

United States: The Presidential Election Results and Meaning

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Joseph Biden and Kamala Harris are the winners of the 2020 presidential election. The Democratic candidates won more votes than any ticket in history. However, Trump won the second most votes, indicating how close the election was.

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Harris is the first woman, and the first person of color (she is of Black and Asian heritage) to be elected to the second highest post.

The presidential election did not go as the pollsters predicted. As happened four years ago, Donald Trump won millions more votes than the polls and the Democratic Party establishment expected.

Under the Constitution, the president is not elected by popular vote. Instead, an Electoral College, composed of electors from each state elect the president. Each state is allowed the number of electors as the number of Congressional seats each state has, for a total of 538. A majority, at least 270, is needed to win.

Biden/Harris passed that threshold on Saturday, November 7.

What has become the norm is that electors pledged to the winning candidate in 48 states go to the Electoral College. In two states there is a modified version. The Electoral College will meet on December 14 to rubber-stamp the outcome.

The defeated candidate, Donald Trump, has filed several lawsuits to reverse the results before December 14. Trump said before and after the election that it was "stolen" from him and he was elected president.

The Democrats lost seats in the House.

The Republicans may hold the Senate. As of this writing (November 8), both sides have 48 Senators. There are two runoff elections in Georgia in early January. Two other Senatorial seats are still being counted. The outcome will determine which party controls the Senate.

The key voting bloc to elect Biden and Harris were African Americans in cities in key battleground states— Detroit (Michigan), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) and Atlanta (Georgia).

Trumpism will not go away

There is a deep polarization in the country.

An increasingly radicalized white supremacist right wing wants a strongman to institute “law and order” to keep Black and Latino people “in their place”. It sees Black Lives Matter protests as anti-American riots.

On the other side, Black, Brown and many white people are terrified of Donald Trump and his policies.

This polarization is expressed by the historic turnout for both candidates. The white supremacist who separates children from their families and who oversaw the deaths of 240,000 Americans and counting as a result of COVID-19 got over 70 million votes.

In 2016 Trump received about 62 million votes; Hillary Clinton won nearly 65 million votes, with 55 percent of eligible voters going to the polls.

Trump received so far around 71 million votes. Biden received 75 million votes, for a total of about 66 percent of registered voters who voted.

When Trump says the election was stolen from him and he remains president, many tens of millions of Americans believe him, and are enraged by the election result. If we mean by Trumpism white supremacy coupled with a drive toward authoritarianism, that has a mass base which will not disappear whatever happens to Trump as an individual.

Where did Trump get his votes? He targeted his base of white voters and whites who do not normally vote. He got them. It is the reason why the national and state pollsters were so wrong.

Overall, the number of whites voting increased but as a percent of total vote, it was about the same as the 2016 election.

Trump also targeted Blacks and Latinos. The goal was to increase his support to offset an increase of Black and Latino turnout. Many Black men are tired of being taken for granted by the Democrats. Trump appears to have won a larger share of the minority vote than any Republican since 1960.

He won more Black men and women than in 2016. Roughly (as of this writing) 18 percent Black men voted for Trump. In 2016 it was about 11 percent. Black women who are the strongest voting base of the Democratic Party also gave him more votes. In 2016 only 4 percent of Black women voted for Trump. In 2020 he got around 8 percent.

His support among various Latino communities was not homogenous. Cuban Americans (3 percent of the total Latino population) gave Trump a large turnout in South Florida. Venezuelans and Nicaraguans who left their countries over their opposition to governments that they considered “communist” and “socialist” also are largely in South Florida.

Answering critics who say that people of color “under performed” for Democrats, *Democracy Now!* co-host Juan González says “The main story is that people of color, especially Latinos, flocked to the polls in numbers that far exceeded what the experts had expected, while the total number of votes cast by white Americans barely increased from the last presidential election. How come none of the experts are asking why white voters underperformed the Democratic Party?

“And let me be a little bit more specific,” said Gonzalez. “There does appear to have been some

areas of the country where there was an increase in the percentage of the Latino vote for Donald Trump, specifically in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and in the Miami-Dade County [in South Florida], both of which, I should note, for those people who know the voting patterns of the Latino community, have always been relatively conservative areas of the Latino community in terms of voting. Even though South Texas is largely Democratic, it's always been a moderate to centrist or conservative Democratic voting bastion. But my analysis of the numbers shows a completely different story when you look at the country as a whole."

Charles Blow, an African American columnist for *The New York Times*, observed the day after the election:

"After all that Donald Trump has done, all the misery he has caused, all the racism he has aroused, all the immigrant families he has destroyed, all the people who have left this life because of his mismanagement of a pandemic, still roughly half of the country voted to extend this horror show. "Let me be specific and explicit here: White people — both men and women — were the only group in which a majority voted for Trump, according to exit polls. To be exact, nearly three out of every five white voters in America are Trump voters."

"Not only did a majority of white men vote for Trump, so did a majority of white women. In 2016, exit polls also showed that a majority of white women had done so, but later an analysis of validated voters by the Pew Research Center [1] found that a plurality of white women voted for Trump, not a majority.

