



December 14, 2020

A Divided Country United for Equality

Post-Election Survey Results

To: Interested Parties
From: GQR and Human Rights Campaign

The country delivered a mixed verdict this election. They sent Donald Trump home after a single term. Trump continues to contest the outcome while consistently failing in the courts, but Joe Biden won more votes than any other candidate in American history, eclipsing even President Obama's total. Biden flipped previously deep-red states of Arizona and Georgia. On the other hand, the massive repudiation of Trumpism did not materialize and the Republican Party down ballot did much better than the President, picking up seats in the House and potentially fending off a Democratic take-over of the Senate, pending two Senate races in Georgia.

While voters may have delivered an ambiguous message in 2020, they were unequivocal in their support for equality. In this survey of 2020 voters, a huge and growing majority of voters support the Equality Act and support rolling back Trump's attacks on the LGBTQ community. Support for the LGBTQ community and other marginalized groups played a huge role in Joe Biden's winning majority, competing even with the coronavirus as the top reason to support Joe Biden or oppose Donald Trump. And once again, Equality Voters--a group of voters modeled to support LGBTQ issues and a key focus of the Human Rights Campaign's activity this election cycle—along with LGBTQ voters delivered massive margins to pro-equality candidates up and down the ballot. A 79 percent majority of Equality Voters supported Joe Biden for President this year.¹

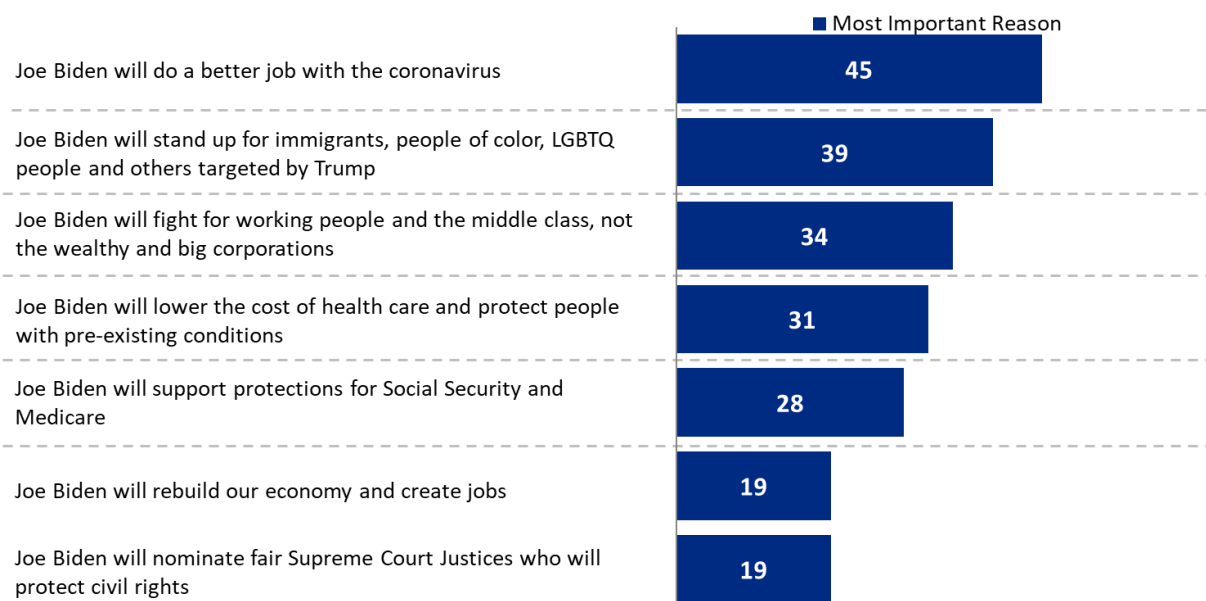
Key Findings

Equality issues —standing up for immigrants, people of color, and LGBTQ people—played a massive role in Joe Biden's 81 million vote total. Biden beat Trump 51 to 47 percent in the popular vote. Among Biden voters, equality issues rank second as the leading reason to support the president-elect.

