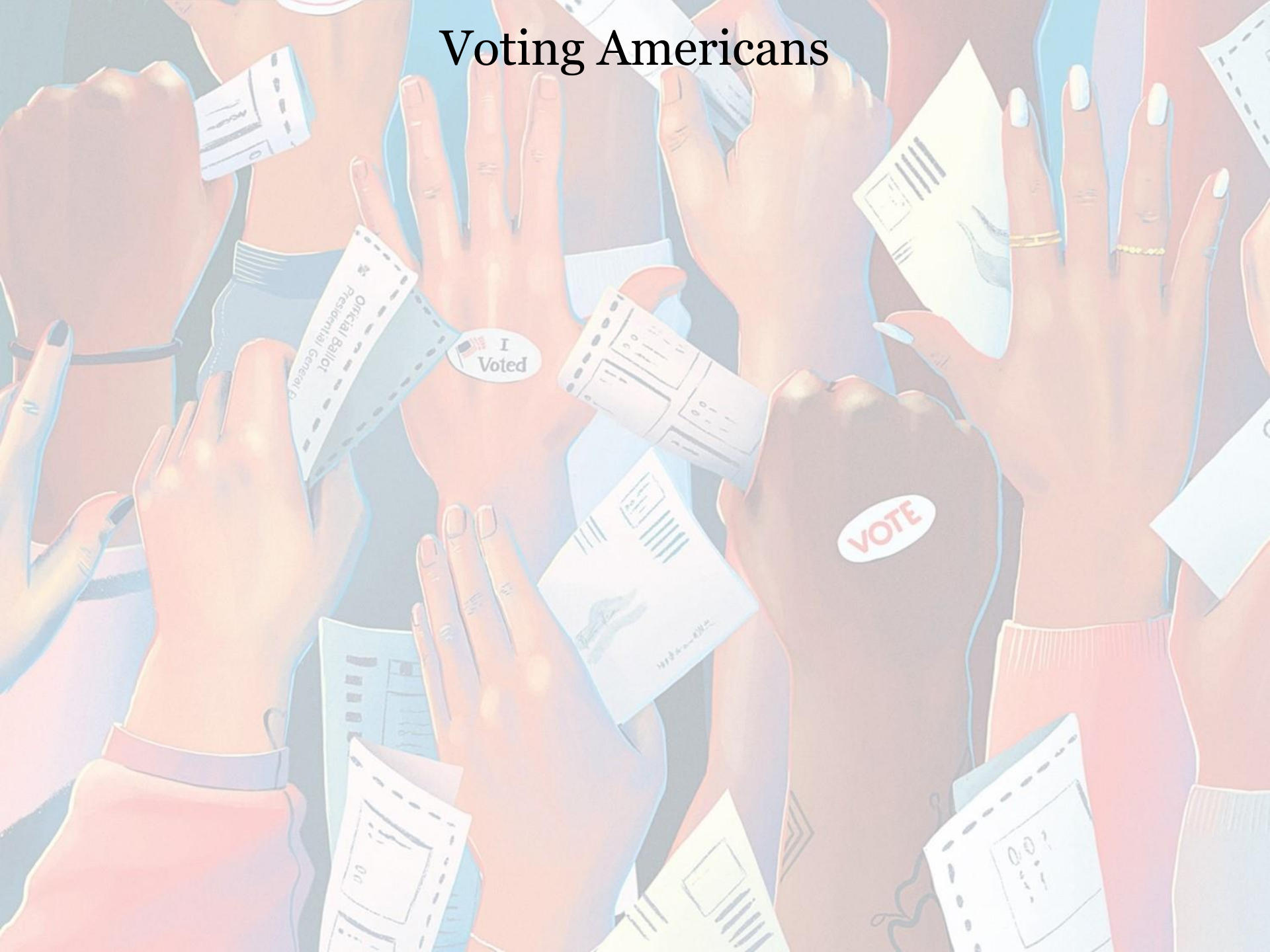


# Voting Americans

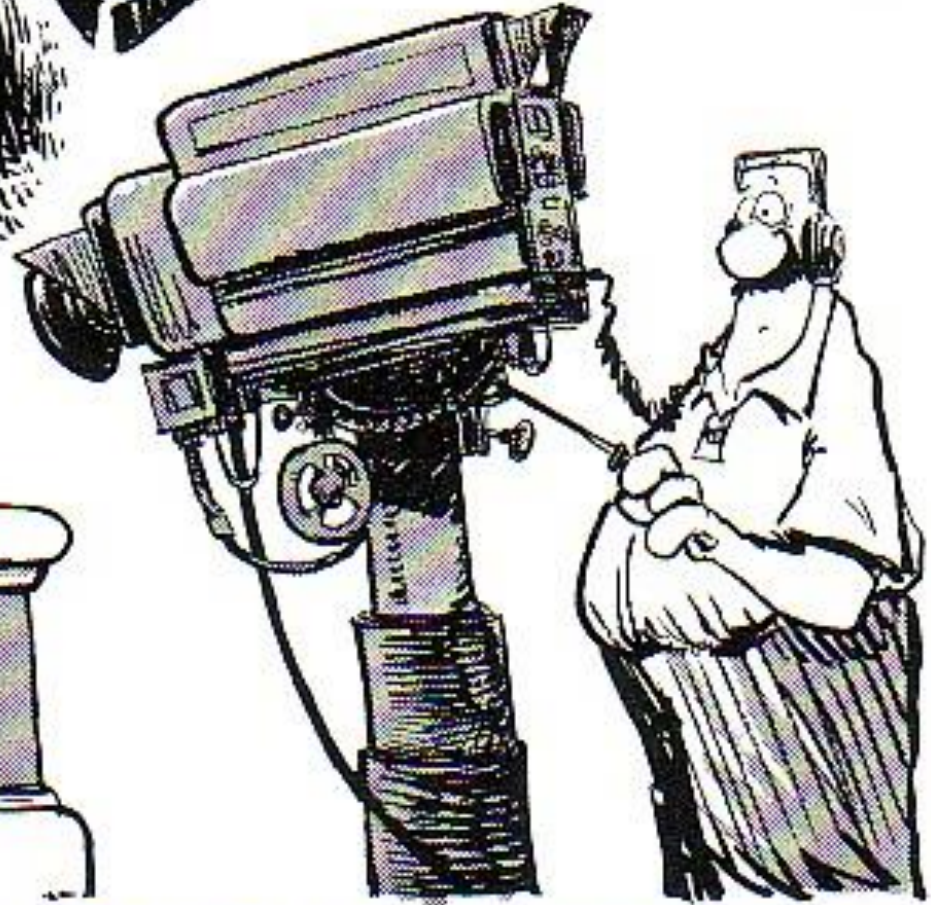




# Public Opinion

RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH, 9/18, 1988. BROOKINS

# NEWS



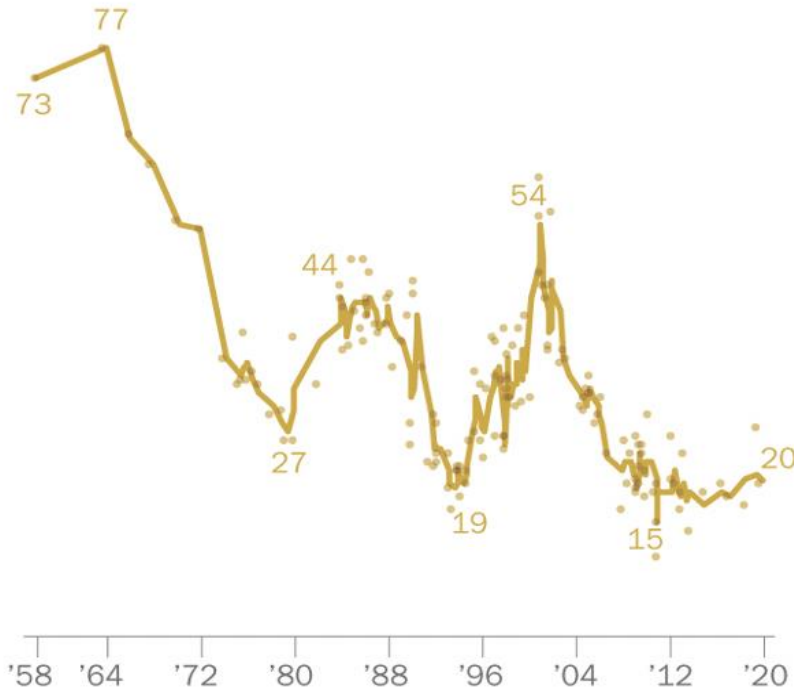
"OUR LATEST POLL SHOWS THAT 68% OF THE VOTERS THINK THAT 91% OF THE POLLS ARE INACCURATE 71% OF THE TIME -- PLUS OR MINUS THREE PERCENTAGE POINTS."



# Forming Opinions

## Public trust in federal government near historic lows for more than a decade

*% who say they trust the federal government to do what is right just about always/most of the time*



Note: From 1976-2020 the trend line represents a three-survey moving average.

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

Trend sources: Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel (2020), Pew Research Center phone surveys (2019 and earlier), National Election Studies, Gallup, ABC/Washington Post, CBS/New York Times, and CNN polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**

-Public opinion: ideas and attitudes that the majority of people hold about a particular issue or person

Many factors influence public opinion:

-Mass media: TV, social media, radio, internet, newspapers, magazines, etc.

-Public officials: government officials in party leadership roles

\*we voted them into office, so when they state their views on issues, they assume party members will feel the same

-Interest groups: influence public opinion to try to persuade people (and public officials) toward their point of view

# Measuring Opinion

- Public opinion polls: surveys conducted by organizations or public officials to monitor public opinion
- Can be misleading if using a simple majority as it could represent only 51% of the polled group
