

2020 Florida Election Study Report

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Executive Summary

Overview of the 2020 Florida Presidential General Election based on Florida Election Administrative Data

- In the 2020 general election, there were 15,551,739 eligible voters in Florida. Of those, 14,565,738 were registered to vote, and 11,137,676 voted. Together, this represents the highest turnout rate in recent Florida history with a statewide turnout rate of 72% for eligible voters and 77% for registered voters.
- Democrats made up 36% of registered voters and 36% of actual voters in 2020. Republicans also made up 36% of registered voters but constituted 39% of actual voters. Voters with No Party Affiliation (NPA), members of third parties, and others combined to make up 28% of registered voters, but only 25% of voters in 2020.
- Almost three-quarters (73%) of Florida counties are “landslide” counties, which we define as counties in which the difference in votes between the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates was larger than 20%. By this definition, 12 out of Florida’s 67 counties are “blue” or Democratic counties, with 5 of these – or 42% – Democratic landslides, while the remaining 55 counties are “red” or Republican counties, including 44 – or 88% – constituting GOP landslides).
- In 2020, a total of 41% of voters cast their ballots by mail, while 39% voted early in person and 17% voted on Election Day.
- Historically there have been only small differences in vote mode decisions across partisan groups. But in 2020, Democrats (53%) were more likely to vote by mail (VBM) than were NPA/Others (43%) and Republicans (34%).
- More than half (55%) of 2020 voters were women, with men making up the remaining 45%. These percentages were the same in 2018.
- Florida has a gender gap in partisanship. Women are far more likely to identify as Democrats than men (41% vs. 33%). Men are more likely to be NPA/Others than area women (28% vs. 24%) and are also more likely to be Republicans than are women (40% vs. 35%).
- Voters aged 50-64 made up a plurality (28%) of voters, while those ages 65-75 represent another 18% of voters. Younger voters constituted a comparatively small proportion of the electorate, with voters ages 18-24 at 8% and ages 25-29 at 6%. Two different but connected groups – ages 30-39 and ages 40-49 – each made up 14% of voters, while those ages 75-84 and 85+ made up 9% and 3%, respectively.
- In 2020, a total of 61% of registered voters were White, 18% were Hispanic, 14% were Black, and the remaining 7% were from other racial/ethnic groups. However, 64% of those who voted were White, 16% were Hispanic, and 13% were Black.
- Before 2020 about 30% of voters over the last several election cycles voted by mail, but in 2020 that number rose to 41%.

Summary of Key Findings from the 2020 Florida Election Study Post Election Survey Voter Experiences with Voting Process and Voter Confidence

- The post-election Florida survey comes from a National Survey on the Integrity of Mail Voting sponsored by the National Science Foundation. We purchased a representative sample of emails of voters across the 50 states and oversampled Florida. Data were collected from December 3-February 1. Data were weighted by age, gender, education, race, vote method, and political party using the 2020 CPS Election Supplement and exit poll data.

VBM Voters

- More than 2 in 5 (44%) absentee voters indicated they chose to vote by mail because of COVID-19, while another 58% did so for convenience. Other reasons include disability (8%) and scheduling issues (8%).
- About three-fifths (61%) of vote-by-mail (VBM) requests were completed online, while 1 in 6 voters (16%) requested an absentee ballot by mail. About 8% of voters indicated they called to request a mail ballot, and another 5% went in person to make their request.
- Absentee voters frequently logged on to their voter registration record to see if their ballot had arrived at the county Election Supervisor's office or to check their voter registration. More than one-third (36%) of respondents to our survey reported being somewhat or very concerned that their ballot would arrive in time to be counted, and 79% logged on to their voter registration record to check the status of their ballot.
- We asked the following three questions: (1) "Who returned your ballot or dropped it in the mail?" (2) "Did you return someone else's ballot?" and (3) if so, "Whose ballot did you return?"
 - Nearly 9 in 10 (86%) voters returned their ballots themselves. Of those who had someone else return their ballot, 10% indicated that a member of their family returned their ballot, while another 2% answered other.
 - Overall, 22% of Florida voters indicated that they returned someone else's ballot. Of those who did, more than 3 in 4 (76%) indicated that the ballot belonged to their spouse, while 5% of voters said they returned a parent's ballot and 19% indicated they returned their child's ballot. About 1 in 6 (16%) returned another family member's ballot, and 10% returned a friend's ballot.
- We also asked voters who returned someone else's ballot, "How many ballots did you return?" Almost two-thirds (65%) said they returned one or two ballots, while 21% returned three ballots, 8% returned four, 6% returned just one, and 1% returned five ballots. No one indicated that they returned more than five ballots for others.
 - We find that 51% of VBM voters returned their ballot through the USPS, while another 45% of voters dropped it off at an early vote location, ballot drop box,

non-USPS post box, or County Clerk's office. The remaining 4% indicated “other.”

- Overall, respondents were quite positive about VBM, as 98% found the instructions very or somewhat easy to follow, and 88% were very or somewhat likely to use VBM again. Over 90% of voters in every age category said their VBM instructions were “somewhat” or “very” easy. Moreover, only 2% of VBM respondents reported encountering a problem that may have interfered with their ability to cast their vote.
- Among 2020 VBM voters, the desire to again vote by mail varied across party identifications: 97% of Democrats said they were somewhat or very likely to vote by mail again, while 72% of Republicans said the same.

In-Person Voters

- A plurality of in-person voters (35%) reported no wait time when voting, with another 30% reporting a wait time of fewer than 10 minutes. Approximately 7% of Florida voters waited more than an hour to vote.
- In 2020, Election Day voters experienced much shorter wait times than early voters. More than half (51%) of Election Day voters reported no wait time, while only 26% of early voters said the same. Additionally, 15% of early voters waited more than 30 minutes to vote, while only 11% of Election Day voters did the same.
- We asked in-person voters their level of agreement with the statement, “The poll workers were helpful.” Results were overwhelmingly positive, as 95% of Florida voters either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Another 90% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe from COVID-19 while voting in person.
- We also asked voters if a poll worker looked at their ballot. Approximately 6% indicated that this occurred while they were voting. We asked the same question about other voters, and only 2% answered yes. Another 4% indicated that another voter asked them whom they voted for while in line.
- Approximately 69% of FL voters indicated that they used a privacy sleeve while moving through their polling place.
- Public health measures implemented in polling places appear to have been successful, at least from a public opinion standpoint. We find that 84% of FL voters rated their polling place’s efforts to protect voters and poll workers from COVID-19 as “good” or “excellent.”
- Overall, 96% of voters indicated that their polling location was easy to find. Additionally, only 3% said they had to go far out of their way to vote, regardless of whether they voted early or on Election Day.
- However, we find that Hispanic voters are slightly more likely to say they had to go far out of their way to vote (9%) than are White (3%) and Black (0%) voters.
- Approximately 90% of voters found it easy to park at their polling place.

- Asked what kind of identification voters provided at the polls, almost 90% said they used their driver’s license or state-issued photo ID to verify their identity.
- Approximately 10% of in-person voters in our survey indicated that they either presented no identification when voting (3%) or presented an invalid form of identification, such as a voter registration card or a letter, bill, or some other document with their name and address (6%).

All Voters

- Almost two-thirds (63%) of voters were very confident, and another 22% were somewhat confident, that **their vote** was counted correctly. Approximately 15% of voters were either not too confident or not at all confident that their vote was counted correctly. Voter confidence is highest at the individual level.
- At the **county level**, 59% of voters were very confident and 21% were somewhat confident that votes were counted correctly. Conversely, 6% stated they were not too confident and 14% were not at all confident.
- Voters were more confident in **state-level** results, with 85% either somewhat or very confident that ballots were counted correctly, while only 8% were not too confident and another 8% were not at all confident.
- Florida voters were least confident in the **national results**. Voters were split almost evenly between being very confident (40%) and not at all confident (41%) that ballots were counted correctly. Of the remaining voters, 11% were somewhat confident and 9% were not too confident. Thus, only a slight majority (51%) had confidence in the national ballot counting.
- The average Democratic voter had a personal confidence level of 3.8 out of 4, close to “very confident.” Even at the national level, Democratic confidence only drops to 3.6. Republican confidence was much lower. Republicans had a personal confidence of 3.0, around “somewhat confident.” but a national confidence of only 1.5. This places their national confidence evenly between “not too confident” and “not at all confident.” NPA voters had an average personal confidence of 3.4, which puts them between “somewhat” and “very” confident.

Summary of Key Findings from Beliefs About Ballot Privacy, Possibility of Voter Coercion, Fraud, and Attitudes Toward Election Reforms from the 2020 Florida Election Study Post Election Survey

- Over half (58%) of Florida voters were at least sometimes asked by family or friends about whom they voted for. The remaining 42% say they were either rarely (26%) or never (16%) asked.
- We asked whether voters believe that others could find out how they voted without the voter disclosing it. The questions were: 1) “How easy or hard do you think it would be for politicians, union officials, or the people you work for to find out who you voted for,

even if you told no one?” and 2) “Do you think elected officials can access voting records and figure out who a voter had voted for?”

- Approximately 18% of voters thought it was impossible for someone to find out who another person voted for, and 9% stated they didn’t know if it was possible. The remaining 73% of voters thought it was possible, at varying levels of difficulty, for another person to uncover who they voted for.
- 50% of voters believe that elected officials can learn who voters chose on their ballot, while 22% do not think they can. The remaining 28% are unsure.
- We find a partisan dimension to beliefs about ballot privacy. About one-third (32%) of Democrats believe it is impossible for someone to access their vote, while just 7% of Republicans believe this. Conversely, 68% of Republicans believe elected officials can access voting records, while 30% of Democrats agree.
- Almost 9 out of 10 voters (87%) said they did not experience any coercive action when voting.
- Of the 13% of voters who reported that they experienced one or more persuasive or coercive actions, 11% said someone tried to convince them to change their vote, 8% experienced someone telling them to vote for a certain candidate, and 2% were threatened to vote for another candidate. Three respondents said someone marked their ballot for them with choices they did not want.
- Asked whether they personally observed what they thought was election fraud, 90% of voters indicated they did not witness any election fraud or irregular voting activities, while 10% saw one or more election problems.
 - These 10% of voters were asked a follow-up question about which types of activities they observed. The highest frequency event was for the activity “Someone filling out an absentee ballot for someone else,” observed by 24% of these voters. Another 22% of these voters witnessed voter intimidation at a polling place.
- We also presented voters with several illegal election activities and asked how often they thought each event occurred in the state.
 - Among all possible activities we examined, voters were most concerned about the possibility that people are bribed or given money for their votes. More than 2 out of 5 voters (41%) believe this happens at least some of the time, with 10% indicating it happens all or most of the time and another 31% indicating it happens some of the time.
- One-quarter (25%) of voters said that elected officials make rules that favor one party most or all the time. Another 31% said this happens sometimes.
- Six percent of voters believe that an eligible voter is denied the opportunity to vote by a poll worker all or most of the time, while 25% believe it happens sometimes.

- Forty percent of voters believe that absentee ballots are stolen and thrown away after being submitted at least some of the time. A similar percentage (37%) believes that at least some of the time, someone steals an absentee ballot, changes it, and casts it.
- Six percent of voters said that ballots are changed by election workers almost all the time, while another 7% said this occurs most of the time. Conversely, 56% of voters say this rarely or never occurs. The remaining 30% said it occurs “sometimes.”
- Asked if voter fraud changed the outcome of the Presidential election in Florida 24% of voters said it did, while 68% disagreed and 8% were unsure.
- We asked respondents “Do you support or oppose requiring all people to show a government-issued photo ID when they vote?” We found that 81% of voters support voter ID requirements.
 - A majority of voters in all partisan groups support voter identification policies. We found that 61% of Democrats, 81% of independents, and 99% of Republicans support voter ID laws.
- We asked respondents, “Thinking about elections and election reforms, which is more important to you, ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote or protecting the voting system against fraud?” Fewer than half (43%) of Florida voters indicated that ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote is more important, while 55% indicated that protecting the system against fraud was a higher priority; 2% were unsure.
 - 81% of Democrats, compared to 12% of Republicans, believe it is more important to ensure that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote. Republicans express similar sentiment in the opposite direction: 86% of Republicans believe that protecting the system against fraud is more important than expanding the franchise, compared to only 18% of Democrats. Independents were split approximately evenly on this issue, with 47% selecting access and 50% selecting integrity.
- We also asked, “How do you think we should elect the President: the candidate who gets the most votes in all 50 states, or the current Electoral College system?” We find that 54% of voters supported electing the President based on who receives the most votes across the U.S., while 46% of voters prefer to retain the current Electoral College system.
 - We find a significant partisan dimension to this question. Almost 9 out of 10 (89%) Democrats support electing the candidate who wins the popular vote in all 50 states. Conversely, 76% of Republicans favor the current Electoral College system. Independents are more evenly split between the Electoral College (44%) and popular vote (56%).

Chapter 1: Study Rationale, Background & Methodology

The 2020 Florida Election Study (FES) represents a systematic examination of voter attitudes and experiences with the election, concerns about election security, and preferences for election reforms. Assessing the performance of an electoral system has long been an issue for researchers and policymakers alike. Florida has been an election hot spot since 2000 when it showed potential problems with voting machines. The chaos in the 2000 election ultimately led to the passage and implementation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002, which created the first national standards around voting including the availability of provisional voting, requiring each state to have a statewide voter registration database, minimum rules around voter identification procedures, and administrative compliance procedures. HAVA also came with money for updating and upgrading voting equipment and created the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), the second U.S. Election Management Body (EMB) after the Federal Election Commission (FEC). Since 2000, Florida has continued to be an important state nationally as the third-largest populated state in the nation with a diverse population, diverse economy, and consistently competitive presidential elections.

Although the 2020 Florida election had no major problems, and for once, it was not in the postelection media spotlight, a highly polarized electorate remains, and the issue of free and fair elections continues to take center stage. Both the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections elevated the issue of fair elections in a way that has not been seen in the United States since the days of machine politics. In 2016, Republican candidate Donald Trump leveled charges of widespread “rigging” and raised the specter of voter fraud. Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton also raised the issue that our election might have been tampered with by Russia, who had recently hacked into the Democratic National Committee (DNC) email servers, raising concerns about the safety of electronic reporting and tabulation systems that could also have ramifications for future elections. During the 2020 election, Democrats raised the issue of voter suppression, and President Trump and Republicans raised the notion of voter fraud, especially around mail balloting, which substantially increased due to the pandemic.

Over the last several years, several prominent fraud cases have emerged that play into voters’ fears. These include the North Carolina 9th Congressional District in 2018,¹ in which fraud played such a significant role that it led to a new election and a recent 2020 municipal election in Paterson, New Jersey.² After the 2020 election, accusations of fraud continued to be raised especially by Republicans and President Trump, resulting in 121 Republican U.S. House members and 6 Republican Senators voting against certification of Arizona’s results and another 139 Republican U.S. House members and 7 Senators voting against certification of

¹ Graff, Michael and Nick Ochsner, November 29, 2021, “‘This Smacks of Something Gone Awry’: A True Tale of Absentee Vote Fraud,” *Politico*, available at: <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2021/11/29/true-tale-absentee-voter-fraud-north-carolina-523238>, accessed June 20, 2022.

² Sturla, Anna, August 20, 2020. “Judge Invalidates Paterson, NJ city council election after allegations of mail-in voter fraud,” *CNN*, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/20/politics/paterson-new-jersey-city-council-voter-fraud/index.html>, accessed June 20, 2022.