¹ This memorandum reflects a survey of 1,400 2020 voters, including an oversample of voters in the Sunbelt (Florida, Texas, Arizona and Georgia). The margin of error is +/- 2.83. As is always the case in early post-election research, these data are subject to further weighting based on additional election results and updated voter lists.

Figure 1: Most Important Reason to Support Joe Biden

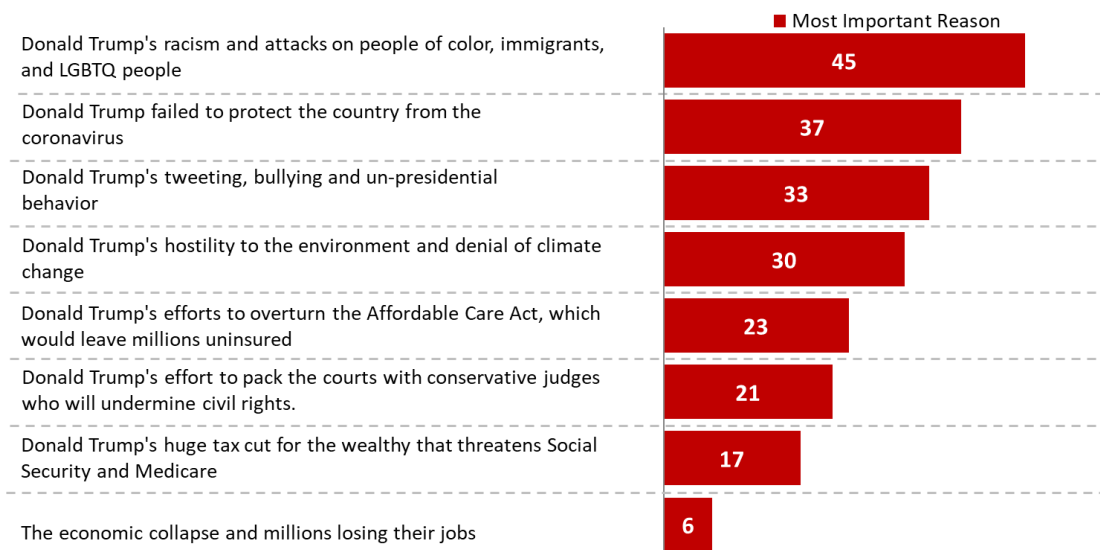
Thinking specifically about your support for Joe Biden, please tell me which THREE are the most important to you.



Equality issues rank first—higher even than the coronavirus—as reasons to vote against Donald Trump.

Figure 2: Most Important Reason to Oppose Donald Trump

Thinking specifically about your vote against Donald Trump, please tell me which THREE are the most important to you.



Notably, while most Trump voters voted the way they did more because they supported the President than opposed his opponent, the Biden vote split: 46 more because they supported Biden, 41 percent more because they opposed Trump. This election truly was a referendum on Trump and Trump’s record on equality issues leads the list of problems voters had with this President.