- Effects of Polls:
  - Can make public officials more concerned with pleasing the public rather than making wise decisions and practicing good political leadership
  - Can discourage voting and lead to a “horserace effect”





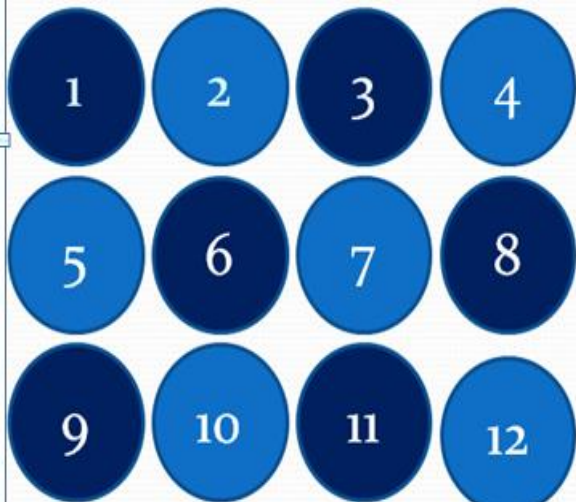
# Measuring Public Opinion and Political Information

How polls are conducted:

1. Random sample: the primary method employed by survey researchers; operates on the principle that everyone should have an equal probability of being selected for the sample
  2. Representative sample: draws from all demographics
- Sample size: 1500
  - Sampling error is the level of confidence in the findings of a public opinion poll:  $\pm 3\%$

## Simple Random Sampling

Population



Sample



12 females 4 males  
75% female 25% male

A representative sample:



6 females 2 males  
75% female 25% male

Accurately  
represents the  
population



# How Americans Vote

- Early 1800s: voting was by voice
- 1888: secret ballots adopted to ensure fairness and honesty
- 1960s: mechanical lever machines were most common
- Today: punch cards, direct recording electronic systems and other paper-ballot alternatives





# Who can Vote?

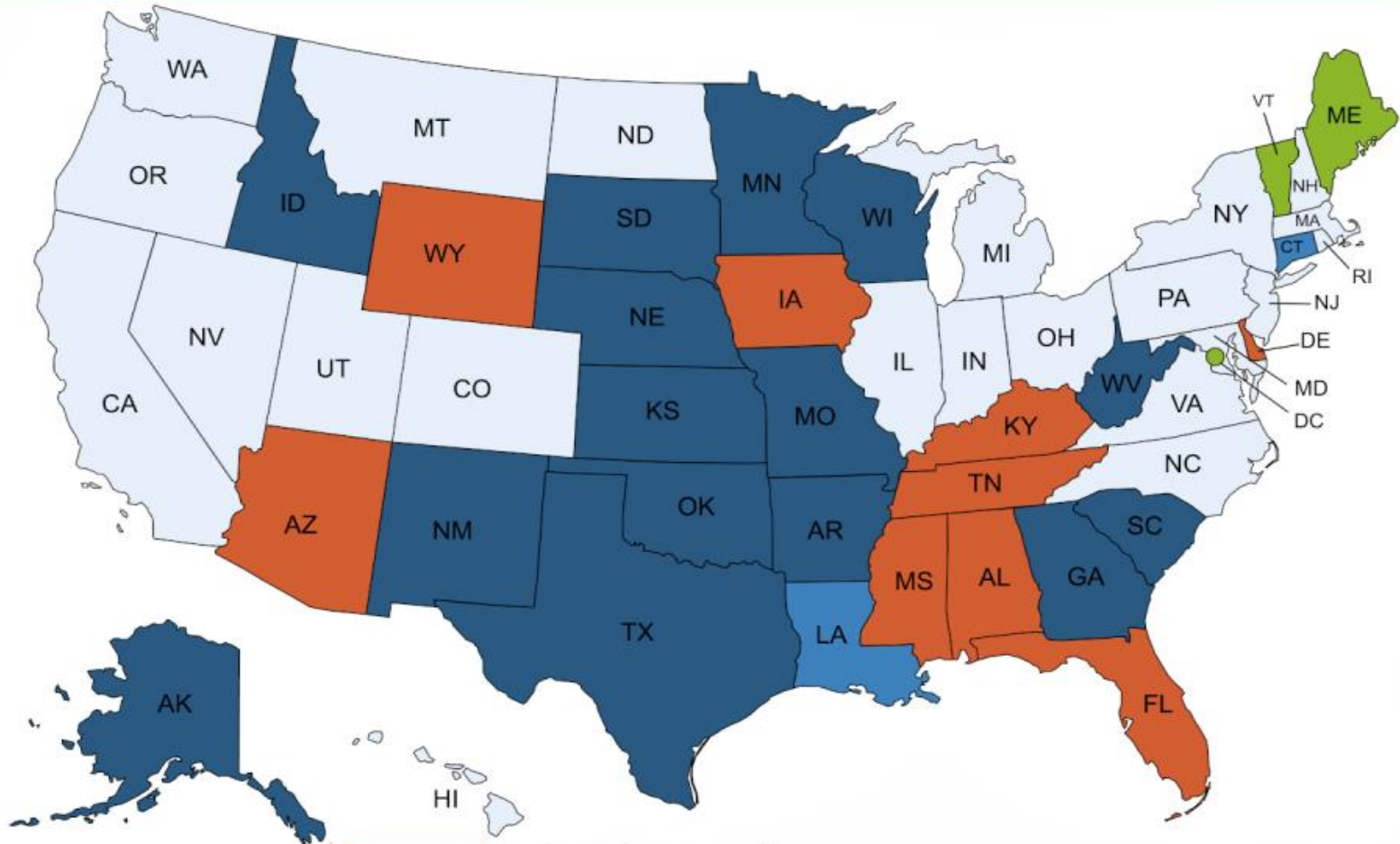
-Requirements to register:






1. 18 years old at the time of the election
2. U.S. citizen
3. Resident of the state for a specified time (varies depending upon state voting laws); some are now allowing same-day registration
4. Felony conviction: some states restore voting rights upon completion of parole or time served



- Electorate: citizens who are eligible to vote
- Constituents: all people that a representative serves in their district, state, etc.