Pennsylvania's results along with a U.S. Capitol riot on January 6th during the counting of the electoral college votes.³

Free and fair elections are one of the pillars of American democracy, but assuring a healthy democracy via a safe, secure, and efficient election process involves more than just making certain that elections work well. The public must perceive that voting is easy and accessible while at the same time believing that they are protected, and that results are determined fairly and accurately, without partisan bias or technological flaws. Information, opinion, and administration need to work hand in hand to demonstrate the functioning of the American election system and hence reinforce its legitimacy.

Florida's legislature responded to the 2020 election outcome with a series of election reforms passed as SB90 in the 2021 session and SB524 in the 2022 session. The 2021 law made several changes to vote-by-mail (VBM). It also regulated the behavior of state officials during election litigation, prohibited the private funding of elections, restored the felon declaration of voting eligibility, and required the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to assist the Department of State in identifying voters who have moved. The new law passed in 2022 established a special executive police force to investigate voter and election fraud, prevented localities from using ranked-choice voting, and increased the fines associated with certain election-related crimes such as changing someone's party registration.⁴ Many provisions in SB90 were overturned by a federal judge in March of 2022, who, in a stunning move, ruled the state must get court approval for the next 10 years before it enacts further changes.⁵ However, an appeals court issued a stay on that ruling in May. Therefore, the new law will remain in place for the 2022 election.⁶

For these reasons, the LeRoy Collins Institute (LCI) is starting a Florida Election Study (FES) to examine and assess the quality and experiences, confidence, and satisfaction of voters with the election ecosystem through a public opinion survey. The data reported herein represent our first installment and come from a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant that examined the integrity of mail balloting in the 2020 election.⁷ For this study, our voter sample was at the state level, and we interviewed a minimum of 120 voters in each state and in many states, including Florida, we did an oversample. The Florida sample consists of 1,090 voters.

³ See Zhou, Li. Jan. 7, 2021. "147 Republican lawmakers still objected to the election results after the Capitol attack: Congress has certified President-elect Joe Biden as the winner of the election — but some Republicans still objected.," *VOX*, available at: <https://www.vox.com/2021/1/6/22218058/republicans-objections-election-results>, accessed February 25, 2022.

⁴ Lawrence Mower, March 9, 2022, "Florida Legislature Sends Voting Bill to Governor Ron DeSantis," *Tampa Bay Times*, available at: <https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida-politics/2022/03/09/florida-legislature-sends-voting-bill-to-gov-ron-desantis-desk/>, accessed April 25, 2022.

⁵ Jane C. Timm, March 31, 2022, "Federal Judge Blocks Florida Restrictive Voting Law," *NBC News*, available at: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/federal-judge-overrules-florida-restrictive-voting-law-rcna22432>, accessed April 25, 2022.

⁶ C. A. Bridges, July 20, 2022, "Election 2022: How to vote in Florida under DeSantis' new law. What's changed?" *Tallahassee Democrat*, available at: <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/politics/elections/2022/07/20/florida-elections-what-you-need-know-how-vote-under-new-desantis-election-law/10086583002/>, accessed August 1, 2022.

⁷ The co-principal investigators on the NSF grant are Robert Stein Rice University and Trey Hood (University of Georgia). Further information about the study can be found at <https://voteintegrity.blogs.rice.edu/>.

The surveys were conducted online with 2020 voters in all 50 states. Email addresses for 1.2 million voters were purchased from several commercial vendors of voter files. Surveys were solicited and completed between November 11, 2020, and February 9, 2021. Responses were weighted to represent the selected demographics from the post-election Current Population Survey, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, vote mode, and party.

A Look Ahead

Chapter 2 examines the macro characteristics of Florida voters in the 2020 election. We look at voter turnout over time, partisanship, demographic characteristics of the electorate, and 2020 election outcomes and place these in a historical context. Chapter 3 uses our public opinion survey to examine voter experience with the voting process and voter confidence. Chapter 3 uses the same data to describe voter beliefs about ballot privacy, the possibility of voter coercion, and attitudes toward election reforms including the electoral college and voter ID.

In Appendix A there is a top-line or frequency report of all the questions in our survey.

Chapter 2: Overview of the 2020 Florida Presidential General Election

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 examines the characteristics of the Florida (FL) electorate during the 2020 general election and places these in a historical context. Specifically, we examine various facets of voting behavior, including turnout and voter registration, over multiple election periods. We make several comparisons in behavior across party identification, vote mode, and key demographic variables such as age, race, and gender. In this chapter, we rely mostly on administrative data, including the FL voter registration file, the Election Administration and Voting Survey (EAVS) Comprehensive Report, and other state and national data.⁸ At times, we also utilize non-governmental organizations including CNN exit polls and the US Elections Project.

2.2 Voter Turnout

According to Florida reports to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, a record-setting 11,137,676 Floridians voted out of 14,565,738 registered voters in 2020, or some 76% of potential voters.⁹ Figure 2.1 shows the rapid growth in the number of Floridians participating in each election since 2000. In part due to Florida's rising population, the number of voters has nearly doubled over the past 20 years with just under 6 million voters in the 2000 and 2002 elections.

⁸ The voter registration file had a time stamp of March 23, 2022. Other data includes those accessed from the FL Department of State

⁹ Election Assistance Commission, 2021, "Election Administration and Voting Survey: 2020 Comprehensive Report," available at:

https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/document_library/files/2020_EAVS_Report_Final_508c.pdf, accessed June 20, 2022.

Figure 2.1. FL Turnout by the Numbers

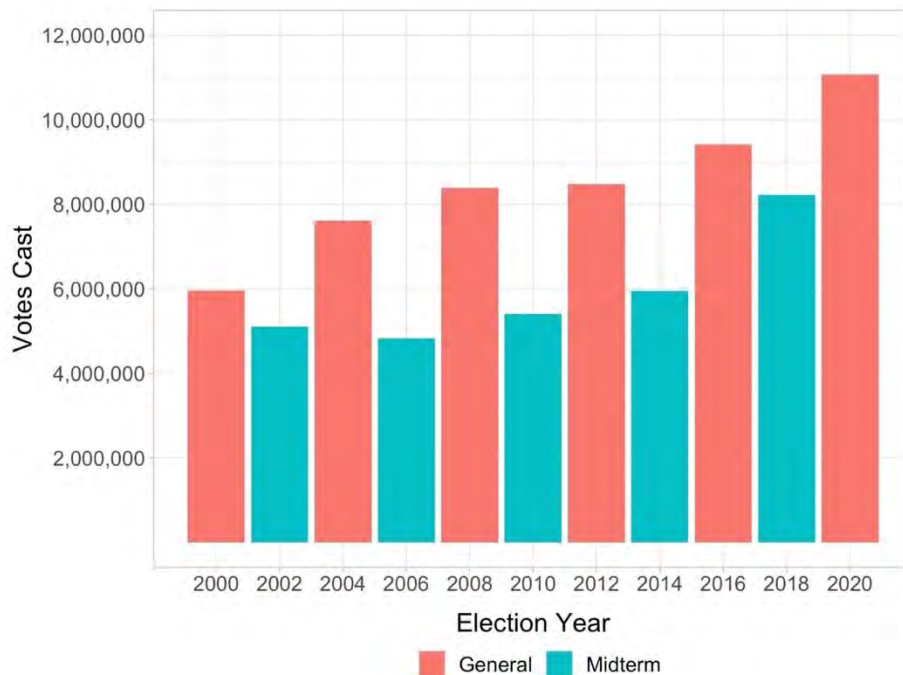


Figure 2.2 shows turnout as a percentage of eligible voters over the same period. Eligible voters are considered all US citizens who are Florida residents of at least 18 years of age by the time of the election, barring restrictions placed due to criminal action or mental incapacitation. The figure includes the entire voting-eligible population (VEP) regardless of their registration status.

The 2020 general election had the highest turnout FL has seen in over 20 years, with roughly 71% of voting-eligible Floridians participating in this historic election. The next highest VEP turnout was the 2008 election with 66%. Both elections were presidential contests with substantial campaign activity in the backdrop of major economic and social crises (the Great Recession and Covid-19, respectively), and in both years Florida was a battleground state. As such, we might expect higher levels of campaign mobilization and consequently turnout. In 2020, despite the public health threat posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant restrictions on polling places, higher turnout prevailed in Florida and across the country, at least, in part, aided by the substantial rise in the use of mail-in and in-person early voting.

Midterm elections in Florida generally feature a precipitous drop-off in turnout, mirroring national trends across election cycles. The average VEP turnout in the six presidential contests between 2000-2020 was 64.1%, while it was only 44.7% in the midterm elections—a nearly 20% difference. The 2006 midterm had the lowest VEP turnout at approximately 40%. The 2018 election had the highest midterm VEP turnout at about 54%.

Figure 2.2. FL Turnout as a % of Eligible Voters

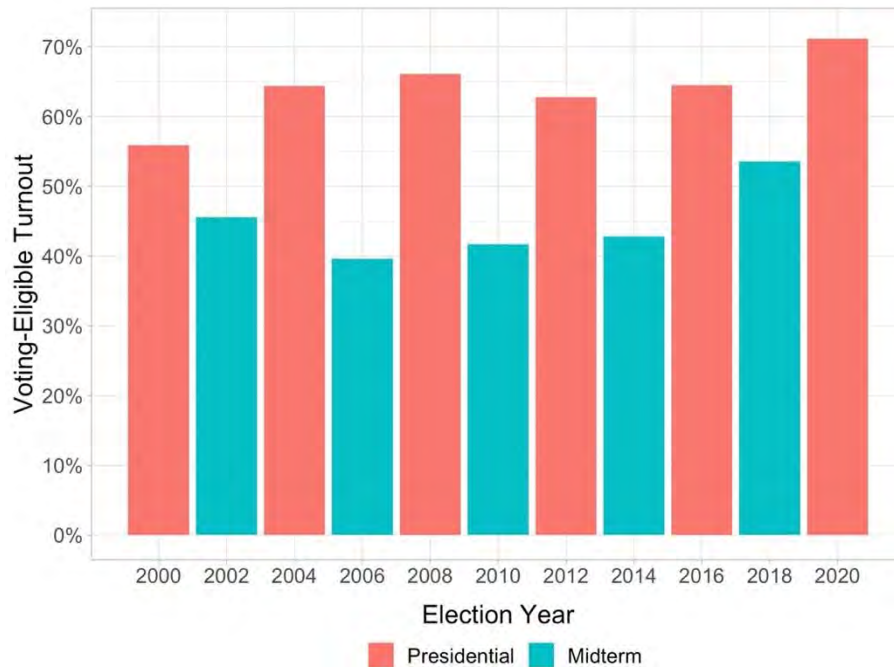
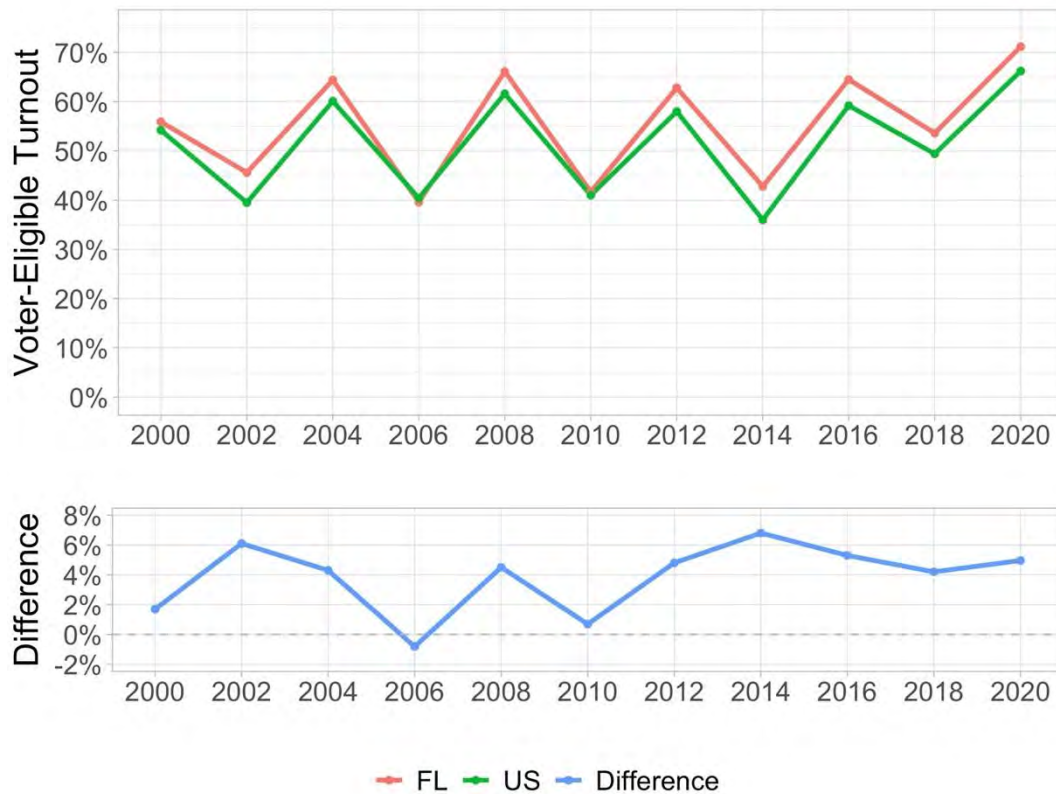


Figure 2.3 compares Florida’s VEP turnout to the VEP turnout nationwide between 2000-2020. The top figure plots Florida and US turnout against each other, while the bottom figure shows the difference between Florida’s turnout rate and that of the US. Florida’s turnout was consistently higher than the national average, barring the 2006 election, averaging close to 4% greater turnout.¹⁰ This difference likely reflects Florida’s history as a competitive two-party state in statewide elections, especially presidential elections, with many electoral votes and representatives at stake. Voters feel their vote is more likely to matter in determining who is elected and parties have greater reason to invest scarce resources in Florida compared to the average state.

¹⁰ See <http://www.electproject.org/> for more information on the VEP and voter participation rates across the U.S. over time.

Figure 2.3. Difference in Voting-Eligible Turnout Rates (FL - US) 2000-2020



2.3. Is Florida Red?

Presidential elections in Florida are notoriously close, with no contender winning by more than 5% in recent history. This fact, among others, is often used to suggest Florida is swing state. Yet despite Florida’s reputation as a “purple state,” recent changes in the electorate indicate favorable conditions for the Republican party. One indicator that Florida is not as competitive of a state as believed can be found by looking at the frequency of single-party control of the governorship and both chambers of the state legislature, known as a “trifecta.” Currently, in the US, there are 23 Republican trifectas, 14 Democratic trifectas, and 13 states with divided government. Not only was Florida one of the 23 Republican trifectas in 2020, but it has had total Republican control (including the governorship) every year since 1998, aside from a moment in 2010 when Governor Crist changed from a Republican to an Independent. Republican majorities at the moment are also very large, with 63% of the seats in FL’s House of Representatives and 60% of the seats in FL’s Senate held by Republicans.

