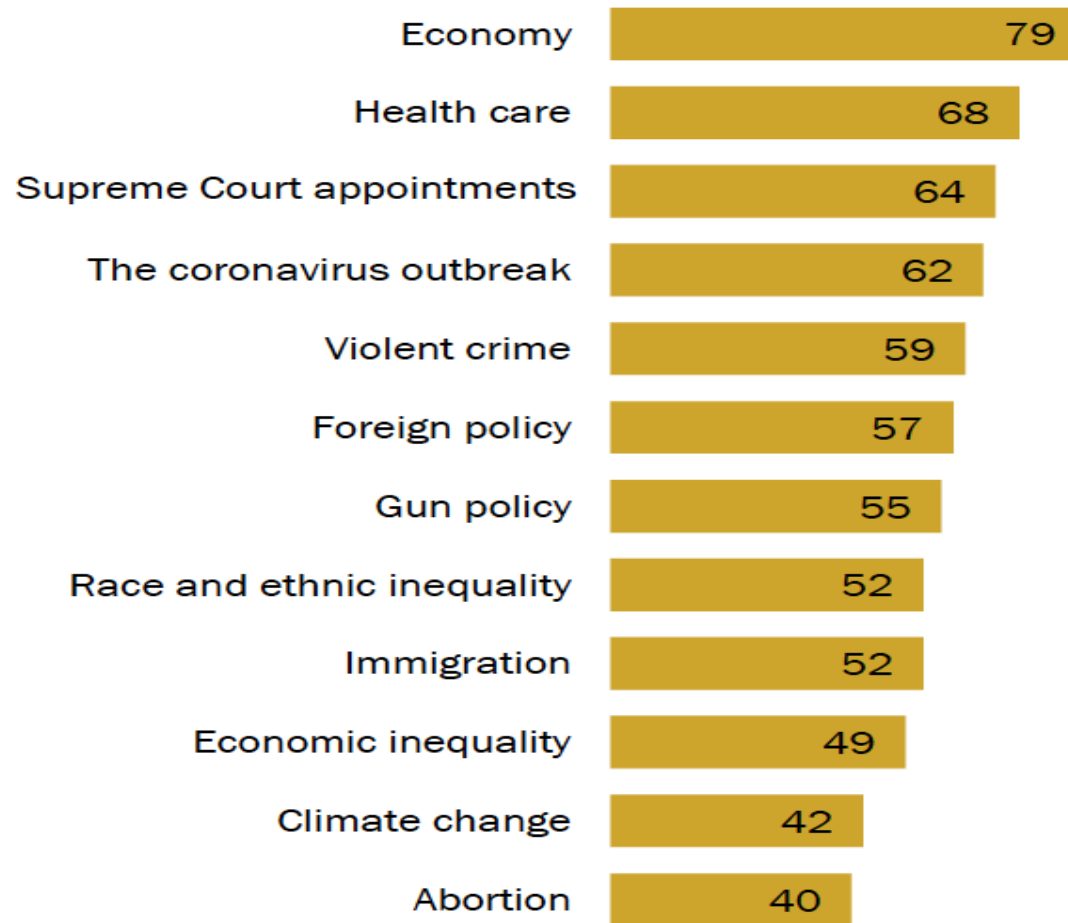


Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 30-Oct. 5, 2020.

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## Economy is top issue for voters in the 2020 election

*% of registered voters saying each is 'very important' to their vote in the 2020 presidential election*