# State Felon Voting Laws & Policies



-  May lose vote permanently
-  Vote restored after prison, parole, & probation
-  Vote restored after prison & parole
-  Vote restored after prison
-  Unrestricted; May vote from prison

Created with mapchart.net

BRITANNICA  
**PROCON.ORG**

RELIABLE.  
NONPARTISAN.  
EMPOWERING.



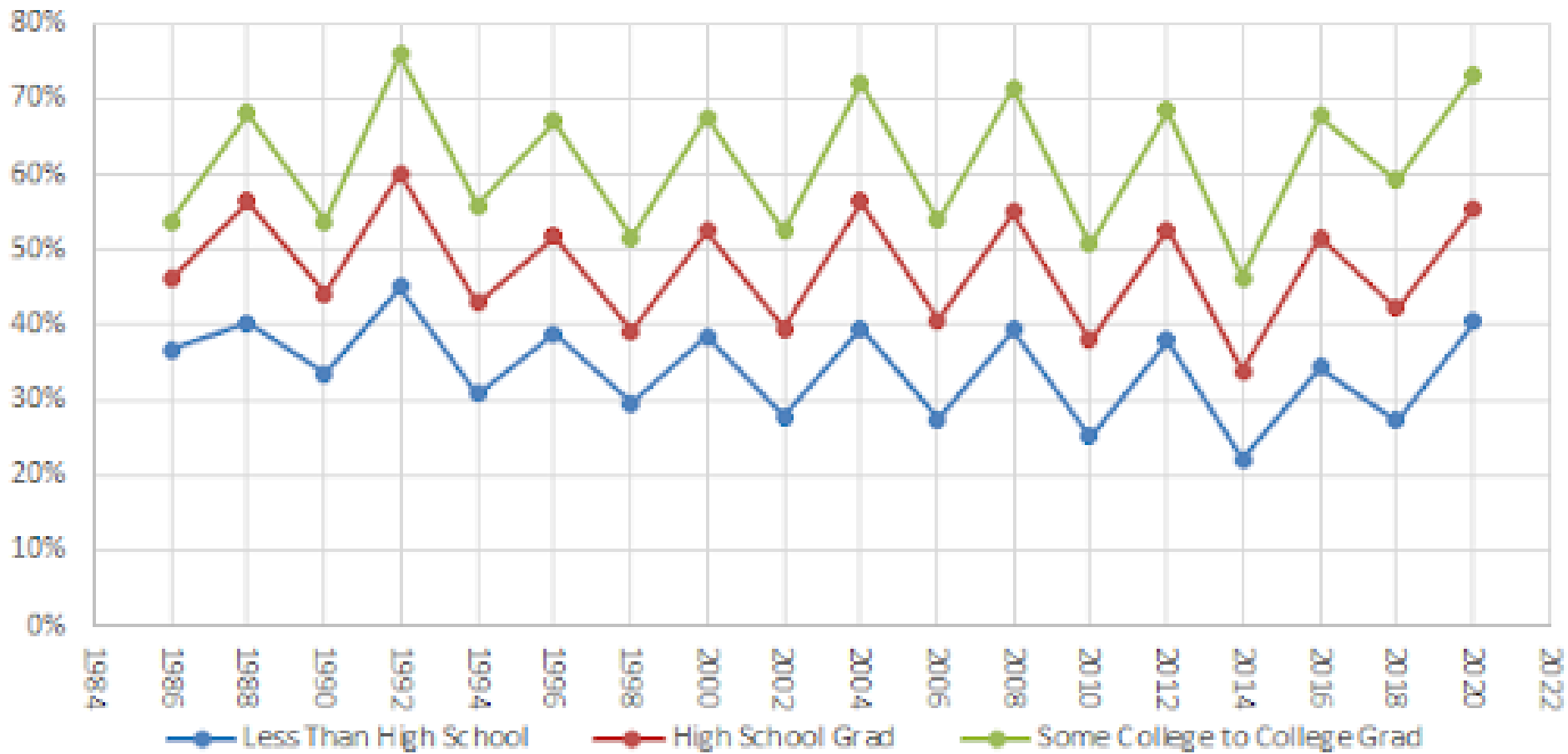
# Likelihood of Voter Participation

An illustration showing a variety of hands of different skin tones and ages, all holding white ballots. The background is a soft, warm gradient. The text is overlaid on the image.

- Education: more education → more likely to vote; tends to be the most determining factor
- Age: older → more likely to vote
- Race: white → more likely to vote
- Gender: female → more likely to vote
- Marital Status: married → more likely to vote
- Union membership: union member → more likely to vote