In addition, all but one of Florida’s down-ballot statewide offices are currently held by Republicans.¹¹ Both of Florida’s U.S. senators are Republican, as are 16 of Florida’s 27 seats in

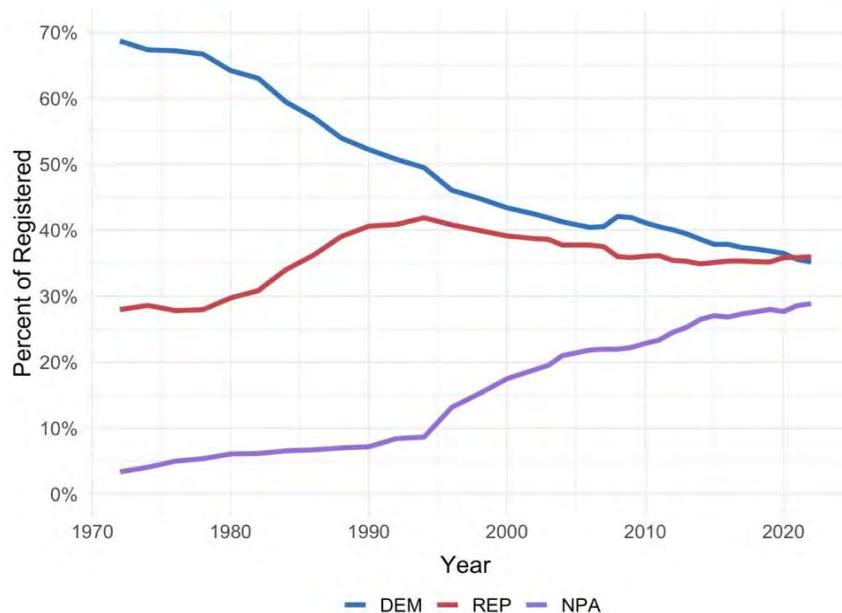
¹¹ This lone statewide office held by a Democrat being the Agricultural Commissioner.

the U.S. House of Representatives. Overall, FL’s federal delegation is majority Republican (62% Republican and 38% Democratic).

Another way we can look at this question is by using voter registration as a tool to understand a state’s partisan flavor, especially since Florida incentivizes voters to select one of the two major parties by restricting who can vote for specific candidates in the primary.¹² Figure 2.4 presents the partisan composition of Florida’s registered voters going back nearly 50 years. Of note, the proportion of registered voters who are Democrats has declined in nearly every year since 1972—a time when Democrats represented a massive 69% of the registered population. By 2022, Democrats make up only 35% of registered Floridians.

The first couple of decades of this shrinkage in the Democratic electorate can be largely explained by the nearly 10% rise in the share of Republican identifiers over the decade of the 1980s. However, the share of Republican identifiers has also shrunk since its apex in 1994—albeit not as consistently nor significantly as with Democrats. Instead, since 1994 there has been a substantial rise in the number of Floridians who choose not to identify with either of the two major political parties.¹³ Over the 26 years from 1994 to 2020, the share of these registered voters has jumped from 9% to 29%. The changing nature of state partisanship suggests that Florida is not a deep red state, especially for statewide and federal offices, where numerically large numbers of NPA (includes those who identify with No Party Affiliation, third party, or other) are likely to participate and vote a split ticket—which is why we expect to continue to see competitive statewide contests.

Figure 2.4. FL Party Registration 1972-2020



¹² As a closed primary state, voters are only permitted to vote in the primary for a candidate who shares their party identification (some exceptions apply). As such, NPA or other minor partisan groups are ineligible from voting for the Democratic and Republican primary contenders.

¹³ For simplicity, in our figures we refer to any registered voter who does not identify as a Democrat or Republican as NPA (No Party Affiliation).

2.4. Registration versus Turnout

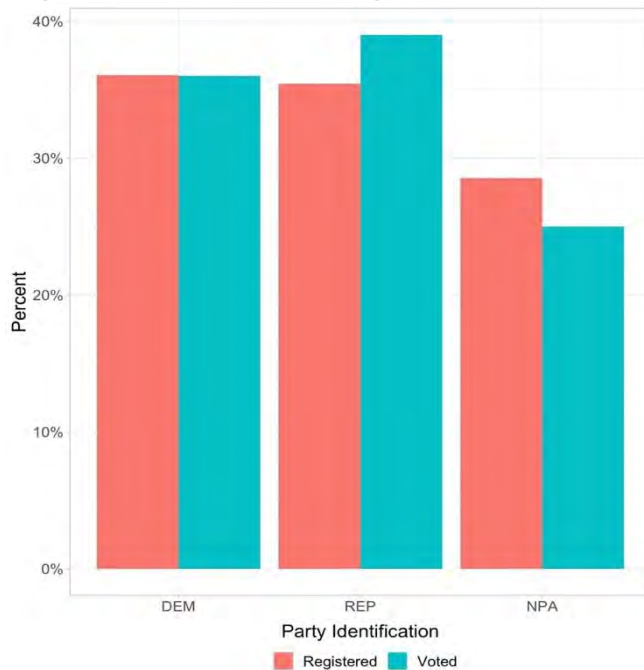
FL residents have multiple methods through which they can register to vote. They can do so online through the Florida Department of State's website, via mail using the National Voter Registration Form, in-person at their county Supervisor of Elections office, local library, or any entity authorized by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to issue fishing, hunting, or trapping permits. Voters may also register when accessing the services of the Florida Driver License Office, Tax Collector's Office, or any other voter registration agency. Additionally, Floridians can submit voter registration information when renewing driver's licenses online through the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles' online renewal system.¹⁴ Florida does not, however, offer election-day registration. Only Floridians whose applications are received 29 days before election day are eligible to vote.

It is important to note that rising shares in voter registration do not perfectly translate into increased vote share. NPAs now represent a substantial share of registered Floridians, Figure 2.5 shows that they were underrepresented by about 3.5% in the 2020 election—precisely matching the overrepresentation of Republican voters that year. This reflects a longstanding finding that individuals attached to one of the two major political parties in the US are significantly more likely to show up to vote than those who identify as Independent or with a minor party.

A key part of any campaign is voter mobilization or the conversion of potential (registered) voters to actual voters. As such, which party is better able to turn out its core constituency can vary between elections and candidates. Partisans report that they are more likely to be contacted for mobilization than independents, which helps boost mobilization and turnout for partisans as we see in Figure 2.5.

¹⁴ <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/for-voters/voter-registration/register-to-vote-or-update-your-information/>

Figure 2.5. FL 2020 Registered & Voters by Party



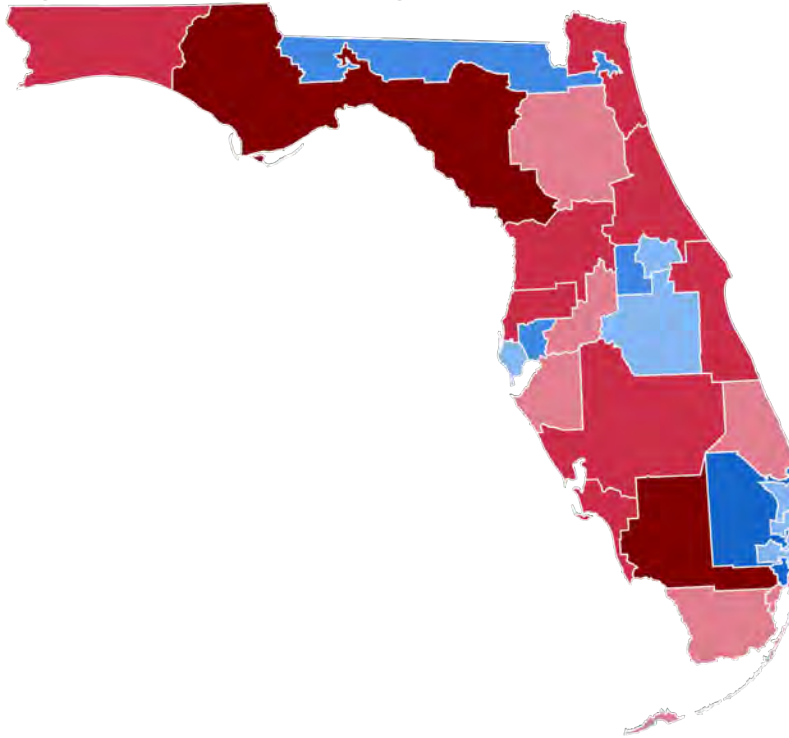
2.5. Campaigns and Voters 2020

In 2020, Florida had 28 contested federal offices, including the presidency and 27 U.S. House seats (see Figure 2.6). The vote summaries for these contests are in Table 2.1. Neither of FL’s senators was up for reelection in 2020—Rubio (R) is up in 2022 and Scott (R) in 2024.

Reflecting the partisan diversity throughout regions of the state, the competitiveness and partisan lean of congressional races varied widely. For instance, the 27th Congressional district (CD27), located entirely within Miami-Dade County on the south-eastern coast of the state, was a highly competitive race. Republican Maria Elvira Salazar narrowly defeated incumbent Democrat Donna Shalala 51% to 49%.

Conversely, the U.S. House contest in the 20th Congressional district (CD20), also located in southeastern FL in Henry, Palm Beach, and Broward counties, was far less competitive. Incumbent Democratic candidate Alcee Hastings won reelection with 79% of the vote, compared to Republican challenger Greg Musselwhite’s 21%. The 2020 FL election featured one uncontested U.S. House election, in which Neal Dunn won reelection in the 2nd Congressional district (CD2) with 98% of the vote.

Figure 2.6. FL 2020 Congressional Districts



The presidential contest in 2020 was very competitive with former Vice President Joe Biden receiving 48% of the vote, while President Donald Trump received 51% of the vote. However, 2020 was less competitive than in 2016 when then-candidate Trump received 49% of the vote to Secretary Clinton's 48%.

Table 2.1. Federal Campaigns 2020

Contest	Votes Cast	% Vote Democratic	% Vote Republican
President	11067456	48	51
CD1	438562	34	65
CD2	311999	--	98
CD3	390401	43	57
CD4	504940	39	61
CD5	336973	65	35
CD6	437856	39	61
CD7	406449	55	43
CD8	459788	39	61
CD9	429638	56	44
CD10	376397	64	36
CD11	475073	33	67
CD12	453135	37	63
CD13	406125	53	47
CD14	372136	60	40
CD15	390671	45	55
CD16	484684	44	56
CD17	412397	34	65
CD18	449720	42	56
CD19	444589	39	61
CD20	322409	79	21
CD21	403093	59	39
CD22	402317	59	41
CD23	380196	58	42
CD24	289638	76	20
CD26	342630	48	52
CD27	342975	49	51

Note: Totals below 100% represent votes for third party or write-in candidates

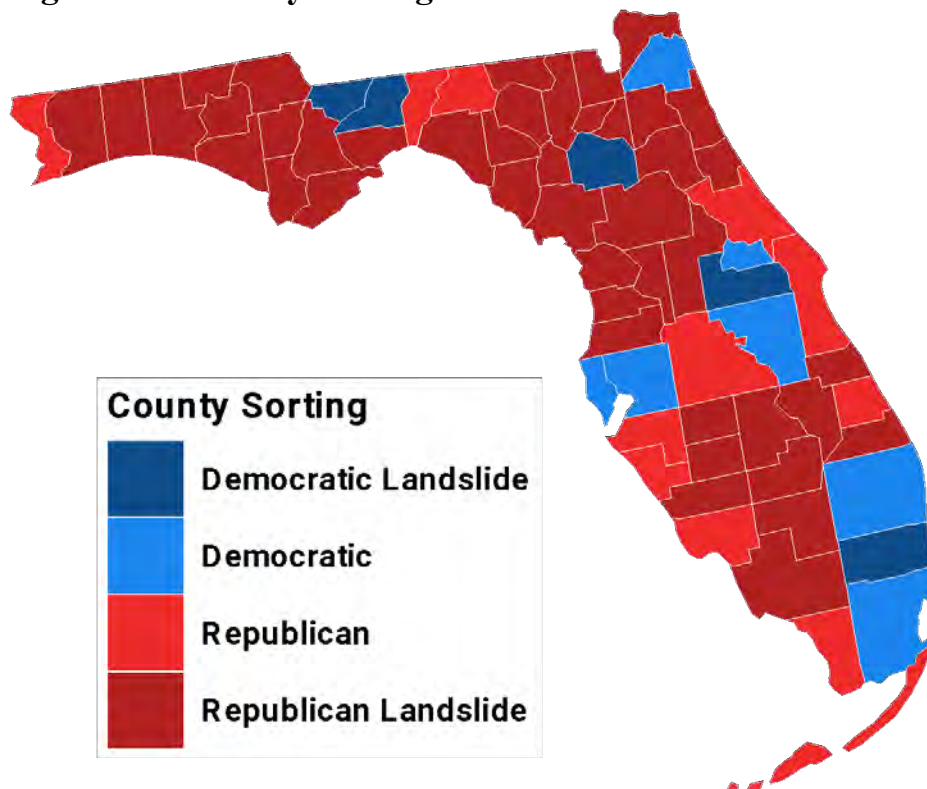
The state is politically divided geographically between rural and urban counties and between Northern and Southern FL counties. Therefore, similar to other states, FL is sorted into political preferences by region. Americans have been sorting into more homogeneous political communities for nearly 4 decades.¹⁵ The effect of sorting is that Americans are increasingly living in “landslide” counties, which are defined as counties where the difference between the

¹⁵ Bill Bishop. 2008. *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded American is Tearing Us Apart*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Democratic and Republican candidates is greater than +/- 20%. In 2020, 58% of Americans lived in counties that were considered red or blue landslides.¹⁶

In Florida, 73% of counties in 2020 were landslide counties. 12 out of Florida's 67 counties are blue (5 or 42% are Democratic landslides), while the other 55 counties are red (44 or 80% are Republican landslides). Figure 2.7 maps this variation in support between Biden and Trump by county in Florida during the 2020 election. Dark blue and red indicate Democratic and Republican landslide counties, while light blue and red are used in counties with vote margins between 0 and 20%.

Figure 2.7. County Sorting in 2020 Presidential Vote Choice



2.6. Voting Mode

¹⁶ Bill Bishop. December 17, 2020. "For Most Americans the Local Presidential Vote Was a Landslide," *The Daily Yonder*, available at <https://dailyyonder.com/for-most-americans-the-local-presidential-vote-was-a-landslide/2020/12/17/>

Covid-19 was the defining feature of the 2020 election and affected every aspect of it. Election administrators worked hard to process absentee ballot requests and create a safe election space for in-person voting. Absentee voters, who made up about 30% of all FL voters between 2014 and 2018, increased by one-third to over 40% of all ballots cast (see Figure 2.8). Yet, the growing utilization of early voting began years before the pandemic in Florida. In 2010, just 20% of FL voters went to the polls early. For the last midterm election in 2018, that share of voters increased to 32% and reached nearly 40% in each of the last two presidential races. While 57% of voters voted on election day in 2010, this number dropped sharply over the next decade, with only 17% voting on election day in 2020.

