

## VOTING IN AMERICA

### WHY THE DEBATE OVER VOTING IS ALL WRONG — AND ONE THING WASHINGTON CAN DO TO MAKE IT RIGHT

With the Senate hurtling toward a showdown over voting rights, it is so important to bring clarity to an issue where there has been almost none. And to recognize that President Biden’s voting speech in Georgia was, in some ways, just as inflammatory and fact-free as former President Trump’s “Big Lie.”

Republicans and Democrats have been fighting over two “problems” — voter fraud and voter suppression — that are completely overblown. Fraud is remarkably rare in America (0.00006% of all votes cast over the past 20 years have been fraudulent according to a comprehensive MIT/Heritage Study). And although voter suppression is a shameful part of U.S. history that continued well into the 20th century, it is simply not happening in an organized wide-scale fashion in the 21st century. Turnout in the 2020 election was higher than any time in a century.

Meanwhile, reforms to the one actual threat to our democracy — the ambiguity around state and federal election certification that lit the match for the January 6 riots — can pass if the White House and congressional leadership turn to the work of a bipartisan group in the Senate and House.

No Labels wanted to share the following insights to help shed light on an issue where there has been nothing but heat for too long.

### INSIGHT: Voter turnout — including among Black, Hispanic, and Asian voters — has never been higher.

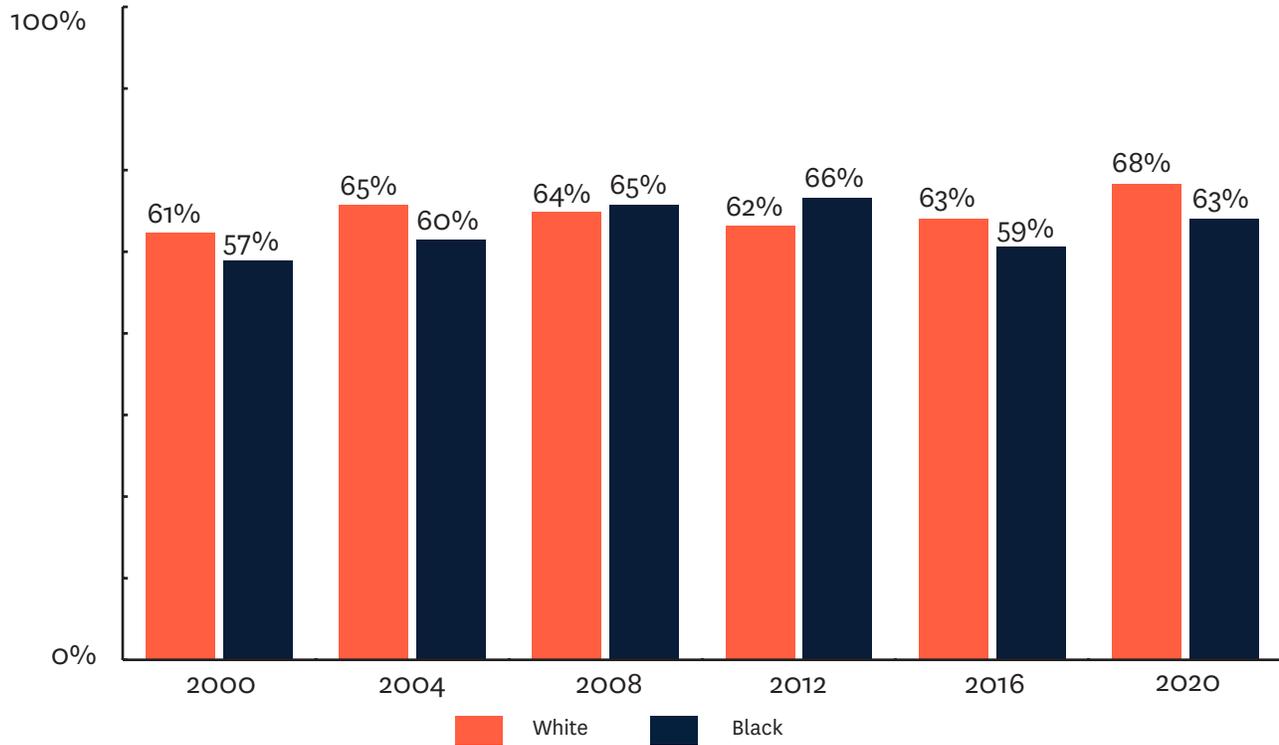
Voter turnout in the 2020 U.S. presidential election was the highest in 120 years, with every age, gender and racial group increasing its turnout significantly over 2016.

		2016	2020	% POINT INCREASE
<b>GENDER</b>	<b>MEN</b>	59.3%	65%	+5.7%
	<b>WOMEN</b>	63.3%	68.4%	+5.1%
<b>ETHNIC GROUPS</b>	<b>WHITE</b>	65.3%	70.9%	+5.6%
	<b>BLACK</b>	59.4%	62.6%	+3.2%
	<b>ASIAN</b>	49%	59.7%	+10.7%
	<b>HISPANIC</b>	47.6%	53.7%	+6.1%
<b>AGE</b>	<b>18-40</b>	51.7%	58.8%	+7.1%
	<b>41+</b>	68.3%	72.2%	+3.9%

Most of the eligible voters who chose not to turn out in the 2020 election were white.