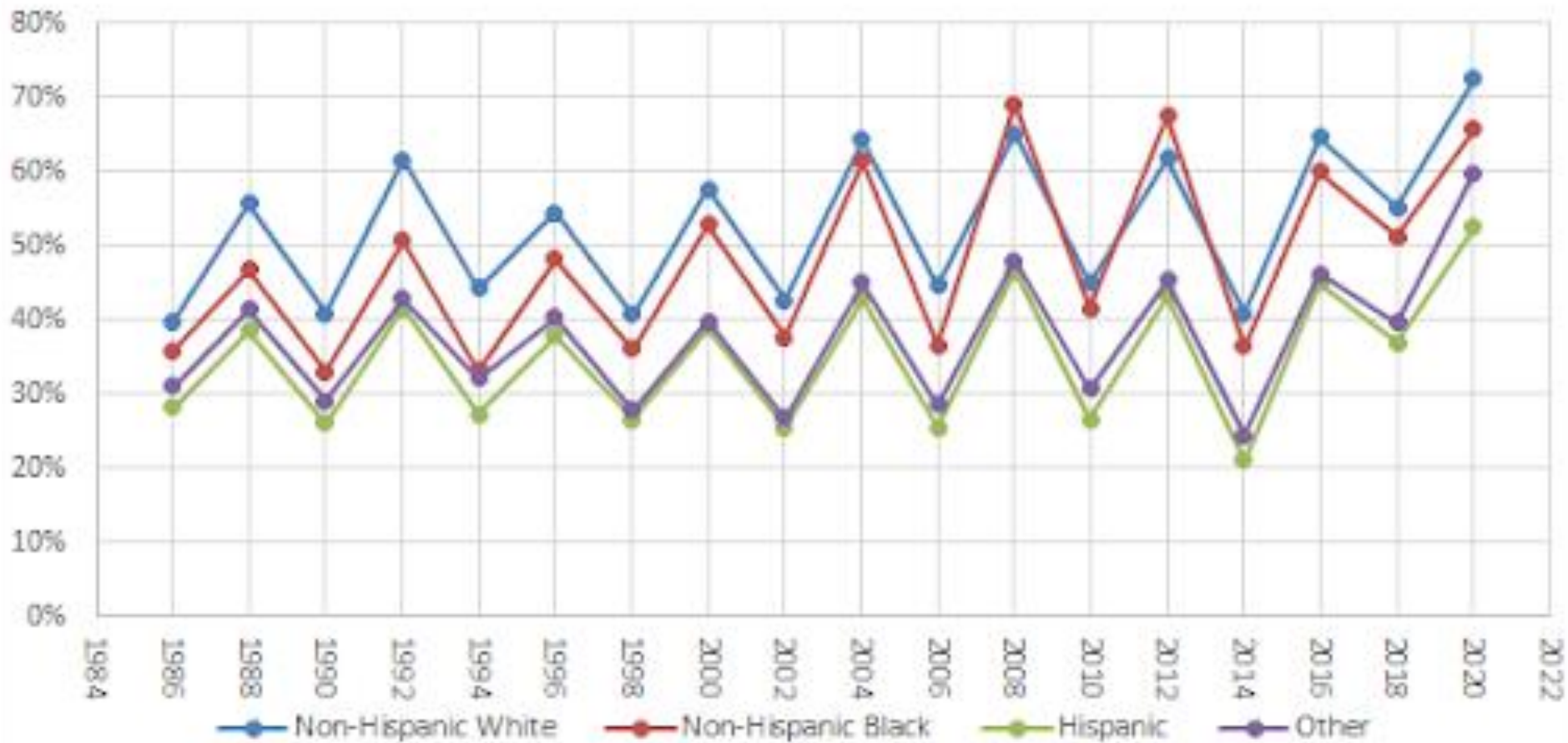
These are cumulative, so possessing several increases the likelihood of voter participation