Figure 2.8. FL Voting Mode by Election Year 2016-2020

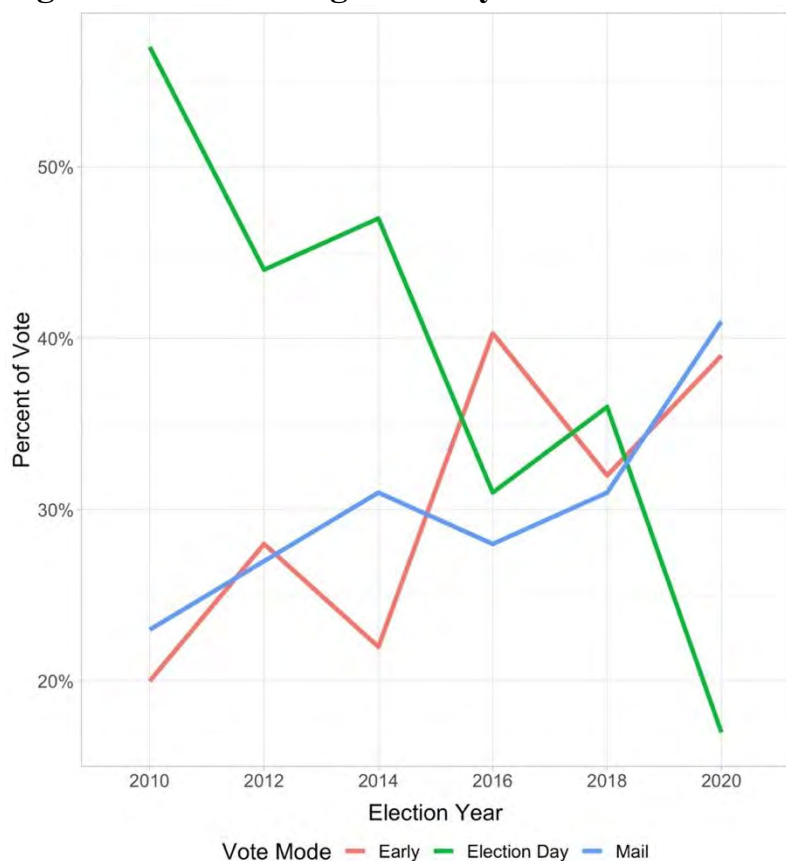
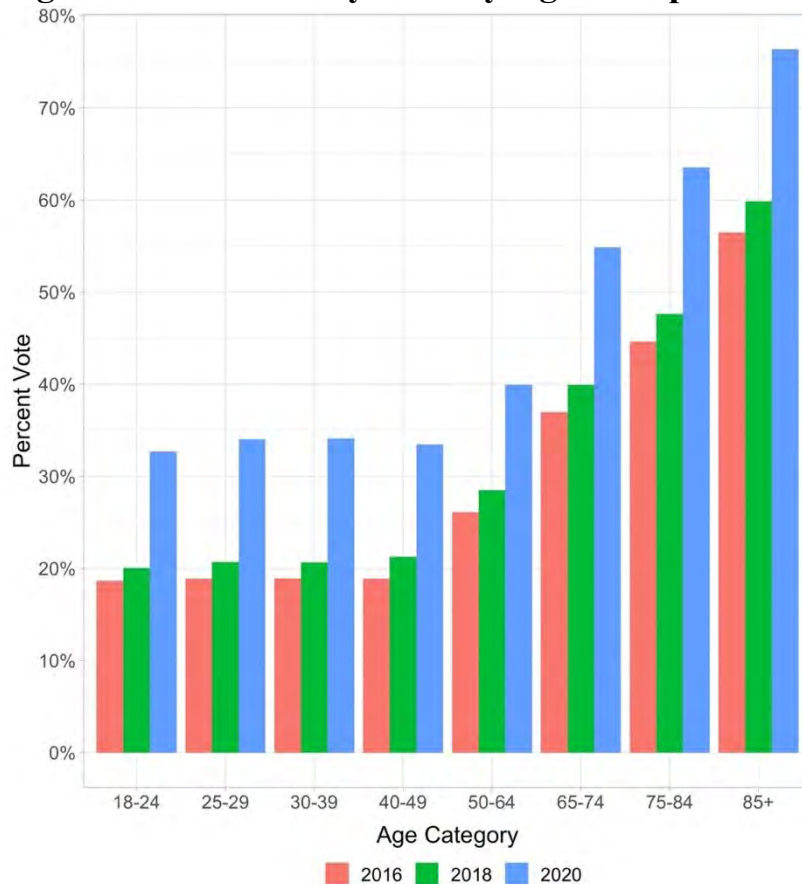


Figure 2.9 shows the relationship between age and VBM rates for the 2016, 2018, and 2020 elections. In all years, older voters are much more likely to VBM, but only among the highest age groups (50-64+). Whereas voters aged 18-49 utilize vote by mail at similar rates (~20%) in 2016 and 2018, those older than 50 use it at an increasing rate as they age—from 40 up to 60%.

The results also provide insight into how Covid-19 appears to have impacted Floridians’ choice of how to cast their ballot. Across the board, voters were more likely to use VBM than in prior years. Like previous elections, in 2020 voters aged 18-49 made use of VBM in a similar fashion (~34%), while each age category 50 and up used VBM at increasing rates. 40% of voters 50-64, 55% of voters 65-74, and 65% to 75% of those 75 and older voted by mail.

Figure 2.9. FL Vote-by-Mail by Age Group 2016-2020



Next, we consider how voting behavior differed between parties. Figure 2.10 shows the percentage of voters from each party who voted by mail in the three most recent elections. 27% of Democrats voted by mail in 2016, while that number rose slightly to 31% in 2018 and then sharply in 2020 to 53%. NPA voters behaved similarly, increasing from 25% to 29% between 2016 and 2018 and again, rising sharply to 43% of voters in 2020. We do not see a similar relationship with Republican voters, as their rate of absentee voting increases steadily—but less dramatically—from 27% in 2016 to 34% in 2020.

Interestingly, in both 2016 and 2018, Democrats and Republicans voted by mail at approximately the same rate while NPAs did so slightly less. However, in the 2020 election, Democrats (53%) and NPAs (43%) were much more likely to VBM than Republicans (34%). This is likely due to differences in voting-method messaging between the two parties. Democrats promoted VBM, while Republican messaging was more mixed, especially from President Trump who routinely criticized VBM as a mechanism for voter fraud.¹⁷

¹⁷ See Atkeson, Lonna Rae, Wendy Hansen, Maggie Toulouse Oliver, Cherie Maestas, and Eric Weimer, 2022, “Should I vote-by-mail or in-person? The impact of COVID-19 risk factors and partisanship on vote mode decisions in the 2020 presidential election, presented at the Southern Political Science Association January 12-14, 2022; Scheller, Daniel. 2021. Pandemic Primary: The Interactive Effects of COVID-19 Prevalence and Age on Voter Turnout. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 31(1): 180-190.

Figure 2.10. Vote-by-Mail by Party from 2016-2020

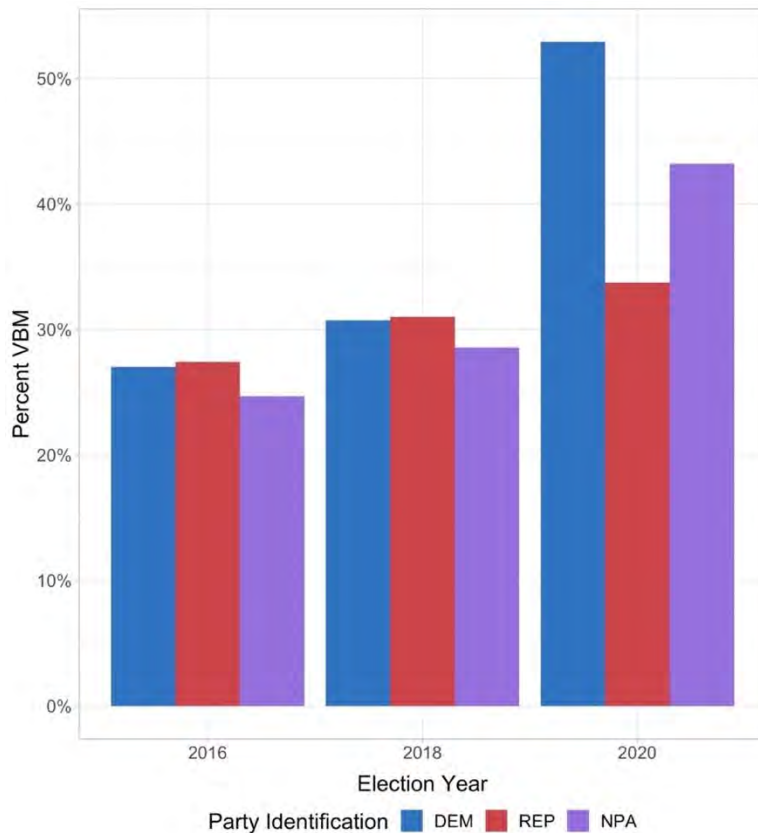
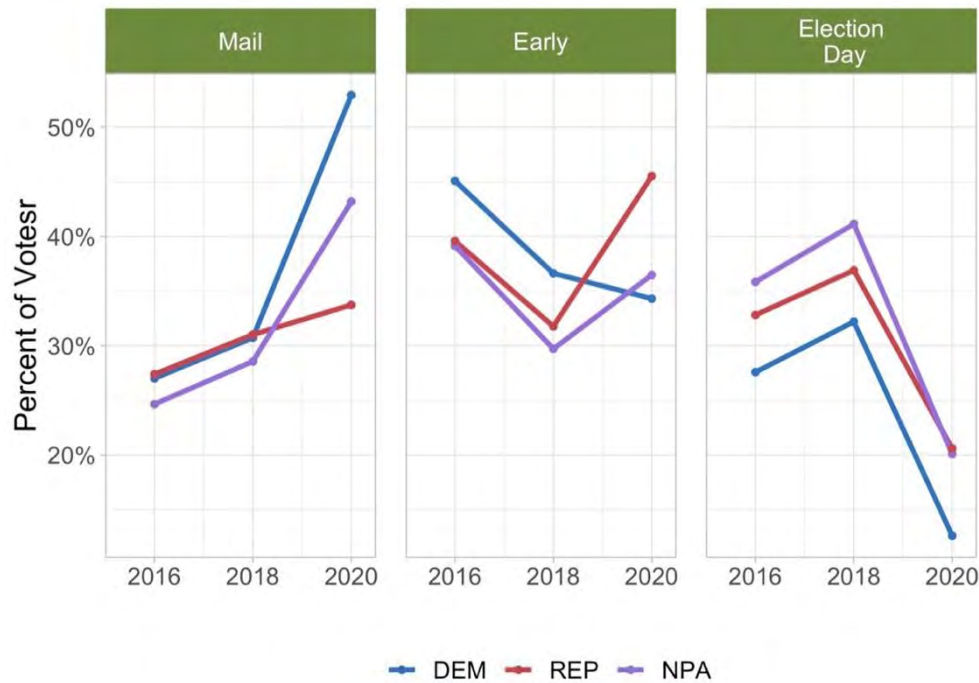


Figure 2.11 takes a deeper look at the relationship between vote method and party affiliation, comparing rates of VBM, early in-person voting, and in-person election day voting across parties for each of the three most recent elections. As discussed above, all voters increased voting by mail in each consecutive election over this period, but the sharp rise in 2020 was centered on Democratic and NPA voters. What Figure 2.11 adds to this story is it shows Republicans—and a lesser degree NPA—responded to the pandemic by instead choosing to vote early. As a result of these changes in voting behavior between the 2018 and 2020 elections, voters from all political identities substantially curtailed their use of election day voting, with each group’s use decreasing by roughly 20%.

It seems Florida voters from all parties took the pandemic seriously in determining their method of voting during the public health crisis brought on by COVID-19. Democrats voted by mail, Republicans largely showed up early when there were fewer crowds and more flexibility, while NPAs did a mix of both—albeit leaning more heavily in favor of VBM.

Figure 2.11. Vote Mode by Party from 2016-2020



FL voters who requested an absentee ballot were able to change their minds and vote a regular ballot in person. To do so, they could take their VBM ballot to the polls, turn it in and instead vote a regular ballot. If the voter did not bring their mail ballot, the Supervisor of Elections' office would attempt to confirm the ballot had not already been submitted. If confirmed, the voter was allowed to vote using a regular ballot at the poll. If the office found the absentee ballot had been submitted already, or could not confirm either way, the voter would not be able to vote in person. However, if the voter believed they had not submitted the absentee ballot, and the office was unable to confirm, then they were provided the opportunity to submit a provisional ballot instead.

Additionally, FL voters in 2020 were able to correct abnormalities or mistakes with their personal signatures on the mail ballots. The Supervisor of Elections was required to notify voters if their signature was missing or did not match the one on record. Voters were then able to complete a "Vote-by-Mail Ballot Cure" affidavit that included a copy of their identification to rectify the discrepancy. This document was required to be returned by 5 pm on the second day after an election.¹⁸

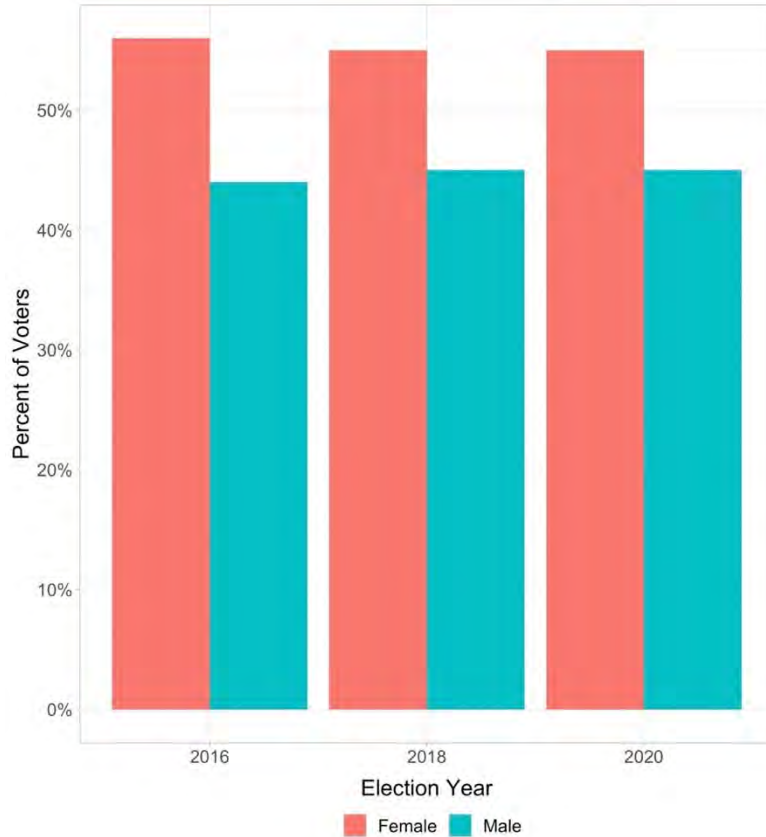
2.7. Voter Demographics

Figure 2.12 compares the percentage of voters by gender from 2016-2018. There is a consistent gender gap in turnout with women comprising 55% of Florida voters and men 45%. This gap is a bit different from the voter registration file where women make up 53%, and men make up 47%

¹⁸ <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/for-voters/voting/vote-by-mail/>

of registered voters. National data suggests FL’s gender imbalance is in the same direction as national trends, but the gap is slightly larger in FL.¹⁹

Figure 2.12. FL Gender & Turnout from 2016-2020



As seen in Figure 2.13, women are also much more likely to identify with the Democratic Party than men. In 2020, 41% of women and 33% of men identified as a Democrat (8-point difference), while 35% of women and 40% of men identify as Republican (5-point difference). These results are comparable to national data, which shows that women are more likely to identify as Democrats (56%) than men (42%) and men are more likely to be Republicans (50%) than women (38%).²⁰

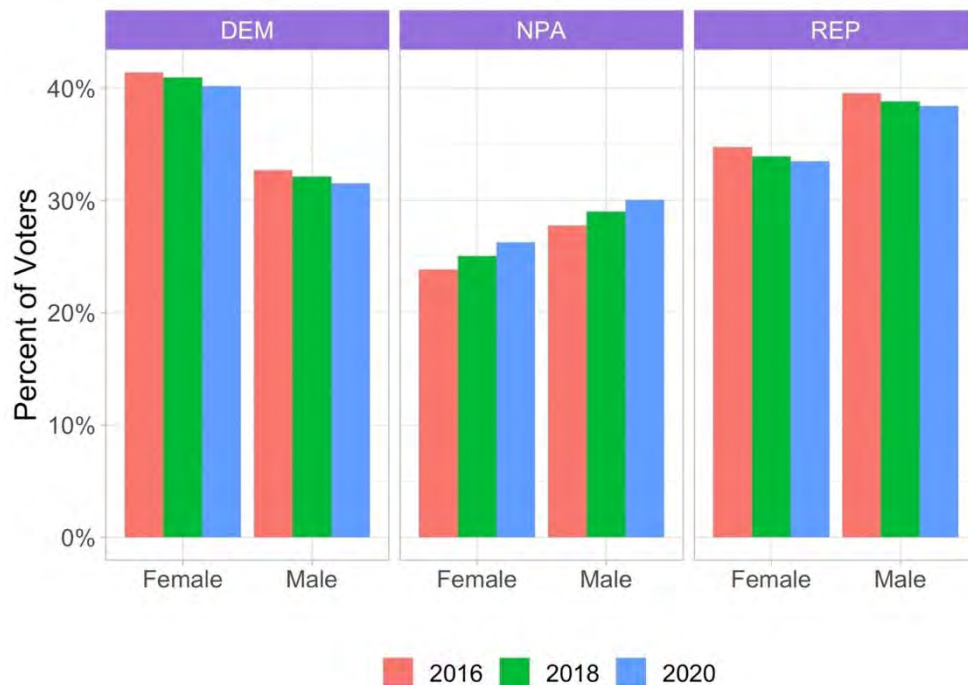
Figure 2.4 showed a long-run rise in the share of NPA registered voters in recent decades, while Figure 2.13 illustrates that in at least the three most recent elections, this rise is not attributable to a gender gap. Although men are roughly 4% more likely to register as NPA than women, this gap has not expanded as voters, regardless of gender, are choosing not to affiliate with one of

¹⁹ See <https://www.cnn.com/election/2020/exit-polls/president/national-results/0> for 2020 exit poll data.