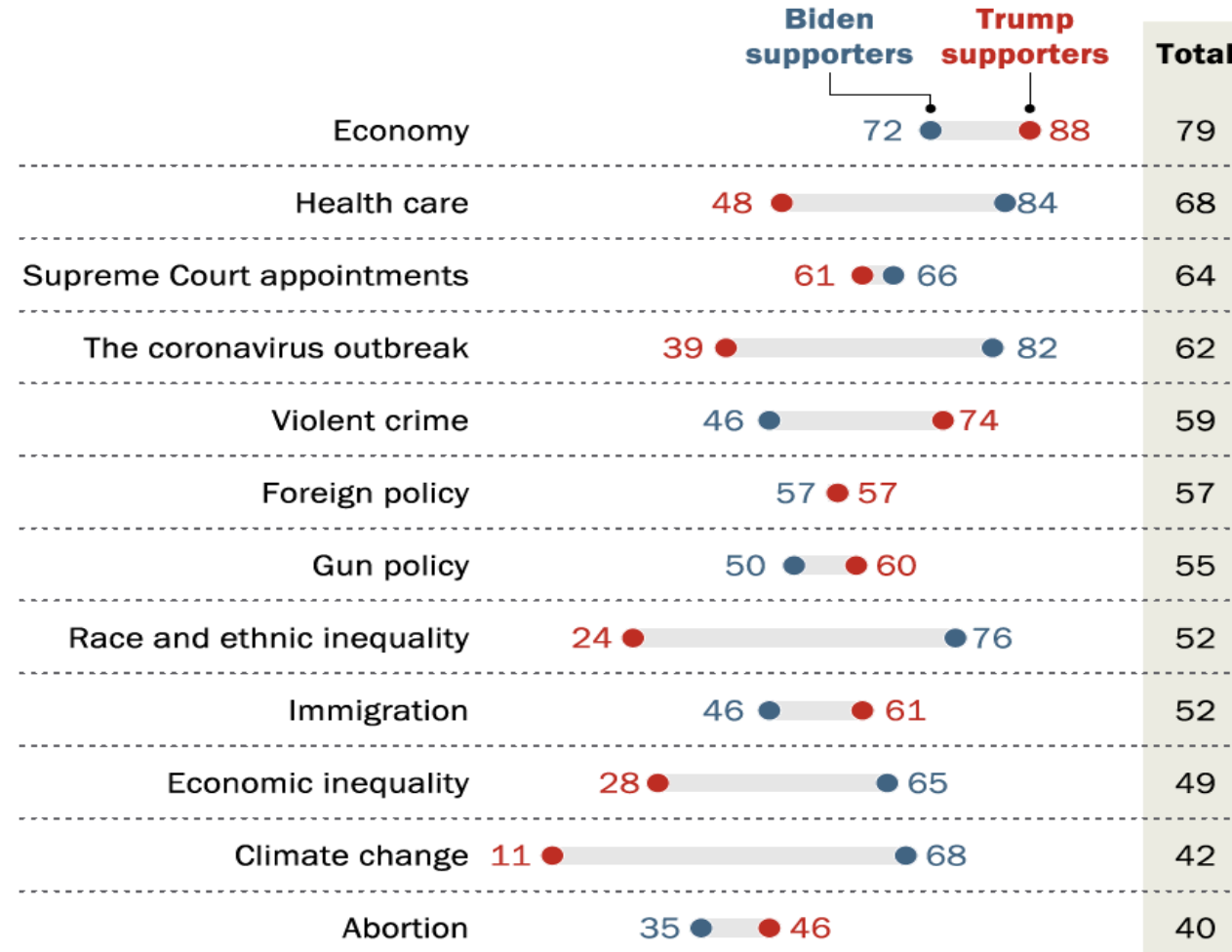
Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 27-Aug. 2, 2020.

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## Top issues for Trump supporters are economy, crime; Biden supporters prioritize health care, coronavirus

*% of registered voters saying each is 'very important' to their vote in the 2020 presidential election*



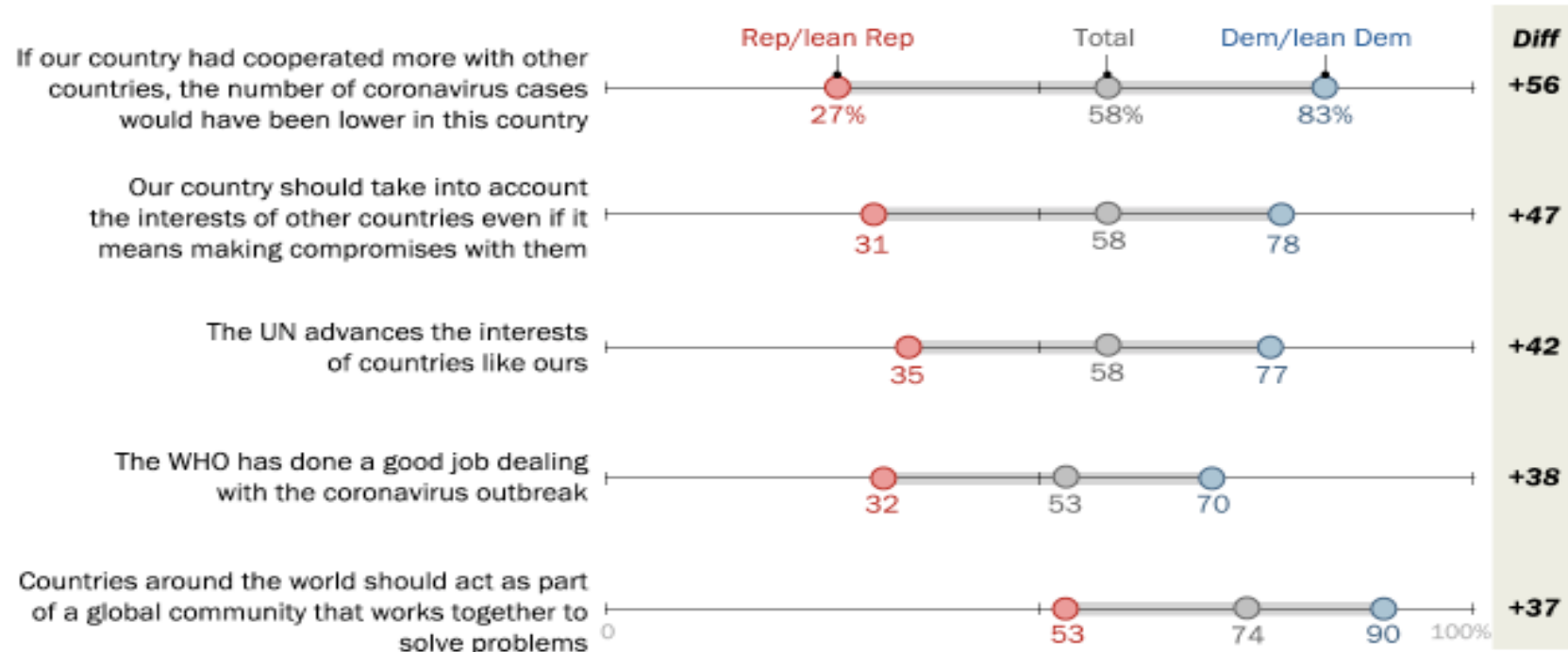
Note: Based on registered voters.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 27-Aug. 2, 2020.