## Citizen Voting-Age Population Turnout Rates by Education

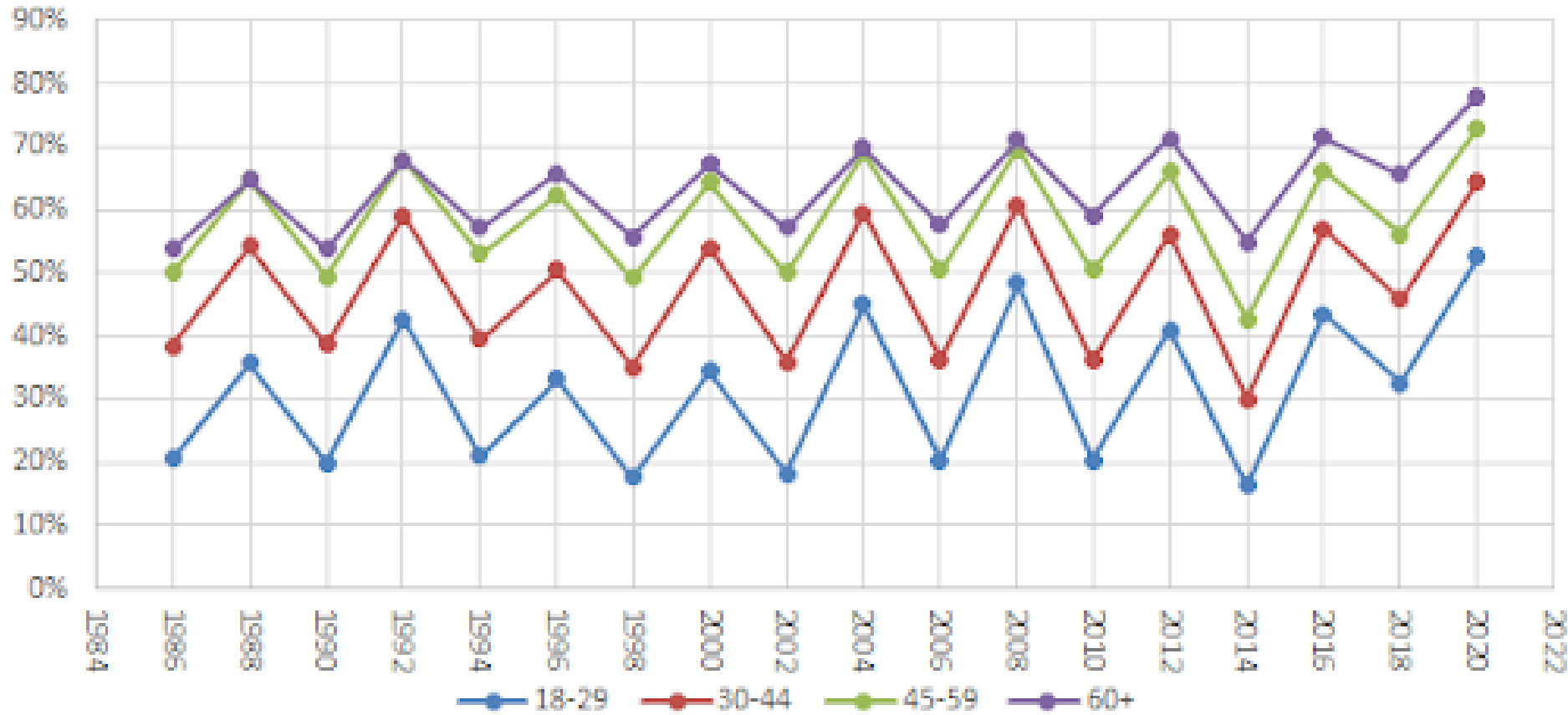




## Citizen Voting-Age Population Turnout Rates by Race and Ethnicity



## Citizen Voting-Age Population Turnout by Age



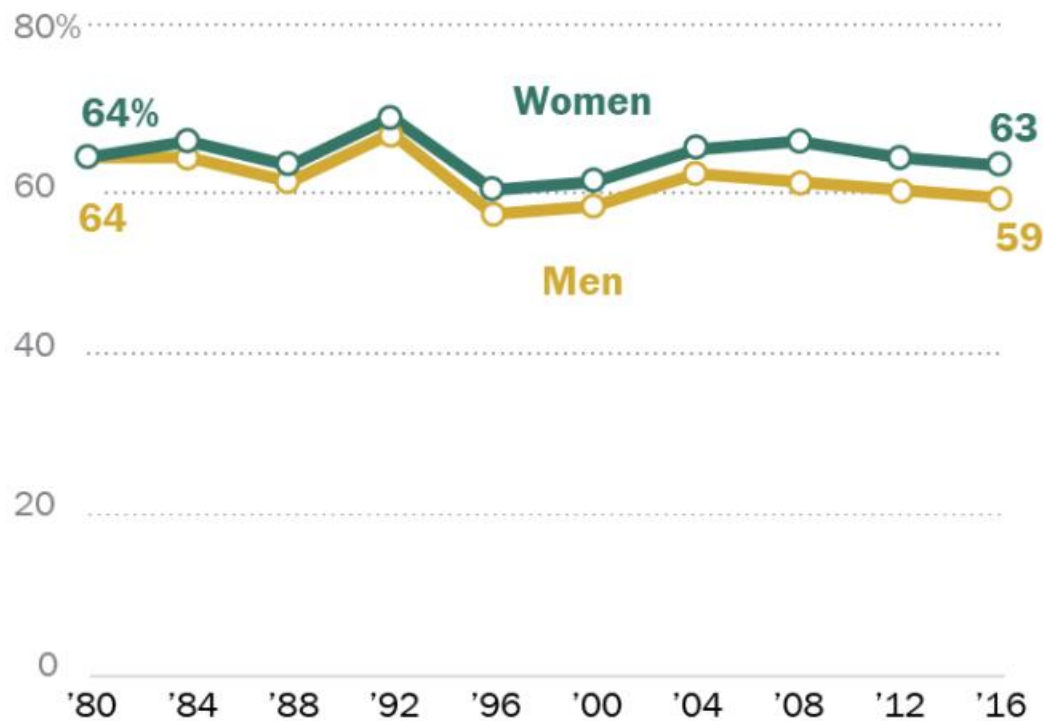


## Historically, women have had slightly higher rates of voter turnout than men

*% of eligible voters who say they voted, by gender*

Note: Eligible voters are U.S. citizens ages 18 and older. Estimates for voter turnout prior to 1996 should be interpreted with caution, as they are not directly comparable to estimates from 1996 and after.

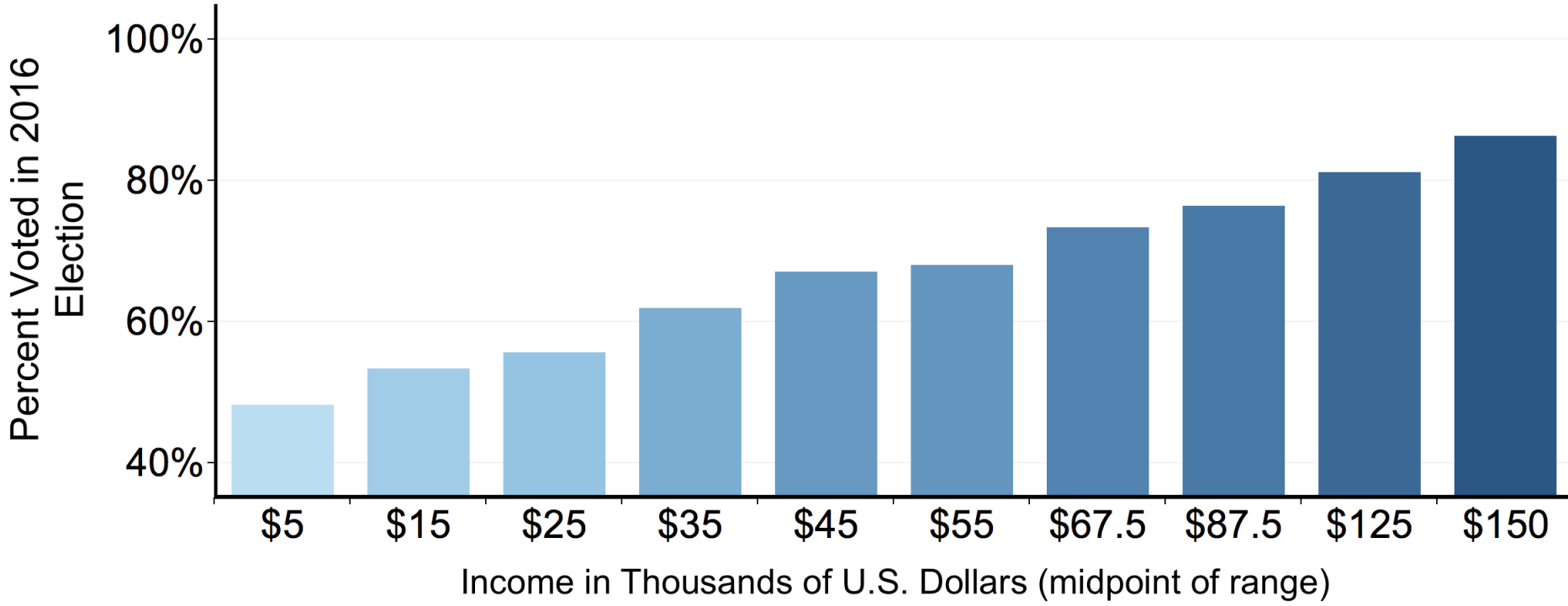
Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of the 1980-2016 Current Population Survey November Supplement.





# Voter Turnout by Family Income

## 2016 Election



Source: Current Population Survey

EconoFact [econofact.org](http://econofact.org)







FIGURE 2

## Voter turnout in midterm elections is higher in states with greater levels of unionization

Voter turnout in midterm elections, 1982–2018

10 states with the highest union density

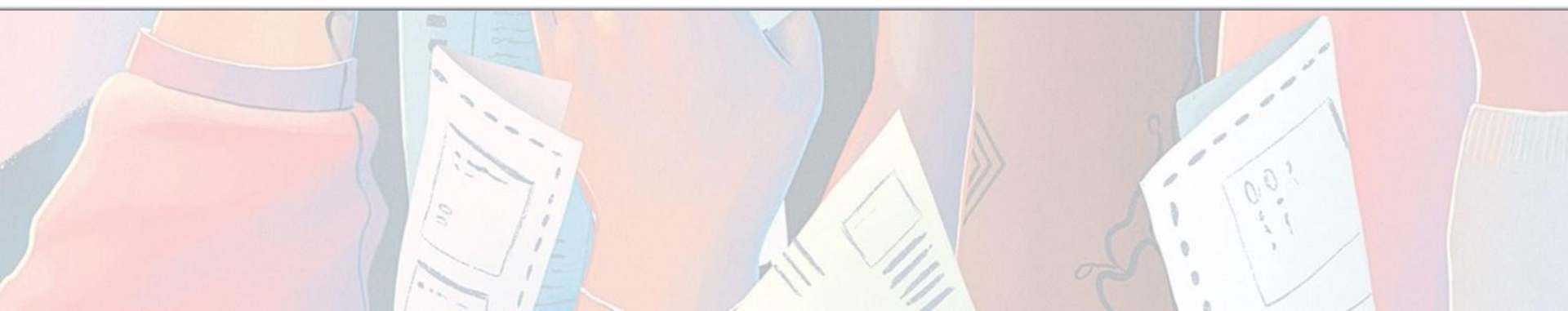
46%

10 states with the lowest union density

38%

Note: States are ranked by total union membership levels.

Source: Authors' analysis of United States Elections Project, "Voter Turnout, State Turnout Rates," available at <http://www.electproject.org/home/voter-turnout/voter-turnout-data> (last accessed February 2019); Unionstats.com, "Union Membership, Coverage, Density and Employment by State and Sector, 2018," available at <http://www.unionstats.com/> (last accessed February 2019).



## 2016 issue importance by age groups

% of registered voters saying each is "very important" to their vote in 2016 ...

	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Young-old diff
	%	%	%	%	
Supreme Court appointments	45	60	74	74	-29
Social Security	57	58	75	78	-21
Terrorism	68	77	85	86	-18
Health care	66	71	76	79	-13
Foreign policy	70	72	77	81	-11
Trade policy	50	53	63	59	-9
Immigration	68	64	75	74	-6
Education	67	64	63	72	-5
Gun policy	71	67	76	75	-4
Economy	80	83	87	83	-3
Abortion	46	43	44	48	-2
Environment	54	47	58	50	+4
Treatment of racial and ethnic minorities	74	67	58	56	+18
Treatment of gay, lesbian and transgender people	50	42	39	32	+18

Note: Based on registered voters. Q40.