²⁰ For a good recent discussion of national trends in partisanship in turnout by gender see, Ruth Igielnik, “Men and Women in the US Continue to Differ in Voter Turnout Rate, Party Identification,” August 18, 2020, available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/08/18/men-and-women-in-the-u-s-continue-to-differ-in-voter-turnout-rate-party-identification/>.

two major parties in increasing numbers. As of 2020, 30% of men and 26% of women registered as NPA, with males nearly as likely to be Democratic as NPA.

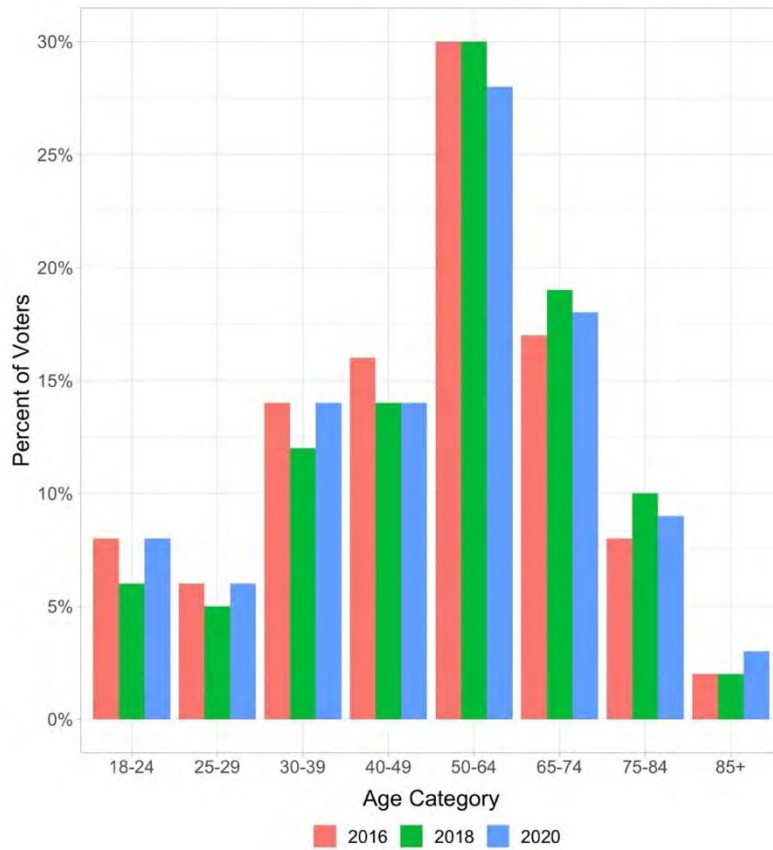
Figure 2.13. FL Registered Voters: Party by Gender from 2016-2020



In terms of age, there has been much less of a shift in voting behavior than in method of voting, as illustrated in Figure 2.9. Figure 2.14 looks at the distribution of voters by age category over recent elections. It presents the percentage of voters in an election from a particular age category. Those aged 50-64 represent the single largest segment of voters, roughly the size of the next two largest age categories—who happen to sandwich the 50–64-year-olds—combined. This presentation reflects differential turnout rates between age categories as seen elsewhere across the country, but importantly, also the large population of retirement and nearing-retirement aged Floridians.²¹ However, no significant pattern emerges between elections except that in midterm years, those less than 40 years old make up a smaller share of voters than in presidential election years.

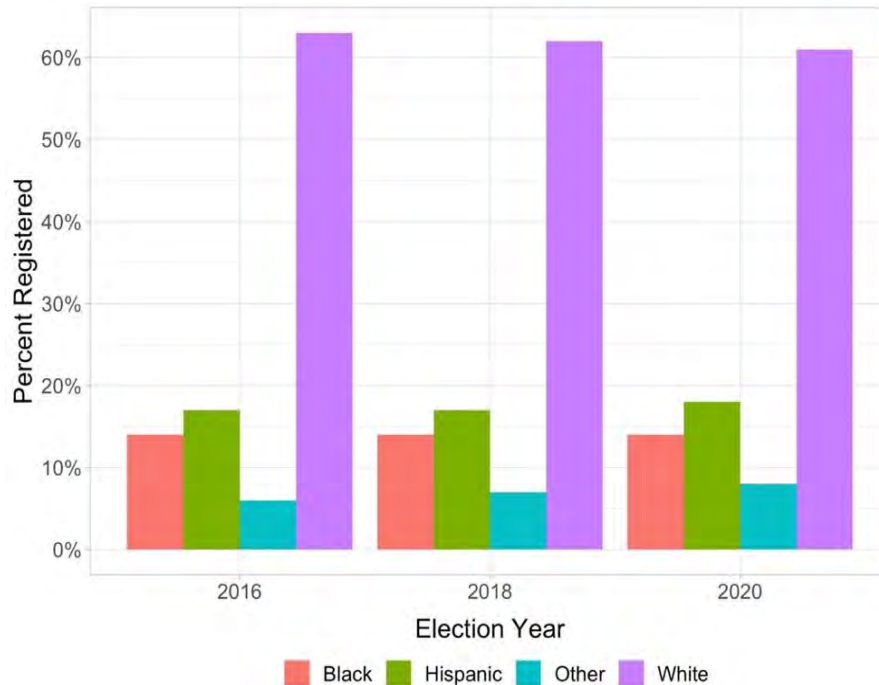
²¹ The Population Reference Bureau identifies Florida as the second oldest state in the country, based on percent of state population 65+, trailing only the state of Maine, see <https://www.prb.org/resources/which-us-states-are-the-oldest/>

Figure 2.14. FL Turnout by Age from 2016-2020



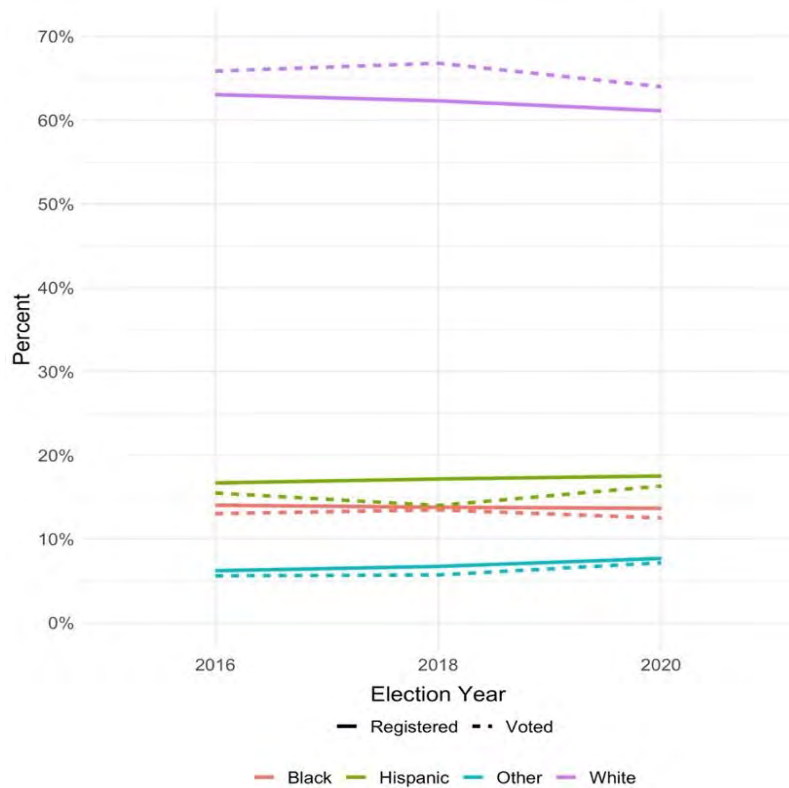
Concerning race and party registration, Figure 2.15 presents the share of registered voters in each of the last three elections who identify as White, Black, Hispanic, or some other race/ethnicity (denoted as Other). White Floridians constituted a majority of registered voters between 2016 and 2020 but dropped slightly from 63% to 61% over this period. In its place, we see a slight uptick in the share of registered voters who are Hispanic from 17% in 2016 and 2018 to 18% in 2020. Black voters, on the other hand, made up 14% of registrants in all three election years.

Figure 2.15. FL Race and Voter Registration 2016, 2018, & 2020



We also assess how the racial demographics of registered voters compared to those who turned out to vote between 2016 and 2020. Figure 2.16 presents the percentage of registered voters (solid line) and the percentage of actual voters (dashed line) who were Black, Hispanic, White, or Other. Overall, non-White voters make up slightly less of the share of voters than registrants while White voters make up a greater share. Between 61% and 63% of registered voters were White during these years, but between 64% and 67% of voters. Conversely, while approximately 17% of registered voters were Hispanic, only between 14% and 16% of those who turned out to vote during these years were Hispanic. Black voters made up approximately 14% of registered voters and 13% of actual voters during these years. We see a similar pattern for voters who selected the “other” category, with minimal differences between registrants and voters (approximately 6% each).

Figure 2.16 FL Registration vs. Turnout by Race in 2016, 2018, & 2020



Chapter 3: Voter Experiences with the Voting Process and Voter Confidence

Voters are the cornerstone of democracy. Therefore, their experiences with voting are central to understanding the larger FL election ecosystem. Assessing voter experiences with, and attitudes toward, the election process provides important information on the effectiveness and efficiency of election administration procedures. Voter experiences with ballot delivery, ballot counting, the quality of the polling site, and interaction with poll workers provide important evidence about the voting process and the quality of the election system. These experiences are the primary means through which election officials influence voter confidence. When voters have problems—for example, because poll workers are unhelpful or because they had problems requesting an absentee ballot—they are likely to feel less confident that their votes are counted correctly.²² Similarly, when voters have good experiences and feel that their ballot privacy was protected and processed smoothly their voter confidence increases. Therefore, this chapter

²² See Lonna Rae Atkeson and Kyle L. Saunders, 2007, “Voter Confidence: A Local Matter?” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 40(October):655-660; Thad E. Hall, J. Quin Monson, and Kelly D. Patterson, 2007, “Poll Workers and the Vitality of Democracy: An Early Assessment,” *PS: Political Science and Society*, 647-654; Thad E. Hall, J. Quin Monson, and Kelly D. Patterson, 2009, “The Human Dimension of Elections: How Poll Workers Shape Public Confidence in Elections,” *Political Research Quarterly* 62(2): 507-522; Sances, Michael and Stewart III, Charles, *Partisanship and Voter Confidence, 2000-2010* (April 5, 2012). Midwest Political Science Association, 2012, MIT Political Science Department Research Paper No. 2012-12, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2035513>.

contains an examination of attitudes surrounding the voting experience that will provide a broad look at the overall quality of the vote experience.

We use the Florida Election Study survey discussed in Chapter 1 for these data (see Appendix A for the Relative Frequency Report). Our sample included Florida voters from each type of vote mode (in-person early, in-person election day, and VBM). It is important to note that when discussing survey results using party identification, we follow long-standing precedence in Political Science and use a branching question that probes respondents who select “Independent,” with leaners considered members of the mentioned party and only those who do not lean toward either party labelled as No Party Affiliation (NPA). This will then, of course, differ from the numbers reported using the official voter registration.

In 2008, FL voters switched to a unified paper ballot system statewide to ensure a paper and auditable record of every voter’s ballot choice.²³ The ballots are kept for at least 22 months after a federal election. In 2016, the Florida legislature added 3 new categories of acceptable forms of IDs, bringing the total number of acceptable forms of photo IDs to 12. These include driver’s licenses, U.S. passports, debit or credit cards, student identification, and retirement center identifications. If a voter does not have an acceptable form of photo ID, they may still vote a provisional ballot and return later with identification.

In 2020, Florida voters could vote early in person at any time from October 19 to November 1, and on election day, November 3. Voters had until October 24 to request a mail ballot and could return them either by mail, at the Supervisor of Election’s office, or at mail ballot drop boxes by 7 pm on election day.

This chapter contains the following four sections:

- Section 3.1 examines the voter experience among Floridians who voted by mail (VBM).
- Section 3.2 examines the voter experience for those who voted in-person, either early or on election day.
- Section 3.3 examines identification requirements and experiences among in-person voters.
- Section 3.4 voter confidence at multiple levels of election administration including the voter’s ballot at his or her vote center, all of the ballots in the county, all of the ballots in the state, and all of the ballots in the nation.

3.1. Vote-by-Mail

Absentee voters typically only made up about 30% of voters in the last several elections, but in 2020 that number increased dramatically. As mentioned in Chapter 2, approximately 41% of Florida voters voted by mail in the 2020 general election. Thirty-three percent of these absentee voters indicated that it was their first time voting by mail. We also asked voters why they chose

²³ Terry Aguayo and Christine Jordan Sexton, 2007, “Florida Acts to Eliminate Touch Screen Voting System,” *New York Times*, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/02/us/02voting.html>, accessed August 2, 2022.

to VBM. 58% indicated that they did so for convenience, while 44% cited Covid-19. Other reasons for voting by mail included disability (8%), absence on election day (9%), and scheduling conflicts (8%). Nearly all VBM voters said their ballots were delivered by USPS (96%), the remaining 4% said they received their ballot via email, fax, online portal, or picked up in person.

Who Voted by Mail?

Amid the novel coronavirus outbreak, mail balloting expanded tremendously across the state. Most (86%) VBM voters filled out their ballot alone, and of those who filled out their ballot with someone else, a majority (68%) did so with their spouse or partner. Largely consistent with the findings using official Florida data in Chapter 2, we find the choice of how to vote varies between political parties using our survey results as well.