"In any case, white women voted for Trump at higher rates than all other women, despite the fact that Trump has spent his first term, indeed his whole life, denigrating women."

In other words, white men and women voted for Trump (a white nationalist and supremacist) consciously. He represented the white majority and its concerns better than anyone else. The fear of the "other" is strong among this group.

The racial polarization was also seen among gay men.

In September, the gay social network Hornet published the result of a survey of 10,000 of its users that found that 45 percent of the gay men on it planned to vote for Trump.

Hornet wrote on its blog: "The idea that gay men — a demographic that typically skews left — would vote for Donald Trump at a higher percentage than U.S. citizens overall would no doubt be very surprising were it to happen." And another surprise: 10 percent of the American gay men who took Hornet's survey say they 'do not support [Donald Trump] at all' but will vote for him nonetheless."

Two members of the far right cult, Qanon, were elected to Congress. They champion the conspiracy theory that Democrats and all who oppose Trump are part of a vast pedophile underground organization. Some go further and charge that this cabal kills and eats children. Six of their members planned to gun down voting workers who were counting votes in Philadelphia before they were stopped and arrested by police.

These two weirdos will push the Republican mainstream even further right.

The election was held while the pandemic is rapidly raging. Most Trump supporters refused to wear cloth masks. They believed Trump that the virus was not that serious. So, when Trump countered "jobs and the economy" versus health and defeating the COVID-19 virus, they supported Trump.

What Biden's presidency will look like

Biden did not stress other issues besides Trump's deliberate failure concerning the pandemic, and the need to throw out Trump.

He distanced himself from the progressive wing of the Democratic Party, including representatives like Alexandra Ocasio Cortez from the Bronx, New York, and other women in "The Squad", as well as Bernie Sanders, and DSA (Democratic Socialists of America) candidates in the Democratic Party who won. These representatives all won reelection where they had previously defeated establishment Democrats.

Biden opposed "Medicare for all" (national health insurance) and the Green New Deal. "I defeated those guys" who supported both proposals in the Democratic primaries, Biden boasted.

Biden pledged to find common ground with Republicans, which means he will move further to the right, and justify this as the need to compromise.

Some Democratic Senatorial candidates who were expected to win and gain control of the Senate lost. If the Republicans keep control of the Senate, Biden will likely shift even more to the right to appease conservative "Never Trumpers" who supported him. Police reforms as demanded by the Black Lives movement will be even less likely. Expect more funding to the police, not less.

One issue where there is little difference between Trump and Biden is foreign policy. The pro-imperialist policy of Trump is a continuation of the previous Democratic and Republican administrations.

The Democrats are pro-Israel, and support Trump's moving the embassy to Jerusalem, support the Saudi war on its people and Yemen and its drone attacks in the region.

Even on China, Biden is just as hostile as Trump. Style may change. That's about it. Ties to European allies may improve but fundamental imperialist foreign policy will be the same. Except a harsher tone toward Russia.

Undemocratic system

It is important to understand the unique aspects of the electoral system in the United States. The Founding Fathers wrote a Constitution to prevent the common workers and farmers from having any real political control of the country.

Only white men with property had the right to vote. Slave holders were given extra votes and powers by having their human property (slaves) counted by three fifths of a person to give them extra representation in Congress, the courts and White House.

Popular protest and eventually a new revolution, the Civil war in the 1860s, gave former slaves and all people born in the U.S citizenship (except native indigenous peoples).

The House of Representatives was created to give the common people some representation but only for white male property owners. However, the Senate was a check to that body. Initially it was selected by each state legislature. And most importantly each state gets two Senators. Today the most populous state, California with nearly 40 million people and the state of Wyoming with 550,000 have the same number of Senators.

The Electoral College has loopholes. Legal action could throw the election to the Congress and even the Supreme Court as occurred in 2000. Then the Court gave the election to the Republican George Bush by a 5 o 4 vote. The Democrat Al Core accepted that decision to “prevent civil unrest.”

Donald Trump seeks the same outcome. He’s made clear he will never concede, and his supporters will do anything to enforce his position.

What happens next is unknown. Is the ruling class ready to test the people? Mass protests will come from both sides.

Finally, most Black people have few illusions in the racist system. They have always been a minority dominated by a white majority.

Glenn Ford, executive editor, of the Black Agenda Report noted before the election results were known:

“Whoever wins the Electoral College, race-based politics will continue to allow the corporate rulers to ignore public demands for relief from the Race to the Bottom and endless war.... The 2020 election thus confirms the tentative verdict of 2016: that majorities of whites will vote their race - side with the White Man’s Party — when the electoral contest is waged mainly on racial terms. The Electoral College system, which was baked into the U.S. Constitution to protect the interests of slave states [2], continues to give white “race” voters an oversized punch in national contests. Trump bets that he could replicate his 2016 Electoral College win over Hillary Clinton even if he still trailed by nearly three million in the popular vote, as he did the first time. Win or lose, Trump’s racial calculation was well-grounded and rational - as proven by the tightness of the 2020 race.”

How true.

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Footnotes

[1] <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2018/08/09/an-examination-of-the-2016-electorate-based-on-validated-voters/>

[2] <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/11/electoral-college-racist-origins/601918/>