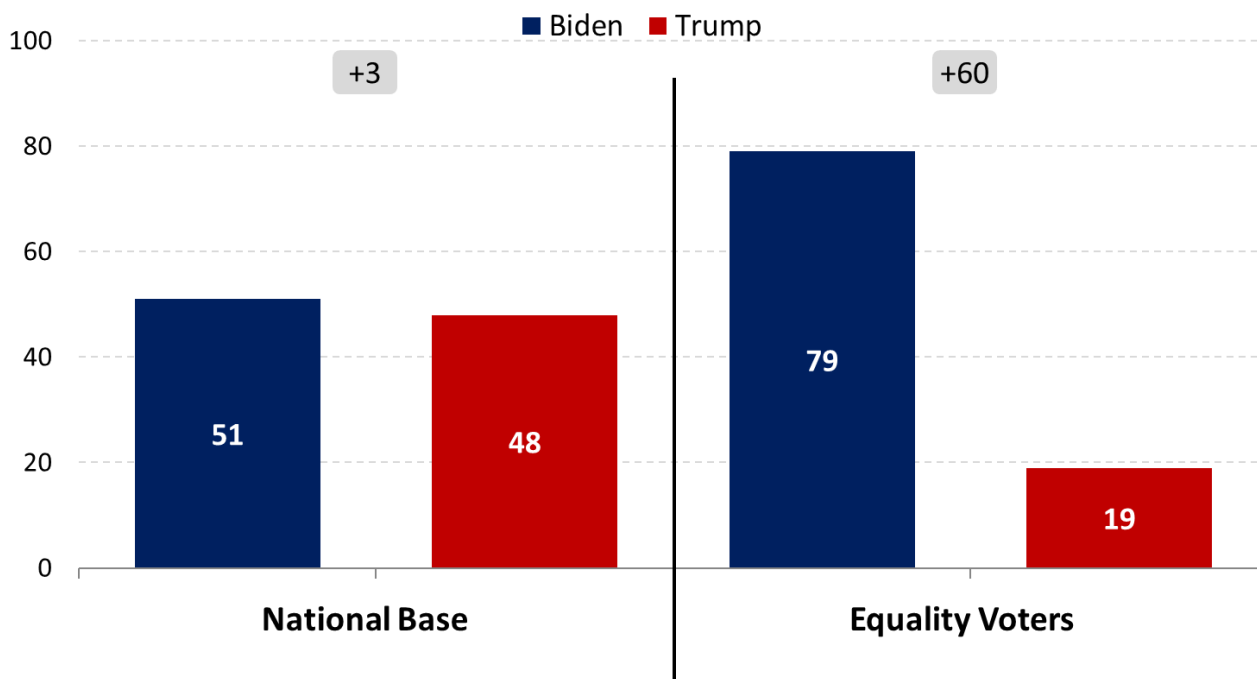
At the same time, attacks on the LGBTQ community had little impact. Anti-LGBTQ operatives launched aggressive attacks on the transgender community, alleging falsely that Biden supports gender confirmation surgeries for children. That issue ranks dead last as a reason to oppose Joe Biden.

Equality Voters delivered a huge Democratic margin once again. Equality Voters are a group of voters modeled to support LGBTQ issues.

- In 2018, Equality Voters supported pro-equality Democratic House candidates with an 83 percent majority, effectively delivering a pro-equality House majority.
- In 2020, 79 percent of Equality Voters supported Joe Biden, effectively delivering the White House.

Figure 3: Presidential Vote: National and Equality Voters

Thinking about the presidential election, did you vote for -- Democrat Joe Biden or Republican Donald Trump?