<b>WHITE</b>	32.7 MILLION
<b>LATINO</b>	14.3 MILLION
<b>BLACK</b>	11.3 MILLION
<b>ASIAN</b>	4.6 MILLION

**INSIGHT: In the last five presidential elections, white and Black voters turned out in roughly equal measure, with whites voting a bit more in 2004, 2016 and 2020 and Blacks voting a bit more in 2008 and 2012.**

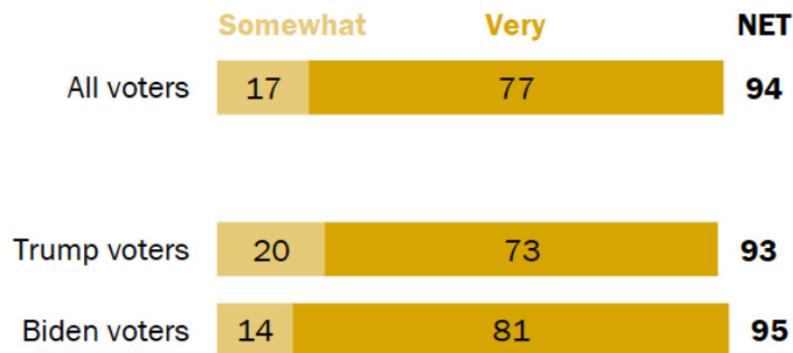


**Turnout among all eligible voters**

**INSIGHT: Most Americans reported it was very easy to vote in 2020.**

**Overwhelming majority of voters say voting was easy for them**

% who say voting in the election was \_\_ easy



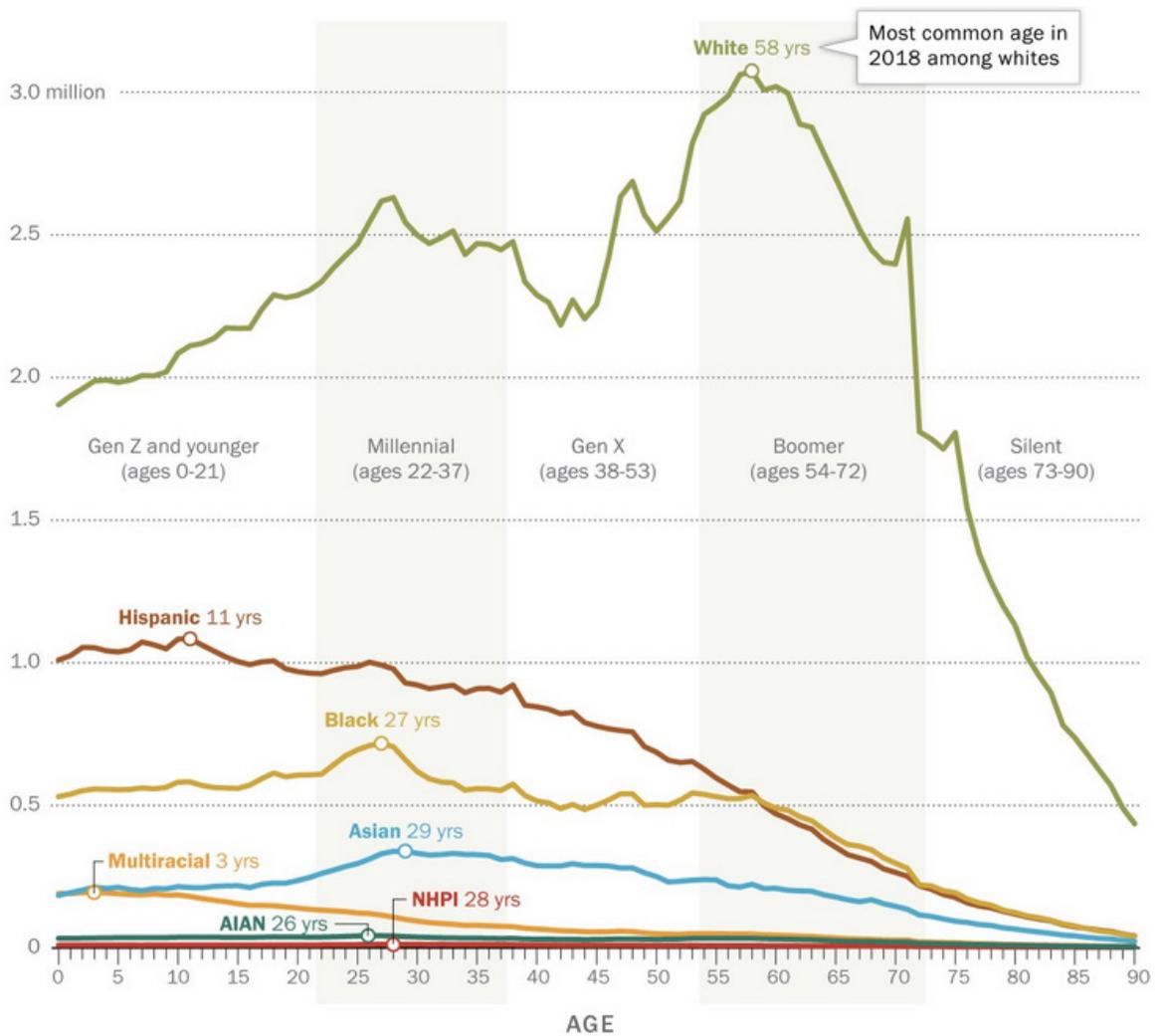
Notes: Based on voters. October survey based on registered voters. No answer responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Nov. 12-17, 2020.

