



CITIZEN DATA

Citizen Data's latest "state-of-play" research yielded key insights about voter attitudes towards election legitimacy, violent public protest, responses to the recent demonstrations at the Capitol, and various ideas for improving American politics. The following results are based on an IVR/P2P survey fielded January 13-15, 2021 among a representative sample of 3,000 registered voters nationally with a margin of error of + / - 1.7 percent.

JUST OVER HALF OF AMERICANS BELIEVE PRESIDENTIAL RESULTS

54% of respondents said that they believe the 2020 Presidential election results are legitimate. At the same time, a noteworthy amount of respondents — 39% — believe that the results are illegitimate. This matter is largely divided on Trump and Biden supporter lines, with 95% of Biden supporters accepting the results as legitimate, and 79% of Trump supporters rejecting them as illegitimate (just 10% accept them as legitimate).

Looking at election results for the U.S. House, Senate, and other state and local offices, these trends hold, with slightly more (+4%) respondents overall accepting the results as legitimate when compared to the Presidential results. Significantly fewer Trump supporters (57%) say state, congressional, and local elections are illegitimate compared to the presidential (79%), with 19% saying they are legitimate — a +9% increase from Presidential results.

VOTERS SPLIT ON SUPPORT OF FUTURE EXPANDED VOTING OPTIONS

Just over half of respondents (52%) said that they believe expanded options for voting such as vote by mail and early in person voting should continue in future elections, with 44% not supporting expanded voting options, and 4% unsure.

Looking more closely, responses largely split along presidential candidate support lines, with 92% of Biden supporters supporting expanded voting options and 86% of Trump supporters rejecting it. Similarly, 90% of those who think that the Presidential election results are legitimate support expanded voting options moving forward. Of those who believe that the Presidential election results are illegitimate, most (90%) reject expanded vote options moving forward.

VIOLENCE, LOOTING, AND RIOTING BROADLY REJECTED

Respondents were asked if violence was ever justified when it comes to holding those in power accountable. 85% said “never” or “rarely,” while 15% said “sometimes” (10%) or “often” (5%). Of those who say that the Presidential results are illegitimate specifically, nearly 82% say that violence is “never” or “rarely” justified.

Respondents were asked about the violence, looting, and rioting surrounding both racial injustice protests in the summer of 2020 as well as the recent demonstrations at the Capitol. In both cases, violence, looting, and rioting were broadly rejected (“not very” justified and “not at all” justified) at levels of 88% or higher. Still, it’s worth noting that just slightly more (roughly +3%) respondents found the violence, looting, and rioting surrounding the racial protests to be “somewhat” or “very” justifiable when compared to the Capitol demonstrations. Even when looking at these issues through the lens of Trump vs. Biden support or those who find the election legitimate or illegitimate, these trends generally hold.

For half of respondents, we framed the racial injustice protests as “Black Lives Matter demonstrations” and the Capitol demonstrations as “Stop the Steal protests.” Doing so did not meaningfully change the breakdown of responses.

VOTERS SPLIT ON ISSUES OF GOP, TRUMP SOCIAL MEDIA, CORPORATE DONATIONS

Respondents overall are split evenly on whether those who protested at the U.S. Capitol are representative of Republican voters as well as if social and digital platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter, were right to shut down President Trump’s accounts following the Capitol demonstrations on January 6th.

However, it’s worth noting that in both cases, more Biden supporters than Trump supporters answered affirmatively. This split is particularly pronounced on the subject of Trump’s social media shutdown, with 90% of Biden supporters saying it was the right thing to do and 91% of Trump supporters saying it was the wrong thing to do. Also notable: Lean Republicans were more likely to support the shutting down of Trump’s social accounts (22%) than Solid Republicans (11%).

Respondents are also generally split on whether large companies should stop donating money to Republican candidates who voted not to certify Biden as the next President: 49%

agree with the decision, 38% disagree, and nearly 13% are unsure. However, most who believe the election was illegitimate believe strongly or somewhat that it is not the right thing to do (78%).

RESPONDENTS NEUTRAL ON THIRD PARTY CANDIDATES

Survey respondents were asked if the events since the November 2020 general election would make them more or less likely to support third party candidates. Nearly half (46%) said that the events made no difference or they were still undecided when it comes to third party candidates. When it comes to voters who identify themselves as Independent, that number increases to 50%.

When it comes to supporting Donald Trump moving forward, over half say they are somewhat or much less likely to support him, though a notable 37% say they would be much or somewhat more likely to support him. Among Trump supporters only, we do see a small shift in candidate and party support: while 74% say they're more likely to support him going forward, 12% say they are less likely to do so.

When it comes to supporting Joe Biden moving forward, voters are split, though that split occurs among partisan lines: for the most part, his supporters have not changed their minds.

VOTERS THINK LESS MONEY IN POLITICS WILL HELP, UNSURE ABOUT OTHER REFORMS

Nearly 70% of respondents think that less money in politics will help make our politics better. This support transcends partisan lines, Trump/Biden support divides, and disagreements over the legitimacy of the 2020 election results.

Just slightly more than half of voters (55%) also believe that easier access to voting will make our politics better. Unlike money in politics, however, Biden supporters and those who feel the election was legitimate feel much more strongly in favor. Trump supporters and those who believe the election was illegitimate are generally split.

When it comes to democracy reforms such as redistricting reform, non-partisan primaries, and ranked choice voting, most respondents are neutral or need to learn more in order to make an informed decision. For example, 45% of respondents say they don't know or need to learn more about ranked choice voting before deciding whether it will make politics in

America better.

HIGH LEVELS OF CONCERN AROUND INAUGURATION VIOLENCE, COVID

Over 70% of respondents believe that Americans should be concerned about violence, looting, or rioting occurring around the inauguration. However, Biden supporters and those who think the 2020 election was legitimate are much more concerned, and Trump supporters and those who think that the 2020 election was illegitimate are less concerned.

Out of a list of 7 issues and an “other” option, 44% of respondents feel that the Coronavirus should be President-elect Biden’s first priority in office, followed by jobs and the economy (22%). Again, Americans are divided along partisan lines: more than two-thirds (70%) of Biden supporters say that the Coronavirus should be Biden’s top priority whereas Trump supporters believe Jobs/Economy should be prioritized (39%) followed by National Security (17%) and the Coronavirus (15%).

Conclusion

The country is divided among Trump/Biden support lines on many issues, including whether or not the 2020 election results were legitimate, support for expanded voting options, decisions around President Trump’s social media accounts, and more. And, when it comes to democracy reform ideas such as supporting third party candidates, ranked choice voting, redistricting, and open primaries, voters are neutral or need to learn more.

Despite deep and clear divisions, there are areas of strong consensus among American voters. For example, respondents largely rejected violence, looting, or rioting, no matter the cause for it (with small but notable numbers supporting violence at least sometimes). Furthermore, there is broad agreement that less money in politics will improve the state of American politics.

Overview & Methodology

Citizen Data fielded a national survey among 3,000 registered voters via IVR/P2P on January 13-15, 2021 in order to assess the current state-of-play and for audience modeling purposes. Most notably, registered voters were asked about their views on the following: election legitimacy, violent public protest, responses to the recent demonstrations at the Capitol, and various ideas for improving American politics. Demographic quotas for age

and education were designed to reflect the distribution of the general registered voter population. The survey results were reweighted slightly to reflect the distribution of the popular vote. The margin of error for the sample is +/- 1.7 percentage points.