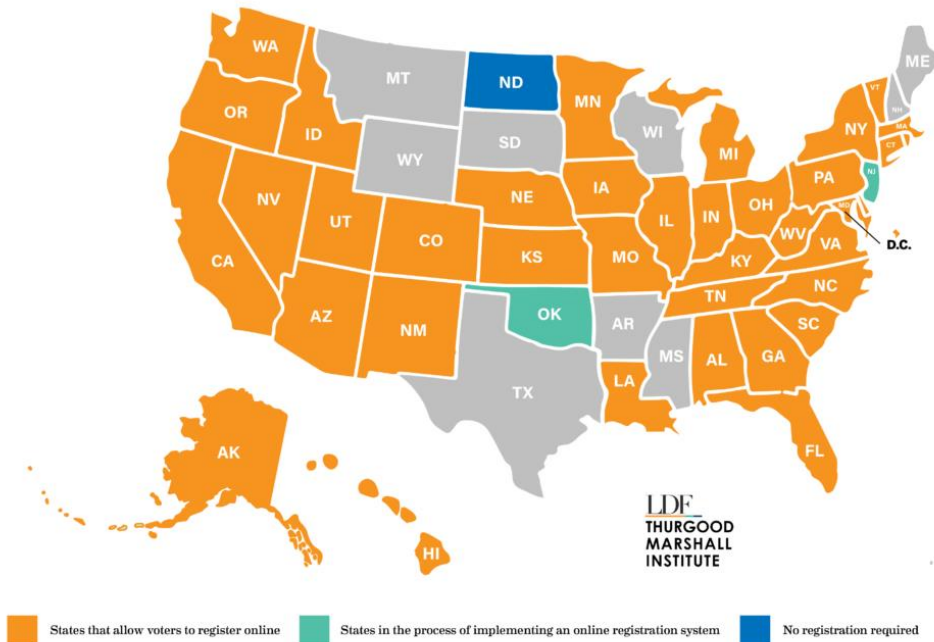
Source: Survey conducted June 15-26, 2016.

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# Preparing to Vote

**38 states and the District of Columbia allow voters to register online.**



As of 2020

[https://ballotpedia.org/Main\\_Page](https://ballotpedia.org/Main_Page)

1. Must be registered to vote
  - Many states have made registering to vote much more accessible before the election
  - The National Voter Registration Act (aka Motor Voter Act) requires states to let people register when they renew their drivers' licenses
  - Registration asks for your name, address, age and often your political party preference (you may register as independent/unaffiliated)
  - If you declare a political party, you may vote in primary elections
2. Be informed about the election through researching candidates

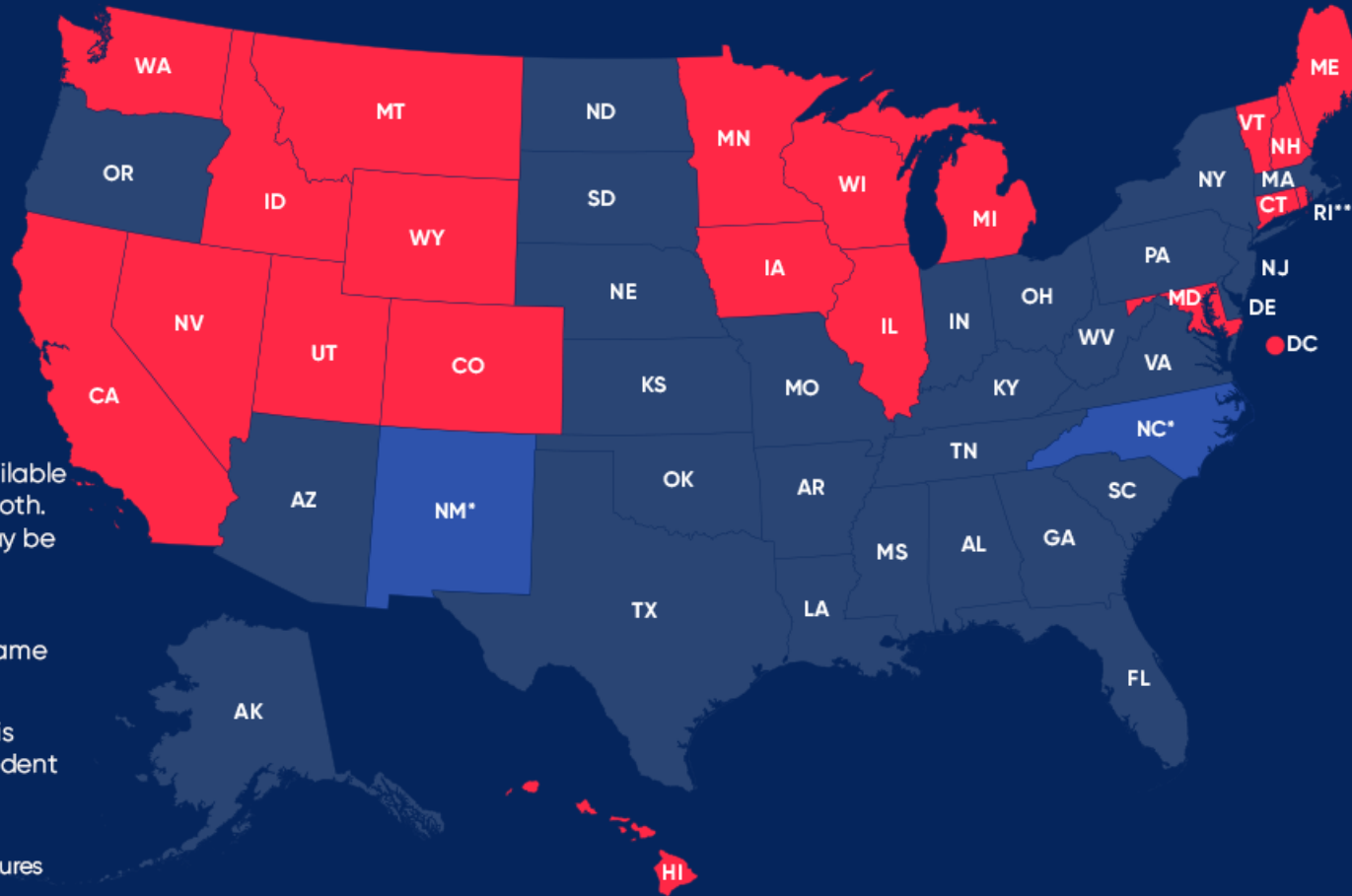
**As of 2020, a total of 22 states plus the District of Columbia have enacted same day registration.**

Same day voter registration may be available during early voting, on Election Day, or both. ID requirements and voting locations may be different than for voters who are already registered when they show up to vote.

\*New Mexico and North Carolina have same day registration only during early voting.

\*\*In Rhode Island same day registration is available, but you can only vote for president and vice president.