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## In the U.S., Democrats are much more likely than Republicans to support international cooperation, the UN and the WHO's coronavirus response

*% of Americans who say ...*



Note: "WHO" refers to the World Health Organization.

Source: Summer 2020 Global Attitudes Survey. Q4, Q8e, Q10e, Q11, Q12f. Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey. Q32.

"International Cooperation Welcomed Across 14 Advanced Economies"

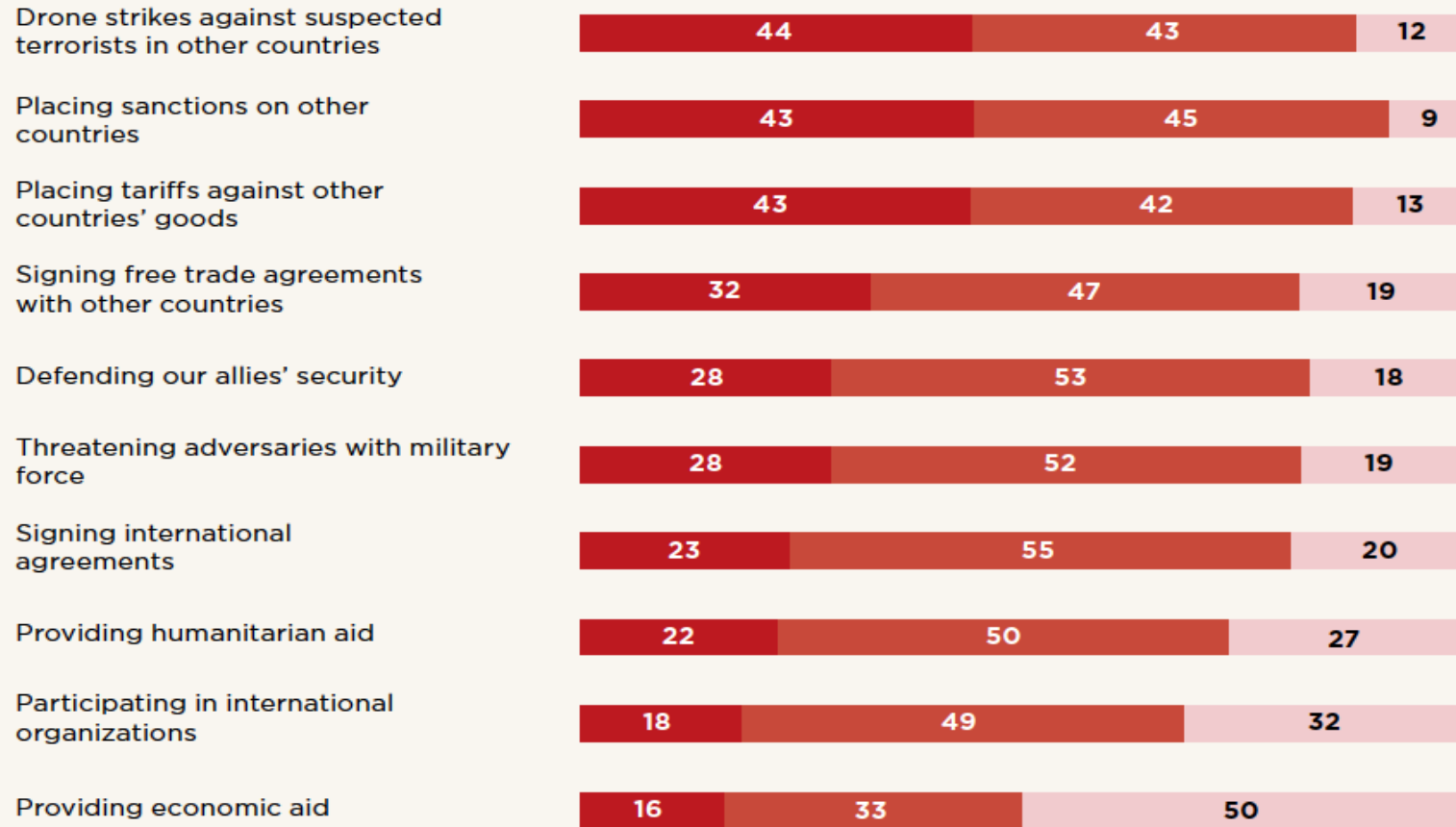
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## Figure 10: **Republicans' Approaches to Foreign Policy**