- Those aged 25-34 and 65+ were the two age groups most likely to vote by mail, with 47% and 53% of voters in that age category, respectively, electing to VBM.
- Blacks (50%) were more likely than any other racial demographic to vote by mail, while Hispanics (35%) were the least.
- 30% of Republicans chose to vote by mail, while 59% of Democrats chose the same.

Requesting an Absentee Ballot

Florida voters who chose to VBM could request an absentee ballot through the Supervisor of Election's office. This could be done either in person, by phone, or in signed writing (mail, email, fax). Voters could also designate immediate family members or legal guardians to request an absentee ballot on their behalf.²⁴ Table 3.1 displays the distribution of different methods used by voters to request an absentee ballot.

- The most popular method was online. About three-fifths (61%) of VBM requests were completed online. Having a central location to apply for VBM is a great resource for voters.
- Only about 1% of voters indicated they used a 3rd party VBM request.
- Just about 13% of voters contacted the Supervisor's office for an absentee ballot either by phone (8%), by email (1%), or in-person (4%).

²⁴ <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/for-voters/voting/vote-by-mail/>

Table 3.1. How did you request an absentee ballot?

Online	61%
Mail	16%
Other	9%
Called	8%
Went in-person	4%
Emailed	1%
Mail (received from 3 rd party)	1%

Returning VBM Ballots

To return their VBM ballots, voters could mail them through the USPS, or hand-deliver them to their County Supervisor of Election’s office, a polling location, or drop them off at a county ballot designated drop-box. Any voter who has requested a VBM ballot can track the status of his or her ballot online through the county Supervisor of Elections' website. To understand how Florida VBM voters returned their ballots, we asked these voters in our survey “How did you return your ballot?” Table 3.2 displays the results.

Table 3.2. How did you return your ballot?

Picked up by the postal worker who delivers mail to my home	26%
Post office box at a U.S. Postal Service location	25%
Dropped it off at an early voting center or election precinct	15%
A drop box used only for ballots	13%
Dropped it off at the County Clerk's office	12%
Official post office box not at a U.S. Postal Service location	5%
Other	4%
Email	0%
Don't know	0%

We find that 25% of voters dropped off their ballot at a post office box located at an official U.S. Postal Service location, and another 26% had theirs picked up from their mailbox by the USPS. 15% dropped their ballot off at an official voting center, and 12% at the County Clerk’s office. Of those VBM voters who did not use any of the USPS resources to return their completed ballot, 79% said they wanted to be certain their ballot arrived, 46% said they did not trust the USPS to deliver it on time, and 40% said it was convenient to drop it off. A vast majority of VBM voters returned their ballot several weeks before the election. 54% returned theirs 2-3 weeks before the election, while 22% submitted theirs a month or more before. Only a quarter of VBM voters waited until right up to election day; 24% up to one week before, and just 1% waited until election day. No Florida respondents indicated they attempted to return their absentee ballot after election day.

Voters were also asked if they returned VBM ballots for other voters or if their ballot was returned by someone else. 88% returned their own ballot, while 10% had a family member do it and another 2% used a friend or someone else.

Overall, 22% of FL voters who voted by mail indicated that they returned someone else’s mail ballot. Table 3.3 shows who these voters indicated they returned a ballot on behalf of. 76%

returned their spouse’s ballot, 19% returned a child’s ballot , and 16% returned some other family member’s. Only 3% mentioned returning a ballot for someone other than a family member.

Table 3.3. Whose ballot(s) did you return?

Spouse	76%
Child	19%
Other family member	16%
Friend	10%
Parent	5%
Other	3%

We also asked voters that returned someone else’s ballot, “How many ballots did you return?” 71% indicated that they returned one or two ballots, while 21% returned 3, 8% returned 4 and 1% returned 5. No one indicated they returned more than 5.

Vote By Mail Experience

To assess how respondents felt about voting by mail, we first asked “Overall, how difficult was it to follow all the instructions necessary to cast your ballot and return it to be counted?” We find overwhelmingly that VBM voters saw the process of casting and returning their ballot to be tractable. Specifically, 98% said that the instructions were very easy or easy, and these results are relatively consistent across age groups, as seen in table 3.4.

Table 3.4. Overall, how difficult was it to follow all the instructions necessary to cast your ballot and return it to be counted? by Age

Response	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Very hard	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Somewhat hard	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Somewhat easy	20%	23%	11%	17%	7%	13%
Very easy	80%	76%	88%	92%	92%	86%

- Over 90% of voters in every age category said voting by mail was somewhat or very easy
- Voters under 30 were less likely to say it was “very easy” than older voters.
- Only 2% of respondents reported encountering a problem that may have interfered with their ability to cast their vote

There was some anxiety over whether ballots would arrive in the county Supervisor’s office in time to be counted in the election. Over two in five VBM voters (36%), reported feeling either somewhat or very concerned (see Table 3.5) To provide more information to voters, Florida hosts an online voter portal in which voters can check their voter registration record and other election data including whether their mail ballot has been sent or whether it has arrived back in the Supervisor’s office. Table 3.6 provides information on the usage rates and reasons Floridians utilized this portal and shows nearly all (79%) VBM voters took advantage of this resource.

Reasons for accessing the portal included to check their registration (43%), look at a sample ballot (23%), ensure their ballot arrived or was delivered to the Supervisor’s office on time (62%), or to check when the ballot was sent (30%).

Table 3.5. How concerned were you that your ballot would arrive at the County Clerk’s office in time to be counted?

Not at all concerned	37%
Not too concerned	27%
Somewhat concerned	21%
Very concerned	15%

Table 3.6 Did you log on to your voter registration record to do any of the following?

Yes, check when delivered	62%
Yes, check registration	43%
Yes, check when sent	30%
Yes, sample ballot	23%
No	21%
Yes, other	3%

We also asked voters about their likelihood of voting by mail in subsequent elections given their experiences in 2020. 75% report being very likely to do so with another 13% saying they are somewhat likely. Voters aged 65+ (81%) or 35-44 (80%) are more likely to say they are “very likely” to vote by mail again, as opposed to younger voters aged 18-24 (52%), who are the least likely to say so.

Desire to vote by mail again varied significantly across party identification, as shown in Table 3.7. Whereas 89% of Democrats and 80% of NPA indicated they were very likely to vote absentee next time, only 51% of Republicans did. Similarly, 15% of Republicans felt they were not at all likely to VBM again, while only 4% of NPA and some 0% of Democrats felt that way.

Table 3.7. Given your experience this year with mail in voting, how likely are you to vote absentee next time? by Party

Response	Republican	NPA	Democrat
Not at all likely	15%	4%	0%
Not too likely	12%	7%	2%
Somewhat likely	21%	9%	9%
Very likely	51%	80%	89%

We find similar, albeit less significant partisan differences in concern over mail ballots arriving at the Supervisor’s office in time to be counted (Table 3.8), but do not observe the same pattern in voter confusion over absentee voting instructions (Table 3.9).

Table 3.8. How concerned were you that your ballot would arrive at the County Clerk’s office in time to be counted? by Party

Response	Republican	NPA	Democrat
Not at all concerned	30%	32%	45%
Not too concerned	25%	22%	22%
Somewhat concerned	32%	25%	17%
Very concerned	14%	21%	17%

Table 3.9. Overall, how difficult was it to follow all the instructions necessary to cast your ballot and return it to be counted? by Party

Response	Republican	NPA	Democrat
Very hard	0%	1%	0%
Somewhat Hard	1%	0%	1%
Somewhat easy	14%	15%	13%
Very Easy	86%	84%	85%

3.2. Early and Election Day Voter Experience

Wait Times

Wait times and line length were one of the items addressed in *The American Voting Experience: Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration*.²⁵ The commission recommended that no voter wait in line longer than 30 minutes. Prior to the election, the CDC had recommended voters switch to early voting if they could, with the intent to help ensure citizens were able to vote and to prevent long lines on election day.²⁶ However, fewer voting locations were available during early voting in an election that saw record turnout and greater use of early voting, all combining to contribute to longer lines at early-voting centers. Line length also increased because, in many locations, fewer voters were allowed inside the voting location at the same time because of public health concerns related to the pandemic.

- A slight plurality of in-person FL voters (35%) reported no wait time, with another 30% waiting for less than 10 minutes.
- However, 16% of early and 12% of election day voters indicated they waited in line for longer than 30 minutes, exceeding the standard as set by the Presidential Commission on Election Administration.

²⁵ The report can be found at: <http://www.supportthevoter.gov/>

²⁶ See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/going-out/voting-tips.html> and <https://www.nga.org/center/publications/election-health-safety-COVID-19/>.

- Election day voters were in line for shorter periods of time than their early voting counterparts (see Table 3.10).

Table 3.10. Approximately how long did you have to wait in line to vote? x How did you vote in this fall's general election?

Response	Early voting	Election day
Not at all	26%	51%
Less than 10 minutes	33%	25%
10-30 minutes	26%	12%
31 minutes to one hour	9%	5%
More than one hour	7%	7%

Polling Location Experience

Poll locations and poll worker-voter interactions are crucial components of election administration. As such, it is important that poll worker interactions be positive for the voter because voters' personal experience influences their level of confidence in their vote being counted correctly. The 2020 election included an additional layer of complexity to an already complex process of election administration as poll workers and voters were advised to adhere to special public health guidelines to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Nearly all voters (96%) said that their voting location was easy to find, and only 3% had to go far out of their way to vote. There were some differences between race/ethnic groups, with Hispanic voters slightly more likely to say that they had to go far out of their way to vote (9%) as opposed to White (3%) and Black (0%) voters.

Overall, voters were also happy with the performance of poll workers with 95% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their poll workers were helpful. Views on Covid-19 safety at voting locations were similarly positive: 90% of in-person voters felt safe from Covid-19 while voting and 84% held positive views of their polling location's efforts to prevent voters and workers from contracting Covid-19. Yet, these opinions varied significantly among younger voters.

- Voters aged 18-24 were more critical of Covid-19 policy, with 20% rating their polling location's efforts as "poor" compared to 1%–5% in other age groups.
- Similarly, only 56% of 18–24-year-old voters gave a favorable rating of their polling location's Covid-19 efforts, while for other age groups the number ranged from 79% to 90%.

Overall, 89% of in-person voters felt their ballot privacy was adequately protected at their polling location. Moreover, while most voters approved of the length of the ballot (87%), Table 3.11 shows these views fluctuated somewhat across racial demographics with 11% of Whites, 19% of Blacks and 20% of Hispanics indicating they found the ballot to be too long. Voters in

the “Other” category (Asian, American Indian, Middle Eastern, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander) were the most satisfied with their ballot, in that only 5% felt it was too long.

Table 3.11. The ballot was too long by Race/Ethnicity

Response	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Strongly disagree	29%	40%	24%	44%
Disagree	60%	41%	56%	51%
Agree	9%	6%	13%	5%
Strongly agree	2%	13%	7%	0%

3.3. Voter Identification for In-Person Voters

In Florida, election day polls are open from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Whether voting early or on election day, voters must bring a current and valid photo ID that includes a signature. If a voter’s photo ID does not include his or her signature, he or she will be asked to provide an alternate form of verification. Voters, provided they are eligible and voted in the proper precinct, can vote via provisional ballot if they forget the proper ID. The provisional ballot will count provided the signature matches the signature in the voter’s registration record.²⁷ As of 2016, Florida voters have 12 options for voter identification:²⁸

- Florida driver's license.
- Florida identification card issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.
- United States passport.
- Debit or credit card.
- Military identification.
- Student identification.
- Retirement center identification.
- Neighborhood association identification.
- Public assistance identification.
- Veteran health identification card issued by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
- License to carry a concealed weapon or firearm issued pursuant to s. 790.06, Fla. Stat.
- Employee identification card issued by any branch, department, agency, or entity of the Federal Government, the state, a county, or a municipality.

In 2020 we asked, “When you first checked in at the polling place to vote, which of the following statements most closely describes how you were asked to identify yourself?” Table 3.13 shows the results. We find that a vast majority of voters utilized a driver’s license or state-issued photo ID to verify their identity (89%), with the second most common category being

²⁷ See <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/for-voters/voting/election-day-voting/>

²⁸ https://soe.dos.state.fl.us/pdf/DE_Guide_0006-Florida_History-Voter_ID_at_the_polls.pdf

their voter registration card (6%). Approximately 3% of voters indicated they did not show any identification. Because Florida requires voter identifications to have a signature and photo, a voter registration card is not a valid form of identification under Florida law.

Table 3.13. When you first checked in at the polling place to vote, which of the following statements most closely describes how you were asked to identify yourself?

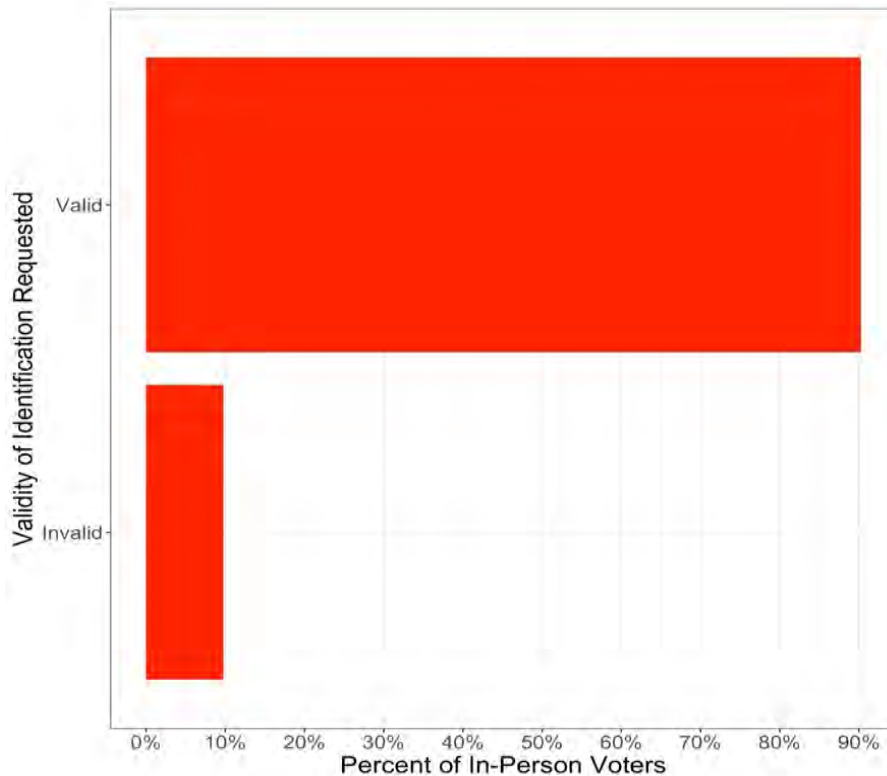
Showed my driver's license or state-issued photo ID	89%
Showed my voter registration card	6%
Gave my name and address, but did not show any identification of any kind	3%
Some other form of identification	1%
Showed a letter, a bill, or something else with my name and address on it	0%
Showed a military ID card	0%

Figure 3.1 differentiates those forms of identification listed in our survey that are not, by themselves, permitted under Florida law (Invalid) from those permitted under Florida law (Valid). Forms of identification not allowed include a voter registration card, a name and address without an ID, and a letter or other document with a name and address on it. Permitted forms included a state-issued photo ID, military ID, or some other form of (presumably) valid identification. Together, these results suggest roughly 10% of in-person voters were asked to present identification that does not meet the criteria set forth Florida election laws.²⁹

When we examine voter identification usage across demographics, we find some small differences between racial groups. For example, Hispanic voters were more likely than other racial demographics to utilize driver's licenses as ID (96%). While White (7%) and Black (8%) voters were slightly more likely than average to use their voter registration card. There were also some differences based on gender. Men were approximately 6% less likely to use their driver's license (86%) than women (92%). See figure 3.1 for a breakdown of the usage of valid and invalid voter identification in Florida.