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures



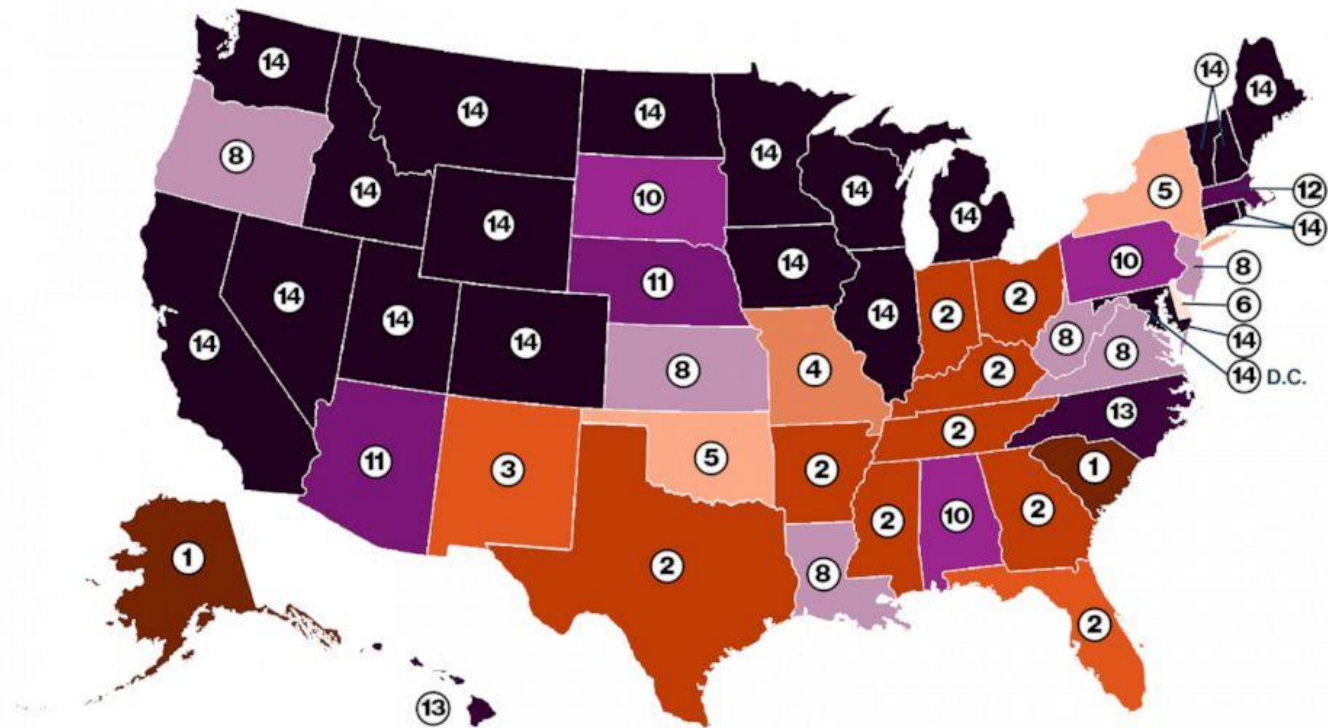
Make a plan to vote at [weall.vote/hub](https://weall.vote/hub)



States in red allow same day registration



# 2020 Election: Latest Voter Registration Deadline



- |   |            |   |                              |   |            |   |            |
|---|------------|---|------------------------------|---|------------|---|------------|
| ① | October 4  | ④ | October 7                    | ⑦ | October 12 | ⑩ | October 19 |
| ② | October 5  | ⑤ | October 9                    | ⑧ | October 13 | ⑪ | October 23 |
| ③ | October 6  | ⑥ | October 10                   | ⑨ | October 16 | ⑫ | October 24 |
| ⑬ | October 31 | ⑭ | November 3<br>(Election Day) |   |            |   |            |

# AGENTS

FAMILY

INTIMATE  
FRIEND'S GROUP

## POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

The process by which a person integrates with the political culture of the society gains knowledge of the political values, ideals, and beliefs of the society and acquires a social and political nature is called political socialization.

EDUCATIONAL  
INSTITUTION

MASS MEDIA

POLITICAL  
PARTIES

RELIGIOUS  
ORGANIZATION

PROFESSIONAL  
ORGANIZATION



# How Americans Learn About Politics: Political Socialization

-Political Socialization:  
the process through  
which an individual  
acquires his or her  
political orientation

Agents of Political  
Socialization:

-The family: time &  
emotional  
commitment;  
political leanings of  
children often mirror  
their parent's  
leanings

\*most experts will  
agree this agent has  
the strongest impact



Copyright by Steve Kelley.



- The Mass Media: generation gap in news viewership
- School/education: used by government to socialize the young into mainstream culture and system of government





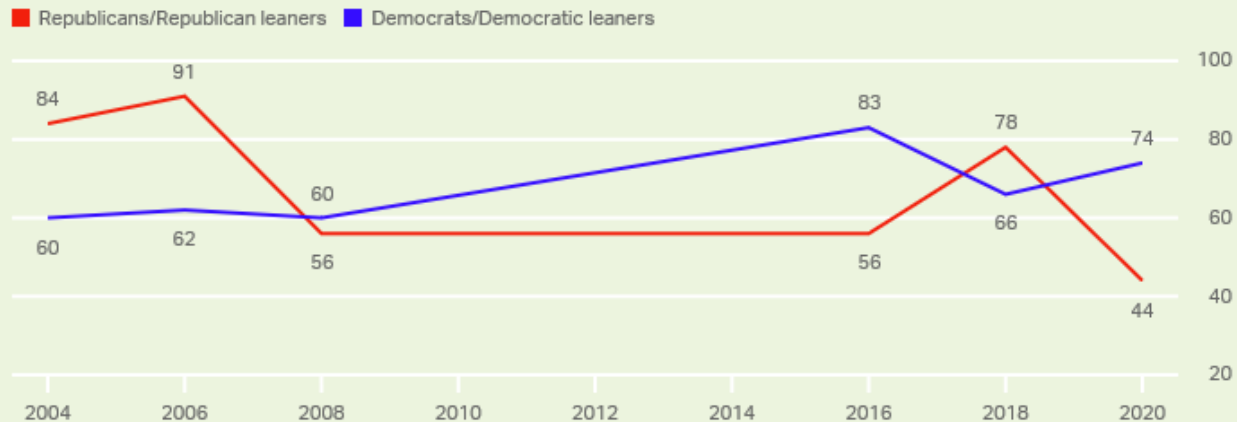
# Whether to Vote: A Citizen's First Choice

- Legitimacy: the people's belief that the government has the right to rule
- Political efficacy: the belief that one's political participation matters
- Civic duty: the belief that in order to support democratic government, a citizen should always vote

## 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



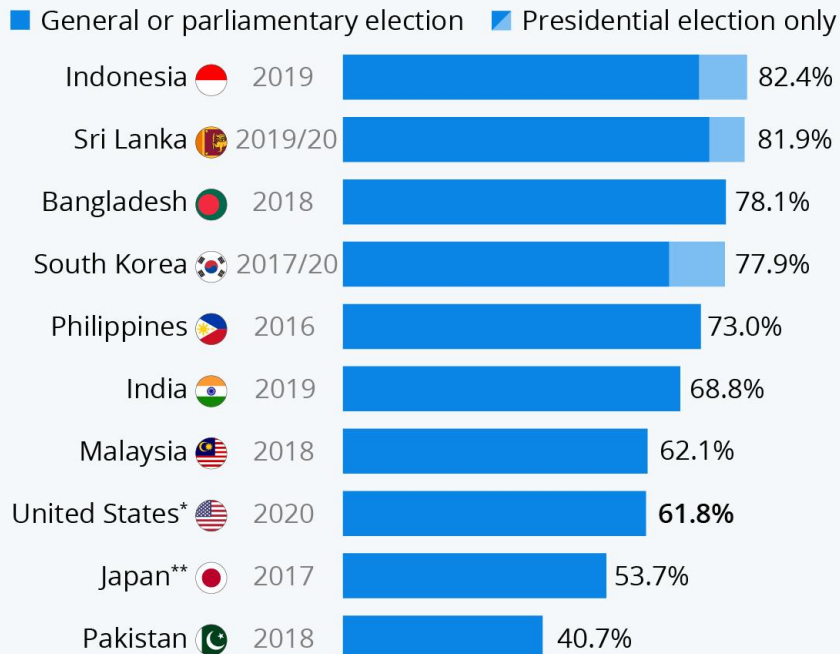
Selected trend based on September/October preelection polling