**The United States uses different foreign policy approaches to achieve its foreign policy goals. Do you think the United States should use the following foreign policy approaches more than it is now, less than it is now, or the same as it is now? (%)**

n = 659

■ More than now ■ Same as now ■ Less than now



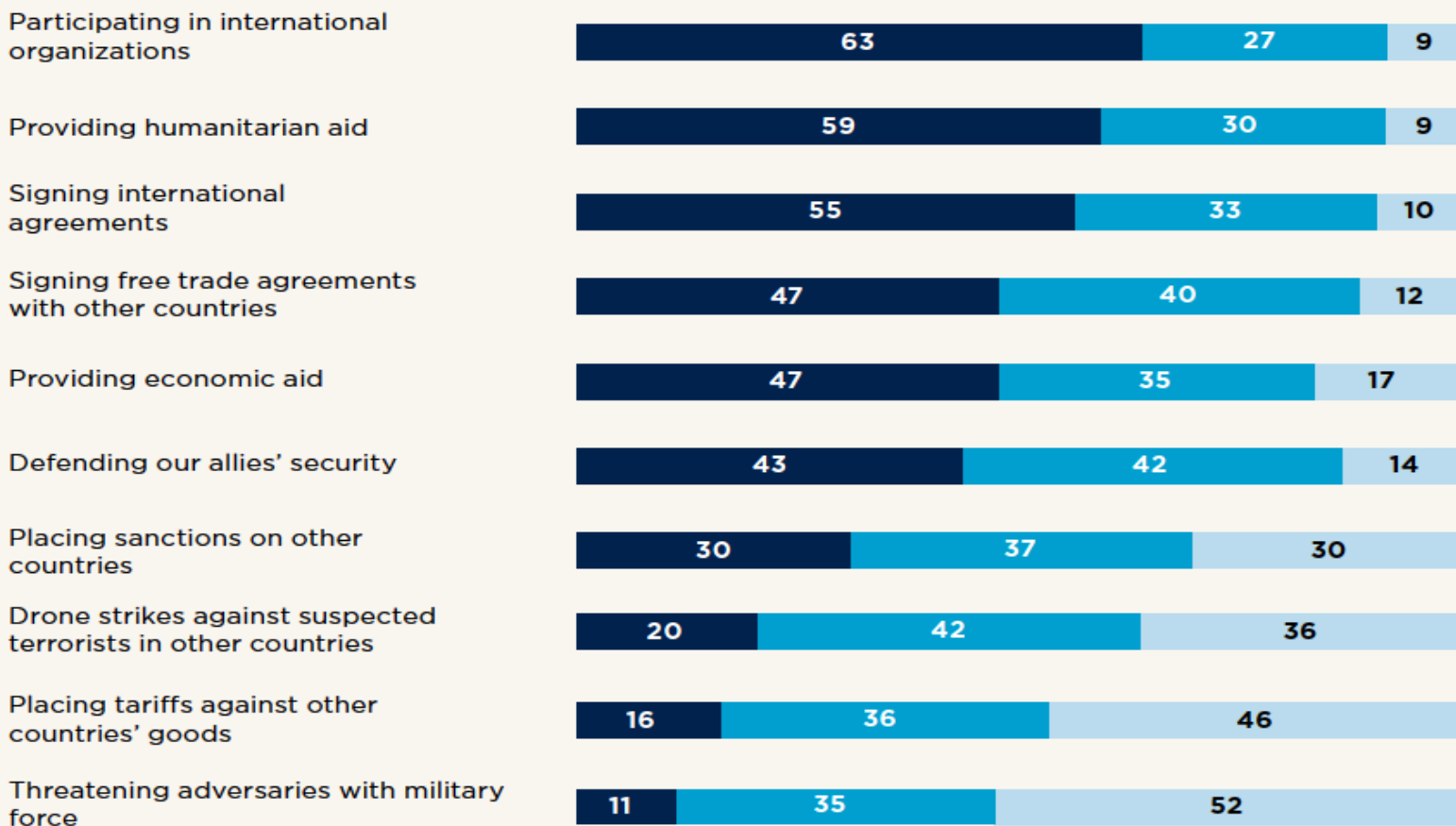
Note: Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