²⁹ What we cannot be certain of from this question, however, is how many voters voted improperly due to failure to provide adequate identification at the polling center. In addition, there are natural limitations of survey instruments, including responses could be untruthful, voters' recollections could be inaccurate, or voters may have been asked to provide more than one form of identification—perhaps first an invalid one followed by a valid one.

Figure 3.1 Validity of Voter Identification



3.4 Voter Confidence, Voting Experience, and Election Security

Most voters (88%) voted in all contests presented to them on their 2020 ballot, with “nearly all” as the second most common response (7%). When asked “How would you rate your voting experience overall?” 64% of voters said “excellent” and another 29% said “good.” In total, 93% of voters had positive views of their voting experience, while only 2% said it was “poor” and another 5% said “fair.”

- 72% of respondents who voted by mail rated their experiences as “excellent” and another 21% said it was “good.”
- 61% of early voters and 55% of election day voters said their experience was “excellent,” while 34% and 36%, respectively, indicated that it was “good.”

Voter Confidence

Voter confidence is a necessary component of a democratic society. Voter confidence represents a fundamental belief in the fairness of the electoral process and ultimately the legitimacy of the

government. Even if citizens are unhappy with the choices their leaders make, they should feel confident that the process that placed those individuals into power was fair and honest and that future elections can result in a change of leadership.³⁰ In this report, we focus on four levels of voter confidence by asking four independent questions.

- First, we asked, “How confident are you that YOUR vote in the General Election was counted as you intended?” Response options were “very confident”, “somewhat confident”, “not too confident” and “not at all confident.” This level, the personal vote, is the most important level of voter confidence because it represents how the voter feels about his/her own voting experience and its accuracy.
- The second level is voter confidence in the county’s election system and was placed in a grid format with the other 2 remaining levels of voter confidence. The county is the primary administrative unit for the state and is responsible for all matters related to election administration including poll worker training, logistics, accuracy testing of the tabulating machines, the counting of ballots, the qualification of provisional ballots, the qualification of absentee ballots, the county canvass, etc.
- The third level is confidence in the process at the state level and therefore is an aggregation of how voters feel about the election process within their larger election administrative unit.
- The fourth level is confidence that all ballots were counted correctly nationwide and is an aggregation of how voters feel about the election process across many election-administrative units.

The responses to these questions are presented in Table 3.14 and show both the frequency of response and the confidence averages across levels of administration, for each voting mode (election day, early, and absentee), and by political party. The variables are coded on a 4-point scale, from 1 to 4, so that a higher average indicates greater confidence. Overall, the results show that voters have very high confidence that their votes were counted correctly at the individual level, which tends to decrease for larger election-administrative units, especially at the national level.

- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of voters were very confident and just over one in four (22%) were somewhat confident that their vote was counted correctly. Thus, over four in five (85%) voters were at least somewhat confident that their ballot was counted correctly. Less than 1 in 10 voters (6%) were not too confident and another 9% were not at all confident.
- County-level confidence is a bit lower than personal voter confidence, with four in five (80%) voters indicating they are very (59%) or somewhat (21%) confident. Only 20% reported being not too (6%) or not at all (14%) unconfident.
- A majority (53%) of voters also indicated they were very confident of state-level results, and another 32% were somewhat confident. The remaining voters were not too (8%) or not at all (8%) confident.

³⁰ Atkeson, Lonna Rae, R. Michael Alvarez, and Thad E. Hall. “Voter Confidence: How to Measure It and How It Differs from Government Support.” *Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy* 14, no. 3 (June 18, 2015).

- Voters were least confident of the nationwide results, with about half (51%) of voters indicating they are very (40%) or somewhat (11%) confident. The other half (49%) indicated they are not too (9%) or not at all confident (41%).

Table 3.14. Personal, County, State and National Voter Confidence

	Your Vote	Votes in your county	Votes in your state	Votes nationwide
Frequency				
(4) Very confident	63%	59%	53%	40%
(3) Somewhat confident	22%	21%	32%	11%
(2) Not too confident	6%	6%	8%	9%
(1) Not at all confident	9%	14%	8%	41%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Averages (1-4)				
Overall Average	3.4	3.2	3.3	2.5
Early voters	3.4	3.2	3.3	2.4
Absentee voters	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.0
Election day voters	3.0	2.7	3.0	1.7
Democrats	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7
NPA/Others	3.4	3.2	3.1	2.7
Republicans	3.0	2.8	3.0	1.5

At the bottom of Table 3.14, average voter confidence levels are broken down by voting mode and party. Previous research has found that voting mode can influence voter confidence and there can be strong winner and loser effects.³¹

When we look at absentee voters, they are more confident than in-person voters at all election-administrative levels, with the difference being greatest at the national level. Previous research suggests that VBM voters are, if anything, less confident than in-person voters, but in 2020 VBM voters were more confident than in-person early and election day voters.³² Similarly, early voters were more confident than election day voters. Their confidence bunched closer together across the personal, county, and state-level administrative units with a large 1-point average drop in nationwide confidence (3.3 vs 2.4). Election day voters had the lowest confidence overall.

This election cycle was unique due to the Covid-19 pandemic and consequently, many election law changes across the states in response.³³ In addition, the election cycle was highly polarized

³¹ See Atkeson and Saunders, 2007; R. Michael Alvarez, Thad E. Hall, and Morgan Llewellyn (2008), “Are Americans Confident Their Ballots are counted?” *The Journal of Politics* 70, 3: 754–66 and Atkeson, Lonna Rae, (2014) “Voter Confidence Ten Years after Bush V. Gore,” in *Ten Years after Bush V. Gore*, edited by R. Michael Alvarez and Bernard Grofman, (Cambridge University Press), Charles Bullock and M.V. Hood III, (2005) “Punchcards, Jim Crow and Al Gore: Explaining Voter Trust in the Electoral System in Georgia , *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 5: 283-94; Betsy Sinclair, Steven S. Smith, and Patrick D. Tucker, (2018) “It’s Largely a Rigged System”: Voter Confidence and the Winner Effect in 2016,” 2018, *Political Research Quarterly* 71(4):854-68.

³² Atkeson and Saunders 2007; Alvarez, Hall Llewellyn 2007.

³³ See Nate Persily and Charles C. Stewart III. 2021. The Miracle and Tragedy of the 2020 Election. *Journal of Democracy* 32:159–78.

around vote mode. For example, the pandemic led Congressional Democrats to introduce legislation to expand no excuse VBM and early voting in all the states,³⁴ while messages from Republican elites, especially President Trump, highlighted concerns that ballots cast remotely by mail could result in lost, fraudulent, or miscounted votes.³⁵ Thus, a practice that was largely nonpartisan before the 2020 election became rapidly polarized along party lines in the months leading up to it.³⁶ Therefore, keep in mind that in 2020 vote mode was highly correlated with partisanship, which helps to explain the differences we see above across vote modes.

A majority of Democrats (59%) and a plurality of NPAs (49%) voted absentee, while early in-person voting was the mode for Republicans (39%). These differences in behavioral choices led to very different partisan responses when voter confidence was assessed by voting mode, with VBM voters having the highest level of confidence, and in-person voters being the least confident, especially Election Day voters, which were dominated by Republicans.

- For example, the average Democratic voter, who was in 2020 the presidential winner, evaluated personal voter confidence at a high 3.8 on a 4-point scale, close to “very confident.” Thus, on average, Democrats appear very confident their ballot was counted correctly.
- But the average personal voter confidence for Republicans was 3.0, exactly at “somewhat confident” on our 4-point scale.
- The personal confidence of NPA and voters belonging to a non-major party was in-between the partisan groups, with an average score of 3.4 which puts them approximately halfway between very confident and “somewhat confident.”

We do see a drop in nationwide voter confidence among all partisan and vote mode groups.

- Democrats’ confidence dropped from an average of 3.8 at a personal level to 3.7 at the national level, a relatively small drop.
- The drop in NPA/other confidence was larger, resulting in an average .7 gap, moving from 3.4 to 2.7.
- Republican voters drop was, by far, the most substantial, moving from 3.0 to 1.5, a one-and-a-half-point average decline.

³⁴ Foundation USV. Senate Introduces No-Excuse Vote-by-Mail to Address Pandemics and Disasters [Internet]. U.S. Vote Foundation. 2020. Available from: <https://www.usvotefoundation.org/Senate-Vote-by-Mail-Bill-S3529>

³⁵ Chen E, Chang H, Rao A, Lerman K, Cowan G, Ferrara E. COVID-19 Misinformation and the 2020 US Presidential Election. *Harvard Kennedy Sch Misinformation Rev.* 2020;1:1–17; Chalfant M. Trump Shifts, Encourages Vote by Mail – in Florida. *The Hill.* 2020 Aug 4.

³⁶ Lockhart M, Hill SJ, Merolla J, Romero M, Kousser T. America’s Electorate is Increasingly Polarized along Partisan Lines about Voting by Mail during the COVID-19 Crisis. *Proc Natl Acad Sci.* 2020;117:24640–2; Thompson DM, Wu JA, Yoder J, Hall AB. Universal Vote-by-Mail Has No Impact on Partisan Turnout or Vote Share. *Proc Natl Acad Sci.* 2020;117:14052–12056.

Voter Experiences & Demographics

Winning and losing, however, are not everything. Individual experiences also matter to the voter's evaluation. Experience with the ballot, the polling location, and interactions with poll workers or local officials are the objective experiences that also influence voter confidence in the election process.³⁷ These experiences are the core local factors that election administrations can influence to improve voter confidence, such as a well-designed voting facility and well-trained poll workers. When voters have a good local experience, they feel more confident that their vote is counted correctly.³⁸ Local election officials should do as much as they can to make the local experience a completely positive one for voters.

For in-person voters:

- Feelings that ballot privacy was protected increases voter confidence. 94% of voters who strongly agreed that their ballot privacy was protected well were very or somewhat confident that their vote was counted correctly, while only 64% of voters who did not strongly agree their privacy was protected were very or somewhat confident.
- However, it is important to note that only 11% of in-person voters disagreed or strongly disagreed that their privacy was protected.
- Helpful poll workers increase voter confidence. Only 35% of voters who thought a poll worker was not helpful were very or somewhat confident, compared to 81% of voters who thought their poll worker was helpful. However, only 5% did not think their poll worker was helpful.

For VBM voters:

- Interestingly, vote confidence was not dependent on where a voter dropped off their ballot. Voters who dropped off their ballot in-person were as confident as those who mailed it in.

Finally, it is important to consider whether voters' demographic characteristics are associated with higher or lower voter confidence. In the past, we have typically found small or insignificant correlations between gender, race/ethnicity, and age on voter confidence. In 2020, however, voter confidence was highly correlated with many of these factors. Because these factors are correlated with party and elite rhetoric, which was prevalent that year, we might expect to see clear differences across certain groups. The pandemic and elite rhetoric brought new attention to election administration and laws and made voter confidence salient in ways that we have not

³⁷ See Atkeson and Saunders, 2007. Also see, Hall, Thad E., J. Quin Monson, and Kelly D. Patterson. 2007. "Poll Workers and the Vitality of Democracy: An Early Assessment." *PS: Political Science and Society*, 647-654, Atkeson, Lonna Rae, 2014, and Bullock and Hood, 2005.

³⁸ Voter confidence is also affected by winning and losing, such that winners are more confident than losers. In some years, voters win and lose elections resulting in changes in confidence between years. In 2008, for example, Democrats won overwhelmingly and won the House of Representatives, a win-win for Democrats. However, they lost the House in 2010 and then Republicans maintained the House again in 2012, despite Democratic gains in the Senate and a win in the White House.

seen in prior elections. Consequently, these can have strong effects on the formation of attitudes and beliefs among those who receive these messages.

- Voters aged 25-34 had the highest personal voter confidence, with 94% either “somewhat” or “very” confident. Conversely, only 77% of voters aged 18-24 were somewhat or very confident. Between 81% and 89% of voters in other age categories were “somewhat” or “very” confident.
- The relationship of education and voter confidence is monotonic, that is, voters with lower levels of education tended to be less confident than those with higher levels of education, and this relationship is consistent across education categories. Voters with professional or doctorate degrees had the highest voter confidence of any group.
- Black voters had the highest personal voter confidence with 99% either “somewhat” or “very” confident. Conversely, Hispanic voters were the least confident, with only 75% “somewhat” or “very” confident. See Table 3.15.
- Men and women had no difference in personal level confidence, with 85% of men somewhat or very confident and 85% of women somewhat or very confident.

Table 3.15. How confident are you that your ballot was counted correctly? by Race

Response	White	Black	Hispanic	Other
Not at all confident	9%	1%	13%	10%
Not too confident	6%	0%	13%	9%
Somewhat confident	23%	16%	22%	28%
Very confident	62%	83%	53%	53%

Chapter 4: Beliefs about Ballot Privacy, Possibility of Voter Coercion, Fraud, and Attitudes toward Election Reforms

This chapter focuses on voters' attitudes toward their ballot, fraud, and election reform, and has four sections.

- In section 4.1 we focus on whether voters feel their ballot is kept private and how willing they are to tell others their vote choice.
- In Section 4.2 we examine beliefs about voter fraud.
- In Section 4.3 we look at attitudes about voter identification laws.
- In Section 4.4 we examine attitudes toward various election reforms including the national popular vote.

4.1 Ballot Privacy

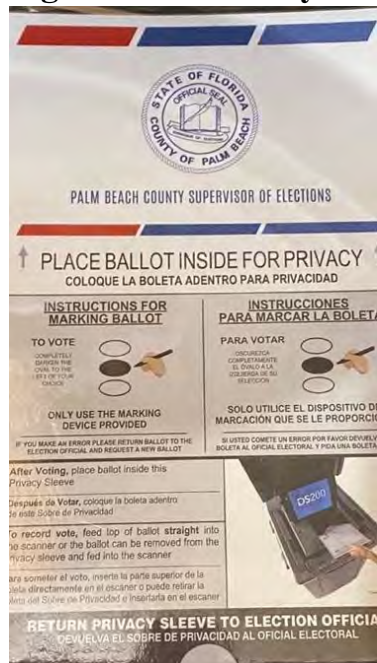
Central to American elections are notions that a voter's ballot is secret and that who they voted for is private. Secrecy and privacy are intended to help prevent coercion and intimidation in voting and increase the integrity and confidence of the electoral process. Beliefs that the electoral process or outcomes are illegitimate can arise if there is a lack or perceived lack of ballot secrecy and privacy.³⁹ This year we asked a large battery of questions related to ballot privacy to help understand how voters view this issue, of which we discuss in detail throughout the rest of this section.

VBM ballots use a double envelope so that ballot qualification and ballot counting do not happen simultaneously. In this way, ballots are kept secret from the poll workers who qualify the ballot and the person who insert it into the tabulator. For in-person voters, privacy is important and poll workers who work the tabulator and ensure that votes are being counted are also taught not to look at the voter's ballot. This is also why we recommend a voter privacy sleeve. Once the ballot is counted and in the tabulator bin it is impossible to determine the order of ballots or to identify anyone's ballot.