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**INSIGHT: Although white voters have the highest turnout among racial groups, much of the discrepancy can be explained by the fact that whites are older, and old people vote in greater numbers.**

Number of people of each age by race/ethnicity, 2018



Note: White, Black, Asian, Multiracial, American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NHPI) groups include only non-Hispanics. All racial/ethnic groups are single-race, except multiracial Americans, who are two or more races, and Hispanics, who are of any race. Ages 91 and older are not shown.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau population estimates as of July 1, 2018

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**INSIGHT: Democratic federal election bills — including the Freedom To Vote Act (S. 2747), which represents a narrowed-down version of the more expansive H.R.1 — mandate several changes to voting and election procedures that have historically been left for states to decide.**

Freedom To Vote Act Proposals	Problems and Polls
Creates federal mandates for universal, online, and same-day voter registration	Poll: 74% of Americans say they believe their state governments can run free and fair elections (NBC, April 2021)
Requires state election officials to accept mail ballots received up to seven days after Election Day	Problem: “The longer it takes for the election results to be known, the greater the risk that they’re going to be questioned and second-guessed.” — Lisa Schaefer, Executive Director of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania
Universal no-excuse vote by mail	Problem: Some states that allow voting by mail lack adequate security protocols. In a survey of individuals who voted in the 2010 midterm elections, those who voted absentee were 10 percentage points more likely than in-person voters to say that their vote was not private.
National standard for what forms of ID can be used to validate voters	Poll: 80% of Americans support photo ID requirements and only 18% oppose them (Monmouth University, June 2021)
Other such as campaign finance provisions and redistricting reform	Problem: Campaign finance reform and redistricting have nothing to do with protecting people’s right to vote or preventing a repeat of January 6

**INSIGHT: The January 6, 2021 riots were made possible because of efforts by the Trump campaign and some Republican officials to overturn legitimate votes both at the state level and when Congress gathered to certify state electoral votes.**

Proposals	Why This Is Needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reform of the Electoral Count Act of 1887, which has bipartisan support, to clarify the role of the Vice President and Congress in certifying state electoral votes.</li><li>• Pass elements of the Freedom to Vote Act to require election security and certification protocols at the state level including protections against removal of local election officials, more rigorous post-election audits, and standards for maintaining ballot integrity.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 51% of Americans fear the results of an election will be overturned by the defeated party (CNN poll, September 2021)</li><li>• 62% fear election-related violence in 2024 (YouGov poll, January 2022)</li></ul>

### WHAT NOW?

As with so much else in America, the debate over voting and elections has been dominated by hyperbole instead of a clear-eyed assessment of what’s wrong and what legislative solutions can make things right.

It’s true that far too many Republicans either believe or refuse to challenge former President Trump’s Big Lie that the 2020 election was stolen. It’s also true that since the November 2020 election Republican-controlled state legislatures in 19 states have passed laws changing the rules of their voting or election systems, while no Democrats have voted for any of them.

You can’t blame Democrats for questioning the motives of Republicans for pushing these bills with no input from them.

But if you dig into the particulars of these laws, you will find most entail tightening up procedures pertaining to registration, mail and absentee voting and Voter ID that were loosened in 2020 in the name of making it safer for people to vote amid the COVID pandemic. Many leading Democrats and liberal commentators have taken to describing these measures as Jim Crow 2.0, which is to say they are somehow worse than the original Jim Crow era, which entailed poll taxes and literacy tests, violent intimidation of Black voters by the KKK, and even outright prohibitions on Black voters participating in party primaries in southern states. To suggest that any voting measures being debated today in America are somehow worse than this is simply irresponsible demagoguery.

If our leaders in Washington mean what they say about our democracy being at risk, they should stop pushing far reaching reforms supported by activists and get focused on shoring up the certification questions that really are a problem. Fortunately, a bipartisan Senate group — including Senators Joe Manchin, Susan Collins, Kyrsten Sinema and Mitt Romney — have already started discussions on reforming the Electoral Count Act along with other measures to eliminate the certification problems and ambiguities that made the January 6, 2021 riots possible.