GALLUP

# Who Doesn't Vote?

## How U.S. Voter Turnout Measures Up in Asia

Share of voting age population in selected countries that voted in the most recent national elections



Excludes midterms

\* preliminary

\*\* of registered voters

Sources: Institute For Democracy and International Assistance, Inter-Parliamentary Union, U.S. Elections Project



-Some citizens have lost the privilege of voting

Some states allow felons to vote from prison while other states permanently ban felons from voting even after being released from prison, parole, and probation, and having paid all their fines.

(NC allows felons to vote once they've successfully completed probation)

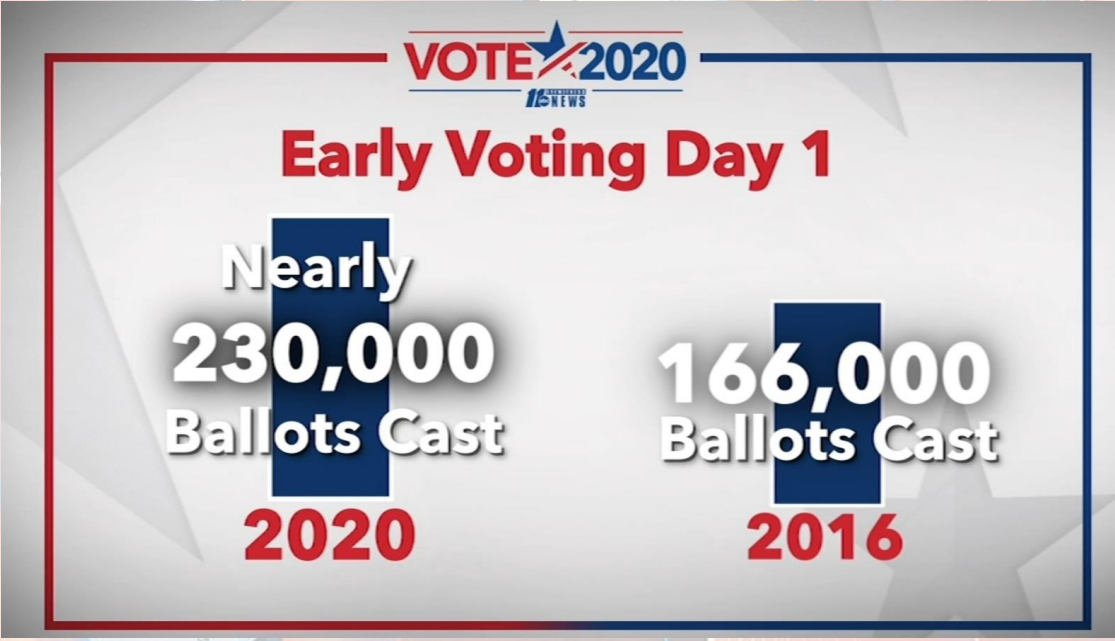
-Some did not register (some could have moved too close to the election)

-Apathy: a lack of interest



# Maneuvering Around Voting Obstacles

- Advertisements that promote the election to select demographics with lower turnout
- Changing of voting laws to ease the registration and election day process
- Polling places: usually set up in town halls, schools, fire stations, community centers and other commonly-known public buildings
- Voting times: open early and close late (many employers are flexible on elections days)
- Early voting, absentee, and mail-in ballots available

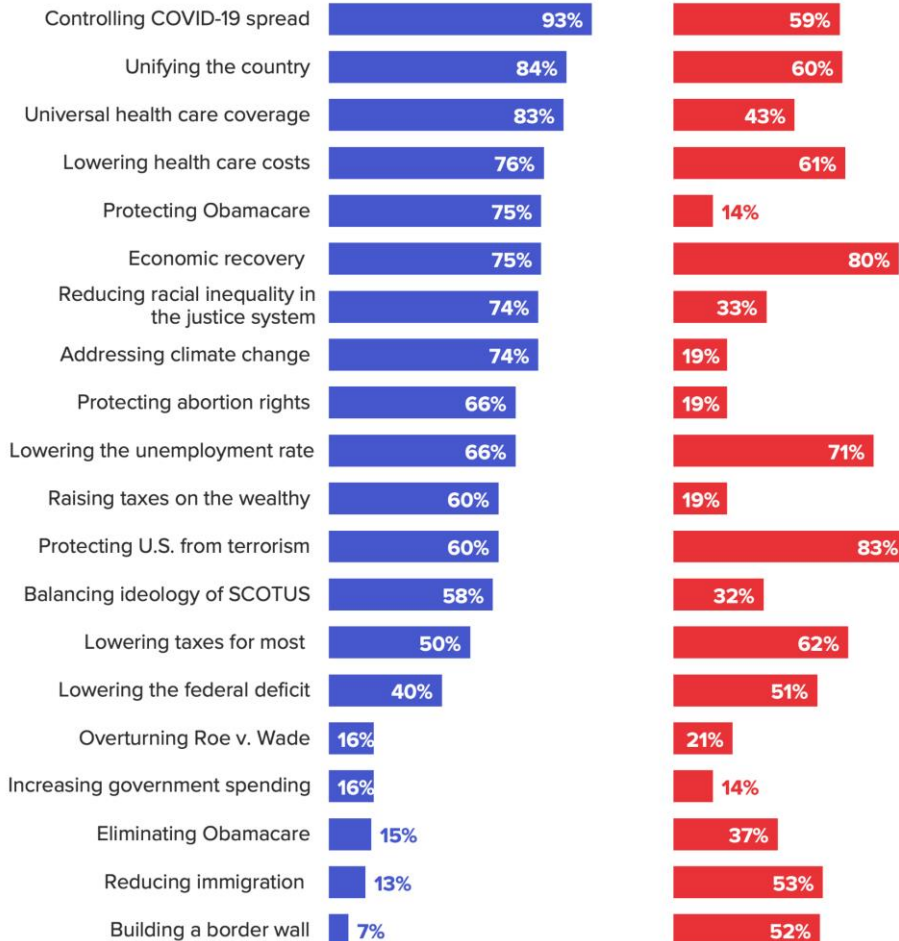


# Why Should You Vote?

POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE: U.S. EXIT POLLING

## The Issues That Are Motivating 2020 Voters

Share of **Biden voters** and **Trump voters** who said the following issues were "very important" in deciding whom to vote for:



- Opportunity to choose our leaders
- Participate in government
- Voice opinions about certain issues

Some questions voters feel are important:

- Does the candidate have relevant experience?
- Will they be effective in office?  
Have they been in the past?  
What have their promises been versus what have they delivered?
- Candidate's stance on issues that matter most to the voter
- Are they a person of character?