## Figure 7: Democrats' Approaches to Foreign Policy

**The United States uses different foreign policy approaches to achieve its foreign policy goals. Do you think the United States should use the following foreign policy approaches more than it is now, less than it is now, or the same as it is now? (%)**

n = 702

■ More than now ■ Same as now ■ Less than now



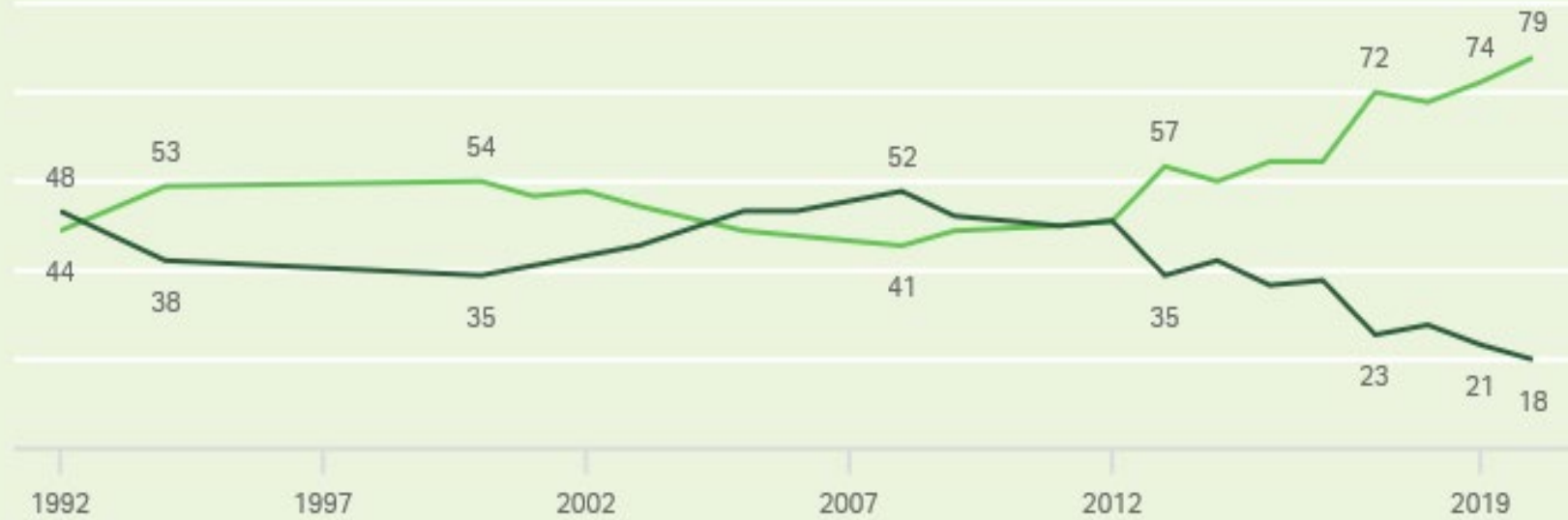
Note: Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



## Americans' Views of What Foreign Trade Means for the U.S.

What do you think foreign trade means for America? Do you see foreign trade more as an opportunity for economic growth through increased U.S. exports or a threat to the economy from foreign imports?