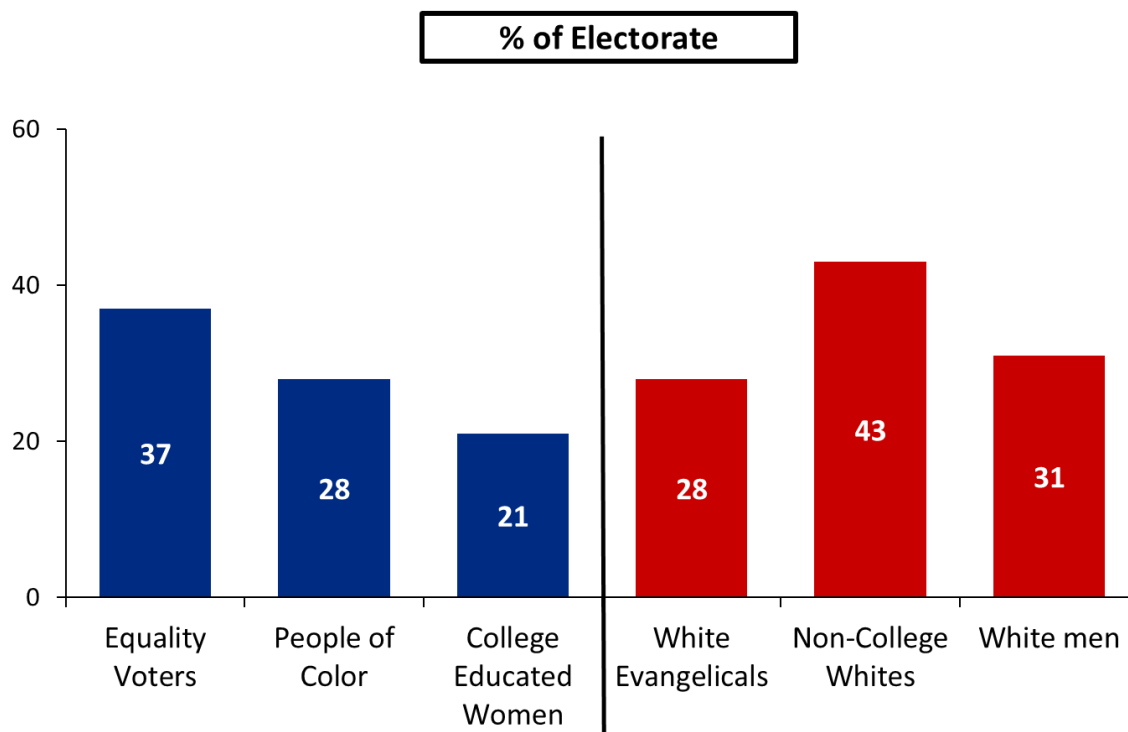
Equality Voters drove support for pro-equality down ballot candidates as well, supporting pro-equality Democratic House candidates (81 – 17 percent) and pro-equality Senate candidates (78 – 19 percent).

Both sides turned out their supporters in this record-setting election. Republican hypocrisy in the courts played a big role in juicing Democratic turnout. A 54 percent majority of Biden voters, including 59

percent of Equality Voters say Trump’s attempt to fill the courts with judges hostile to civil rights was a major factor in their decision to turn out and vote this year.

Equality Voters represent a significant voting bloc. Support for marriage equality now reaches 67 percent (June 2020, Gallup) and impressive majorities of voters support most equality issues, including many Republican and Trump voters. At this point, Equality Voters play a bigger role in American politics than some of the largest conservative voting blocs.

Figure 4: Equality Voters: Percentage of Electorate



Part of this growth reflects the expanding visibility of the LGBTQ community. For example, nearly half (46 percent) of 2020 voters say they personally know someone who is transgender, up from 27 percent in 2016.²

Despite some reports, LGBTQ voters did not waver in their opposition to Trump. The 2020 Edison exit survey purported to show Joe Biden winning only 63 percent of LGBTQ voters. This finding is implausible. In the 2016 Edison exit survey, Hillary Clinton won 77 percent of the LGBTQ vote. While the 2020 Edison exits showed a modest decline in Democratic support among some base groups, a 14-point drop is hard to reconcile, particularly given the Trump Administration’s homophobic and transphobic record over the last four years.