■ % Opportunity for economic growth ■ % Threat to the economy

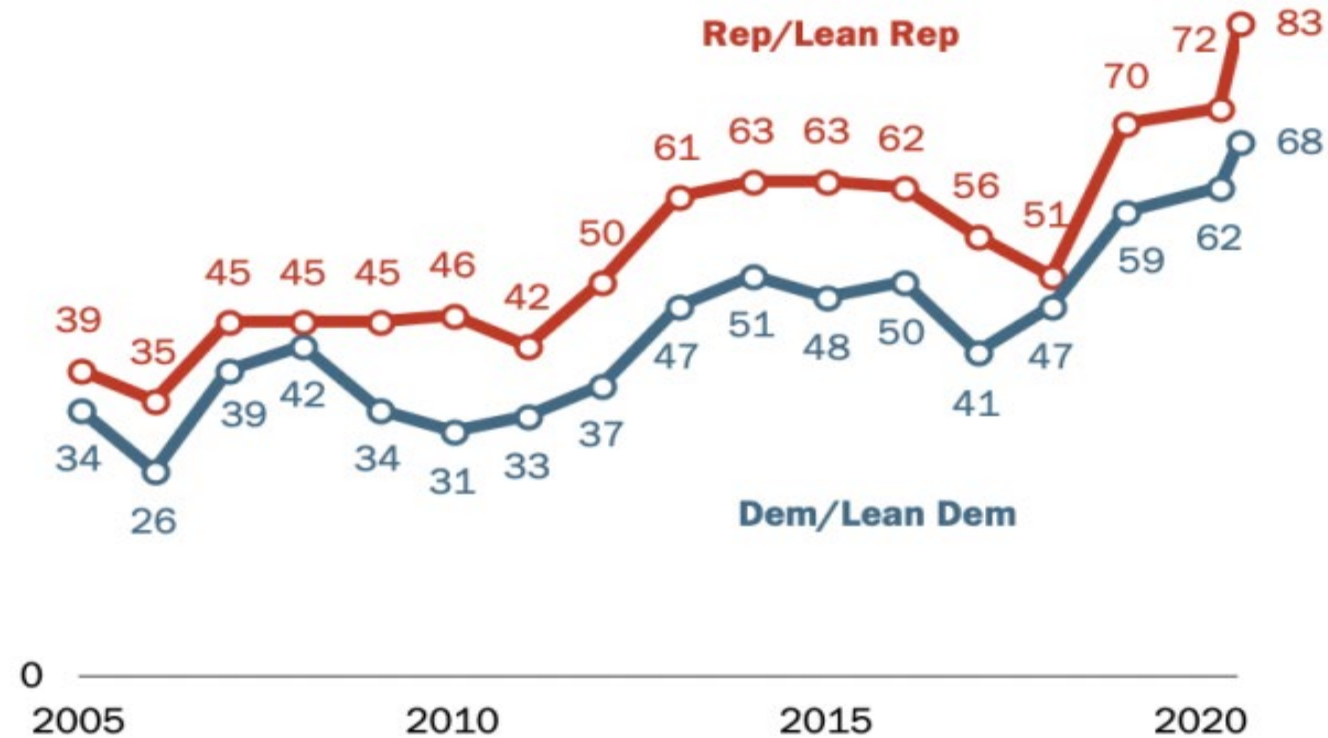


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## Republicans are more negative toward China than Democrats, though all partisans hold increasingly unfavorable views

*% who say they have an unfavorable opinion of China*

100 %



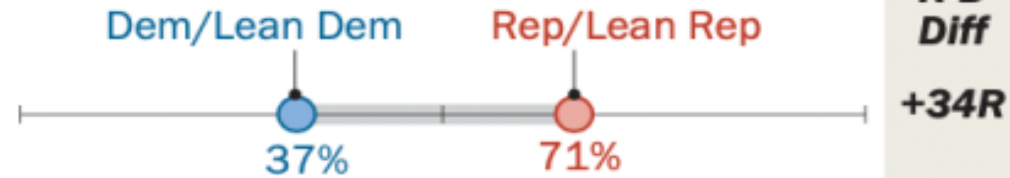
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-July 14, 2020.

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## Republicans generally prefer tougher policy on China

*% who say ...*

The U.S. should hold China responsible for the role it played in the outbreak of the coronavirus, even if it means worsening relations with China



It is more important to get tougher than build a strong relationship with China on economic issues



The U.S. should try to promote human rights in China, even if it harms economic relations with China



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 16-July 14, 2020.

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# **Expect a Tumultuous Election Day and Beyond**

## Confidence in Accuracy of U.S. Elections, by Political Party Self-Identification

How confident are you that, across the country, the votes for president will be accurately cast and counted in this year's election -- very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident or not at all confident?

% Very/Somewhat confident

■ Republicans/Republican leaners ■ Democrats/Democratic leaners

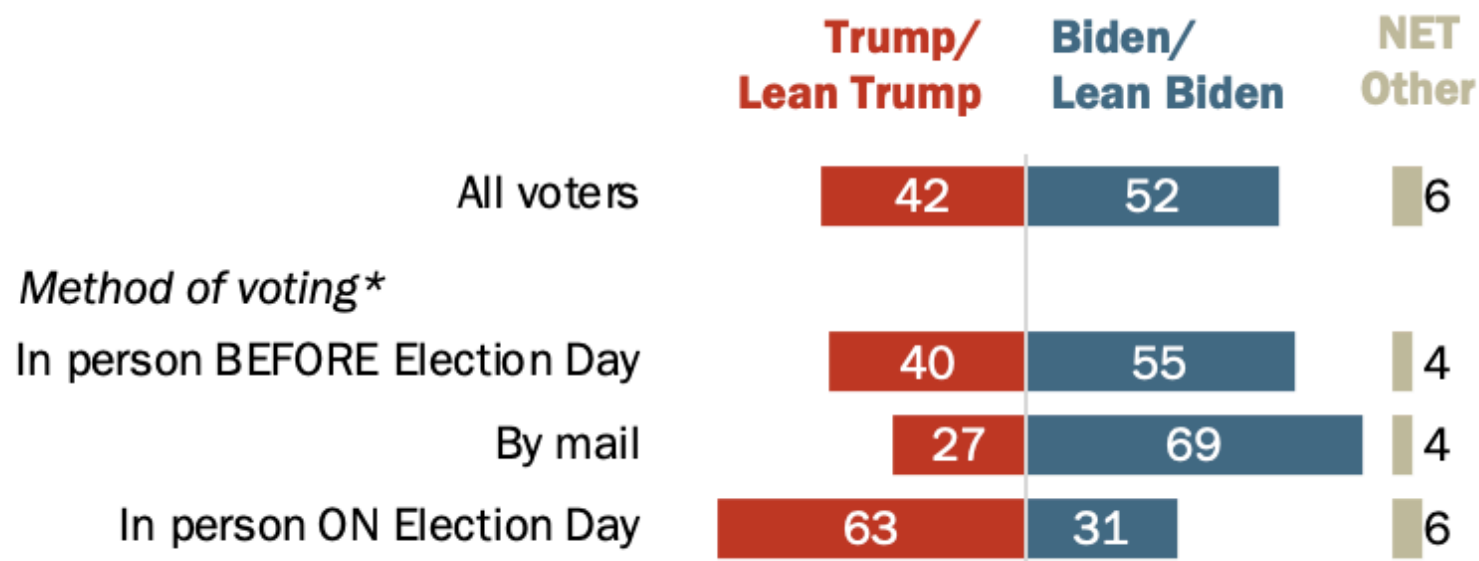


Selected trend based on September/October preelection polling

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## Trump fares better among those who plan to vote on Election Day; Biden holds advantages among mail, early voters

*% of registered voters who support ...*



\*Method of voting categories include those who have already voted.

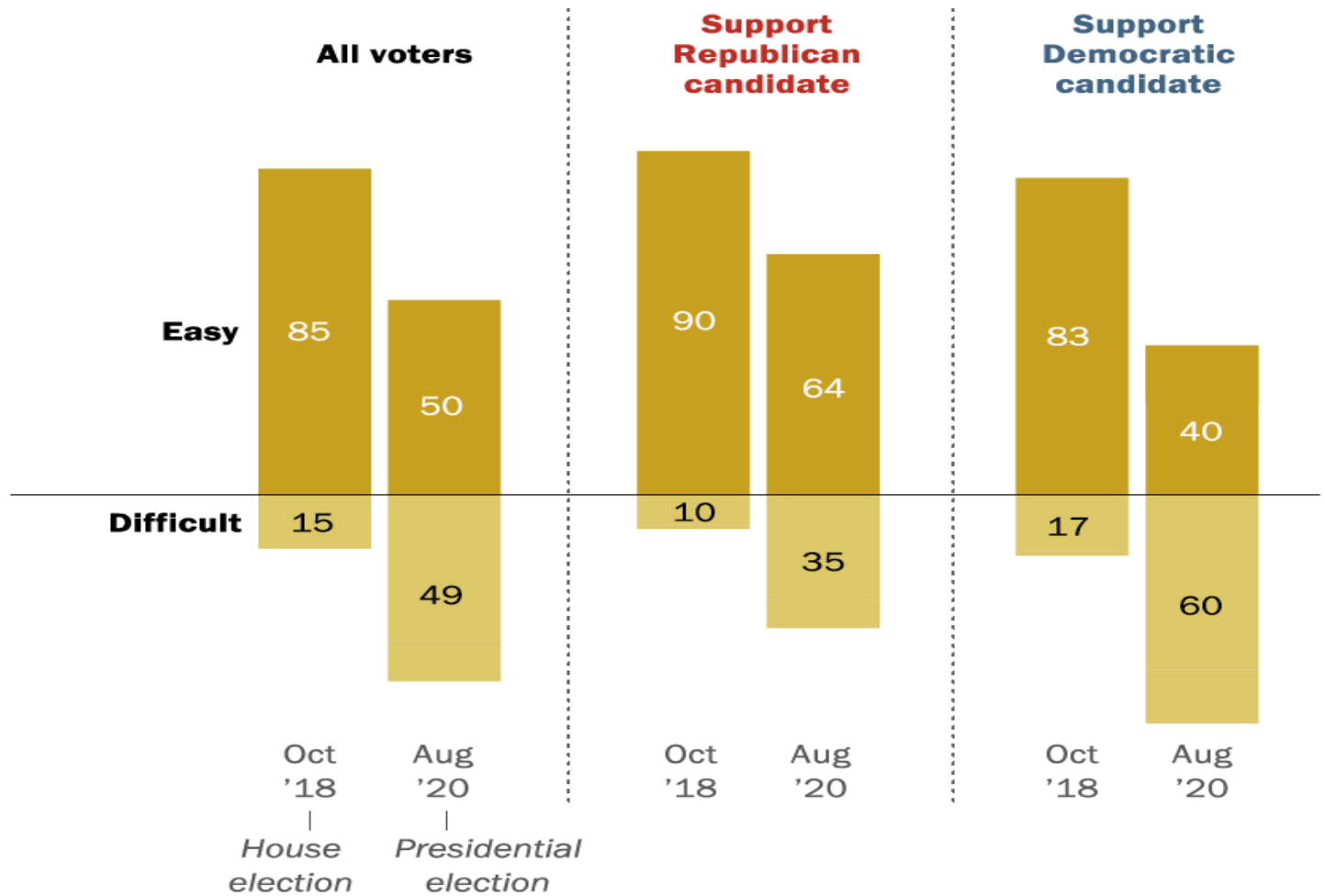
Notes: Based on registered voters. No answer responses not shown. "Other" candidates include those who say they are voting for Jorgensen, Hawkins or someone else.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Sept. 30-Oct. 5, 2020.