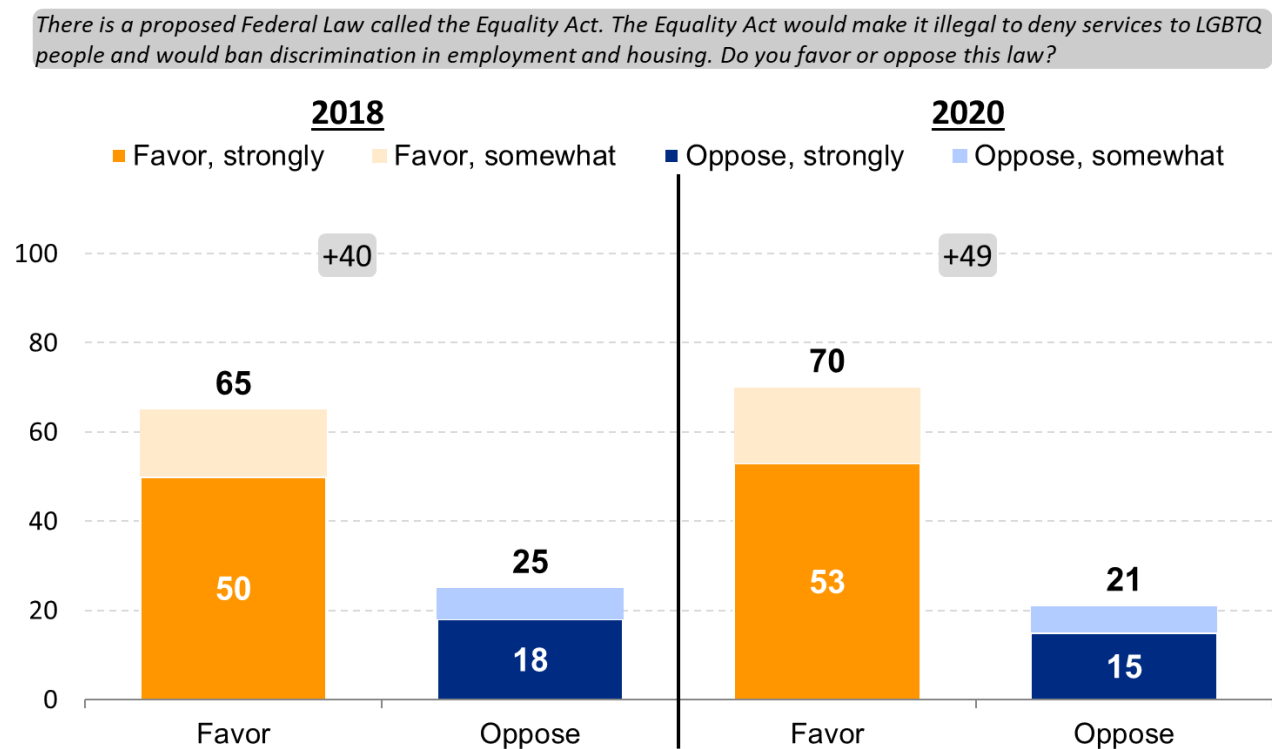
Other exit surveys show a far different outcome in the LGBTQ community.

² 2016 results reflect a GQR post-election survey of 1,100 2016 voters commissioned by the Human Rights Campaign.

- The 2020 AP Vote Cast exit survey—N=102,947 respondents—showed Biden winning 73 percent of the LGBTQ vote. This survey also showed LGBTQ voters accounting for 8 percent of the vote share, up from 5 percent in the 2016 Edison exit survey.
- A post-election survey commissioned by GLAAD with 800 LGBTQ voters showed 81 percent supporting Joe Biden.
- LGBTQ voters in this survey by GQR and HRC showed 83 percent of LGBTQ voters supporting Biden, much closer to the historic norm.³

Support for equality issues is unequivocal among 2020 voters. Whatever big, broad conclusions are drawn about 2020, there is no doubt voters support continuing the journey toward equality. A 70 percent majority support the Equality Act, including 50 percent of Trump voters. This reflects a 5-point increase in support for this legislation from 2018, despite the more decidedly Democratic outcome two years ago.

Figure 5: Equality Act Support: 2018 vs. 2020



Voters support overturning Donald Trump’s ban on transgender military service by a 59 to 30 percent margin, 78 to 14 percent among Equality Voters. The COVID crisis exposed many weaknesses in our health care system and Trump made things worse by eliminating regulations protecting LGBTQ people

³ The total sample size of LGBTQ voters in this survey is less than 100 cases.

from discrimination by hospitals, doctors and insurance companies. Voters favor reinstating these protections 67 to 22 percent (48 to 34 percent among Trump voters).

Reversing these anti-LGBTQ Trump actions should be a key early priority for the new Biden Administration. Similarly, U.S. Senate action on the Equality Act is well past due.

Conclusion

The country remains divided and the hard work of finding common ground has only just begun. But one clear message voters delivered this election—including a healthy number of Trump voters—is that the march toward equality continues to move forward.