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**Half of voters, including a majority of Biden supporters, expect it will be difficult to vote in this year’s election**

*% of registered voters who expect voting in the November elections to be ...*

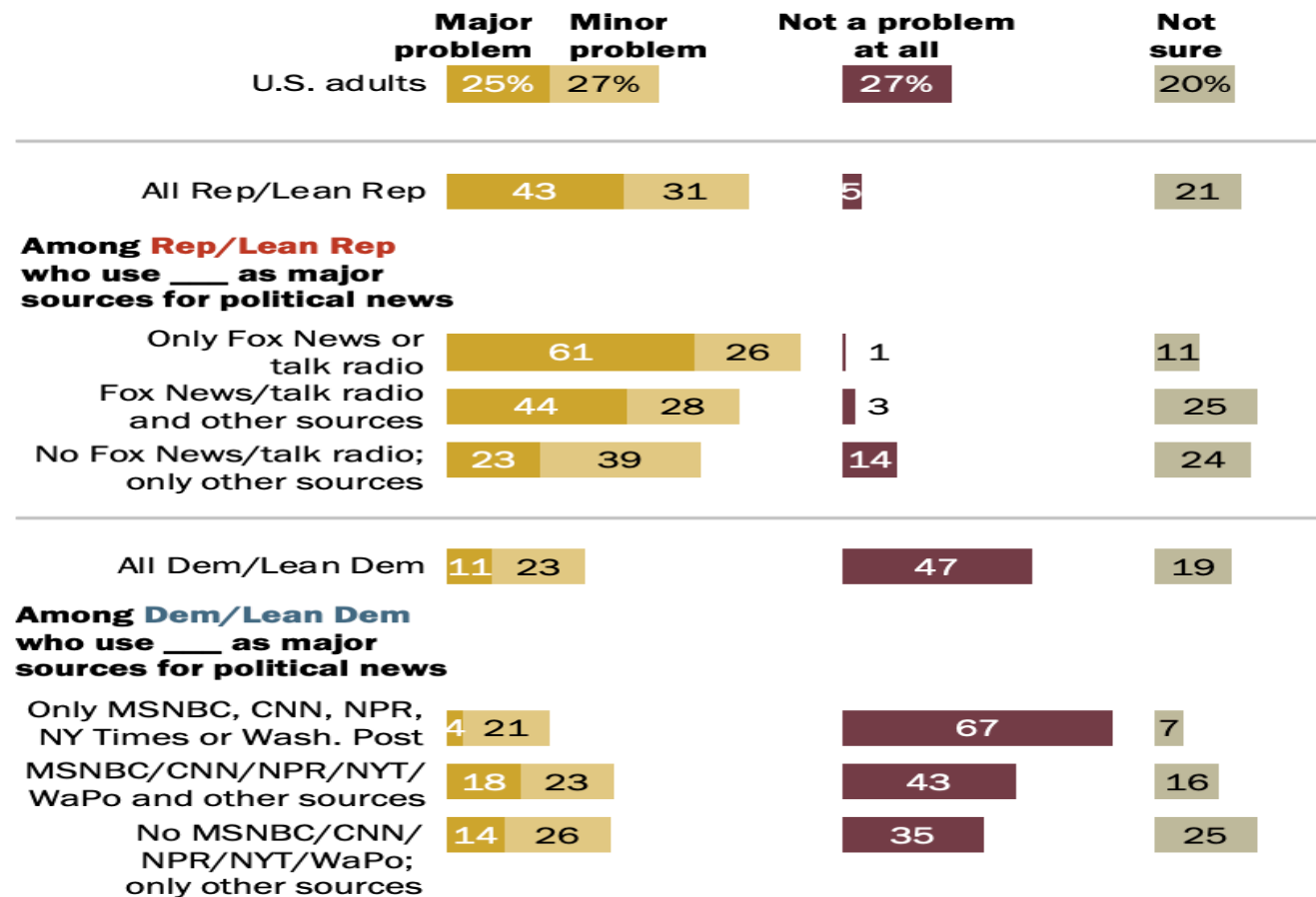


Notes: Based on registered voters. Based on supporters of Republican and Democratic House candidates in 2018, Trump and Biden supporters in 2020. No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted July 27-Aug. 2, 2020.

# Republicans about four times as likely as Democrats to say voter fraud has been a major issue with mail-in ballots

% of U.S. adults who say voter fraud has been a \_\_\_\_ when it comes to voting by mail in U.S. presidential elections



Note: The Fox News cable channel and talk radio shows such as Sean Hannity or Rush Limbaugh have audiences that lean Republican and conservative. MSNBC, CNN, NPR, New York Times and Washington Post have audiences that lean Democratic and liberal. Sources whose audiences are more mixed include ABC, CBS or NBC network television news. Respondents who did not give an answer not shown. See Appendix for more details. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Aug. 31-Sept. 7, 2020. "Political Divides, Conspiracy Theories and Divergent News Sources Heading Into 2020 Election"



# 2020 Presidential Election Outcome

ABC News/Washington Post poll