In addition, some counties use voter privacy sleeves to enhance privacy while in the voting location. The voter privacy sleeve is a long legal-sized file folder that the voter can place their ballot into when they are moving from station-to-station in the polling location to ensure privacy. Figure 4.1 shows a photo of a laminated privacy sleeve used for in-person voters in Palm Beach County.

³⁹ See Dowling, Connor M., David Doherty, Seth J. Hill, Alan, S. Gerber, and Gregory A. Huber (2019), "The Voting Experience and Beliefs About Ballot Secrecy" *PLoS One*, 14,1: e0209765.

Figure 4.1. Privacy Sleeve for In-Person Voters in Palm Beach County



We find that 69% of voters reported that they kept their ballot in a privacy sleeve, while 29% said they did not and 2% did not know. Interestingly, partisans did not differ greatly in perceptions of privacy, with 93% of Democrats and 86% of Republicans agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement “my ballot privacy was protected.” We do, however, find differences among racial demographics. These are shown in Table 3.12. Hispanics were the most likely to feel their ballot privacy was not protected with about 23% of Hispanics indicating they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. This frequency is more than double that of White voters and over seven-times higher than that of Black voters.

Table 4.1. My ballot privacy was protected by Race/Ethnicity

Response	White	Black	Hispanic	Other	All
Strongly disagree	2%	3%	7%	2%	3%
Disagree	7%	0%	16%	2%	8%
Agree	35%	21%	43%	38%	35%
Strongly agree	56%	76%	34%	58%	54%

Voters Disclosing Their Vote

Voters have complete control over their choice to disclose whom they voted for to family, friends, and others. We asked if family or friends asked voters whom they voted for, whether they named the candidate, and if they are truthful in their disclosure of whom they voted for. Table 4.1 shows the relative frequency of these responses.

- Over half (58%) of voters are at least sometimes asked by family and friends whom they voted for, while 42% of voters are rarely (26%) or never asked (16%) about their preferred candidate.
- When asked by a friend or family member which candidate they preferred, most voters named a candidate almost all of the time (57%) or most of the time (21%). Fewer voters indicated they sometimes (11%), rarely (7%), or never (5%) named a candidate.
- An overwhelming majority of voters were truthful in naming the candidate they prefer all the time (85%) and most of the time (8%). Fewer voters are sometimes (3%), rarely (2%), or never (1%) truthful in stating the candidate they prefer.
- There are no substantive differences among party identifiers or across demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, race, education) in discussing and disclosing the candidate voters preferred in an election.
- However, NPA voters are less likely to name candidates most or all of the time when asked (60%) relative to Democrats (81%) or Republicans (76%).

Table 4.1. Percentage of Being Asked and Providing Who a Voter Voted For

Response	All or almost all of the time	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never or almost never
How often does anyone, including friends or family, ask you which candidate you prefer or voted for?	11%	14%	33%	26%	16%
If a friend or family member asks you who you prefer in an election, do you name a candidate?	57%	21%	11%	7%	5%
If you tell a close friend or family member which candidate you prefer, do you tell the truth?	85%	8%	3%	2%	1%

We also asked in-person voters if they were asked to disclose their vote while at the polling location, or if secret ballots were being looked at by others. We find that 4% of Florida voters said that someone in line asked whom they were voting for, 6% said that a poll worker looked at their ballot and saw who they were voting for, and 2% said the same of another voter.

Can Others Determine Your Vote If You Do Not Disclose It?

Next, we focus on two questions that asked if voters believe others can find out whom they voted for without their personal disclosure of such information. The questions are 1) “According to the law, which candidate you vote for is supposed to be kept secret unless you tell someone. Even so, how easy or hard do you think it would be for politicians, union officials, or the people you work for to find out who you voted for, even if you told no one? And 2) “Do you think elected officials can access voting records and figure out who a voter had voted for?”

- The response to these questions, shown in Table 4.2, is quite surprising, as many voters were either unsure or thought it likely that someone could find out whom they voted for. Only about one in five voters (18%) thought that it is impossible for someone to find out

whom another person voted for, leaving the vast majority either unsure or thinking it is at least possible to do. More than two in five believed it is somewhat or very easy.

- Half of Floridian voters (50%) believed that elected officials can figure out whom someone voted for, while over two in ten (22%) of voters do not believe elected officials can determine their vote, and another 28% were unsure.

Table 4.2. Percentage Response to Two Questions about Voters’ belief that others can find out who they voted for even if the voter does not disclose this information to others

According to the law, which candidate you vote for is supposed to be kept secret unless you tell someone. Even so, how easy or hard do you think it would be for politicians, union officials, or the people you work for to find out who you voted for, even if you told no one.	
Impossible, my vote is secret	18%
It would be very hard, but not impossible	23%
It would be somewhat hard	11%
It would be somewhat easy	18%
It would be very easy	21%
Don’t know	9%
Do you think elected officials can access voting records and figure out who a voter had voted for?	
Yes	50%
Don’t know	28%
No	22%

When evaluating these responses, we found some interesting differences among party identifiers. These results are displayed in Tables 4.3 and 4.4.

- More Democrats (32%) believe it is impossible for others to find out their vote compared to NPAs (17%) and Republican voters (7%).
- If we convert these ordered responses to a numerical scale ranging from 1 (“Impossible, my vote is secret”) to 5 (“It would be very easy”), we find that Democrats have a score of 2.7, clearly on the side of it being “hard” to determine. NPAs are at 2.97, or “somewhat hard” and Republicans are at 3.55, between “somewhat hard” and “somewhat easy.”
- Like the previous question, Republicans (68%) are more likely than NPAs (45%) and Democrats (30%) to believe that officials can access voting records to figure out who someone voted for.
- These results indicate that members of the Republican party are more skeptical than other partisan groups that their vote can be kept secret.

Table 4.3. How easy or hard do you think it would be for politicians, union officials, or the people you work for to find out who you voted for, even if you told no one? by Party identification

Response	Republican	NPA	Democrat
Impossible, my vote is secret	7%	17%	32%
It would be very hard, but not impossible	18%	23%	29%
It would be somewhat hard	14%	10%	8%
It would be somewhat easy	22%	12%	13%
It would be very easy	29%	21%	11%
Don't know	10%	18%	6%

Table 4.4. Do you think elected officials can access voting records and figure out who a voter had voted for? By Party identification

Response	Republican	NPA	Democrat
No	10%	25%	35%
Don't know	22%	31%	35%
Yes	68%	45%	30%

One might expect that VBM voters would be the most likely to think that their vote could be identifiable, given that they include identifying references such as their signature and their ballot changes possession more frequently than at a physical polling location. However, we did not find this to be the case as shown in Table 4.5. Rather, election day voters were the most concerned about their ballot privacy.

- Over half of election day voters (66%) believe that election officials can figure out who a voter voted for, while 54% of early and only 40% of VBM voters felt the same way.
- However, the high correlation of vote mode with partisanship may help to explain these findings.

Table 4.5. Do you think elected officials can access voting records and figure out who a voter had voted for? By Vote mode

Response	VBM	Early	Election day
No	28%	18%	14%
Don't know	32%	28%	21%
Yes	40%	54%	66%

Next, we assessed responses broken down by vote mode for each political party individually. Here too, mail voters were most likely to believe their vote was secret. Table 4.6 shows that over half of Republican VBM voters (60%) and approximately 70% of early and election day voters

believe local election officials can identify their ballot and who they voted for. Only 35% of NPA VBM voters believed that officials could access their ballot, compared to 51% of early voters and 59% of election day voters. For Democrats, VBM and early voters answered similarly (28% and 32%, respectively), while 36% of election day voters answered “yes.”

Table 4.6. Do you think elected officials can access voting records and figure out who a voter had voted for? By Vote Mode by Party identification

Republican				
Response	VBM	Early	Election day	All
No	15%	8%	6%	10%
Don't know	25%	22%	19%	22%
Yes	60%	70%	75%	68%
NPA				
Response	VBM	Early	Election day	All
No	26%	26%	16%	25%
Don't know	38%	22%	25%	31%
Yes	36%	51%	59%	45%
Democratic				
Response	VBM	Early	Election day	All
No	37%	31%	39%	35%
Don't know	35%	37%	26%	35%
Yes	28%	32%	36%	30%

Voting Coercion and Persuasion

Related to voting secrecy is the notion that voting should be free from intimidation and coercion so that voters may freely support the candidate(s) they prefer. Table 4.7. shows the percentages of voters who said they experienced one or more instances where others pressured them into voting for a particular candidate. We note that the first two are rather innocuous and not necessarily considered a form of intimidation; certainly, people are allowed to talk to others about politics, and persuasive rhetoric is an essential part of political campaigns.

- Over eight in ten (87%) Florida voters said they did not have anyone try to convince, tell, threaten, or mark their ballot for a candidate they did not prefer to vote for.
- The remaining 13% of Florida voters reported that they experienced one or more persuasive, and in some cases coercive, actions to get them to vote for a candidate they did not prefer.

- 11% experienced someone trying to convince them to vote a particular way, 2% were threatened, and 3 respondents in our survey indicated that someone had marked their ballot for them—corresponding to an estimated 0.31% of voters.

Table 4.7. Percentage of Voters Who Experienced a Persuasive or Coercive Action

No one did any of these	87%
Try and convince you to vote for someone that you didn't want to vote for	11%
Tell you to vote for someone that you didn't want to vote for	8%
Threaten you to get you to vote for someone you didn't want to vote for	2%
Mark your ballot for you, making choices that you would not have made	0%

There are some party differences to consider, as well.

- From Table 4.8. we can see that 14% of Republican voters in Florida had someone try to convince them to vote for someone they did not want to vote for, while 13% of NPAs and 7% of Democrats experiencing the same.
- The same relationship holds for being told to vote for a certain candidate, with Republican voters (10%) nearly twice as likely to be told to vote for a candidate than Democrats (5%).
- However, all three voters in our sample who said that someone marked their ballot for them were Democrats.

Table 4.8. Party Breakdown of Persuasive or Coercive Action

Response	Republican	NPA	Democrat
Try and convince you to vote for someone that you didn't want to vote for	14%	13%	7%
Tell you to vote for someone that you didn't want to vote for	10%	7%	5%
Threaten you to get you to vote for someone you didn't want to vote for	4%	2%	1%
Mark your ballot for you, making choices that you would not have made	0%	0%	1%
No one did any of these	83%	85%	91%

Additionally, Table 4.9 shows that there are few significant differences related to the method voters used to cast their ballot.

- 11% of VBM, early, and election-day voters said someone tried to convince them to vote for a certain candidate.
- Election-day voters (11%) were slightly more likely to have someone tell them to vote for someone else than early (7%) or VBM (6%) voters.
- Of our three respondents who had someone mark their ballot, one voted by mail and two voted on election day.

Table 4.9. Vote Mode Breakdown of Persuasive or Coercive Action

Response	Absentee	Early	Election day
Try and convince you to vote for someone that you didn't want to vote for	11%	11%	11%
Tell you to vote for someone that you didn't want to vote for	6%	7%	11%
Threaten you to get you to vote for someone you didn't want to vote for	3%	1%	3%
Mark your ballot for you, making choices that you would not have made	0%	0%	1%
No one did any of these	87%	86%	86%

We also asked voters who experienced one of these persuasive or coercive actions to provide more details about it.

- Of these voters, 88% said they ignored the request, 11% said they pretended to comply while keeping their same vote, and 1% said they voted how they were told.
- A friend (47%) was the most common individual who tried to get respondents to change their vote. 15% indicated the pressure came from family members, while just 3% said it came from their spouse and 1% said an employer.
- Notably, some 33% said it came from somebody other than a spouse, family member, friend, or employer. This answer choice allowed respondents to write-in who had tried to influence their vote.
 - The most common responses were political ads including automated and digital ones, political leaders and candidates, people either canvassing door to door, on a street, or in line, or through social or news media

4.2 Beliefs about Election and Voter Fraud

Given the rhetoric in this election and the expanded use of mail balloting, we asked several different voter fraud questions to assess voters' beliefs about election and voter fraud.

- Twenty-three percent of voters said that elected officials rarely or never make rules that favor one party, while 46% said they do so most or all of the time.
- Only 13% of voters said that ballots are changed by election workers all of the time or most of the time. Conversely, 57% of voters say this rarely or never occurs.
- There are also interesting partisan differences on this question, as shown in Table 4.10, with Republicans more likely to think it is likely that ballots are changed by election officials than either NPAs or Democrats (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10. Ballots are changed by election workers by Party

Response	Republican	NPA	Democrat
Never or almost never	13%	50%	82%
Rarely	10%	11%	12%
Sometimes	54%	21%	5%
Most of the time	13%	12%	1%
All or almost all the time	10%	6%	0%

Personal Observations of Fraud

- We first asked voters if they personally witnessed any irregular voting events. Ninety percent of voters indicated they did not personally witness any of these election fraud or irregular voting activities, while 10% said they saw one or more election problems.
- We asked this group who witnessed election problems: “Which of the following situations did you personally observe in the 2020 general election?” These results are detailed in Table 4.11. The highest proportion of relevant answers was for the activity “Someone filling out an absentee ballot for someone else”, in which 24% of these respondents reporting witnessing.
- 22% stated they witnessed voter intimidation at the polling place, 21% of these voters had a ballot delivered to their home that did not belong to anyone in the household, and 17% each claimed to see voting machines failing to record votes and people using fake identities to vote.
- 21% stated there was something other than listed in the questionnaire, and upon further inspection of the open-ended responses we found many centered-on videos seen online alleging fraud, accounts that were second-hand, and instances that clearly align with one of the answer choices provided.

Table 4.11. Which of the following situations did you personally observe in the 2020 General Election?

Question	Yes
Someone filling out an absentee ballot for someone else	24%
Voter intimidation at the polling place	22%
A ballot came to your house that did not belong to anyone in your household	21%
Other	21%
Voting machines failing to record votes correctly	17%
Someone using a false identity to vote illegally	17%
A ballot you or someone in your household requested that did not arrive	9%
Bribery or paying for votes	7%
Someone stuffing a lot of ballots into an official ballot drop box	7%
Someone being improperly denied the chance to vote	3%

Note: Asked to the 10% of voters who reported witnessing voter fraud

Belief in Frequency of Fraud

Just because voters have not witnessed unusual election activities does not mean they do not believe it happens. Therefore, in our next set of questions, we asked about perceptions of how often voter fraud occurs in the state with the following question: “Below is a list of possible illegal election activities that may or may not take place in Florida. Please tell me whether you think each event occurs all or most of the time, some of the time, not much of the time, hardly ever, never, or don’t know.” Table 4.12. shows a detailed display of these results over seven different types of actions.

- Among all possible activities we examined, voters were most concerned about the possibility that absentee ballots are thrown away, people are bribed for their votes, voting machines fail to record the proper vote, and pressuring someone to not vote. Approximately 40% of FL voters believe these events occur at least some of the time.
- Of the remaining issues, 37% allege absentee ballots are modified at least some of the time, 34% of voters believe voters are pressured to change their vote, and 31% believe people who are eligible are denied the chance to vote.
- Between 17-19% of voters don’t know whether any of these actions occur

Table 4.12. % Belief in How Often Illegal Election Activities may take place in FL

Question	All or most of the time	Some of the time	Not much	Hardly ever	Never	Don’t Know
Voted absentee ballots are stolen and thrown away after being submitted	11%	29%	7%	17%	18%	18%
Someone intimidates a voter into voting for someone they didn't want to	7%	27%	17%	20%	11%	18%
Someone steals an absentee ballot, changes the ballot, and casts it.	9%	28%	8%	19%	17%	18%
Someone bribes someone or pays them money for their vote	10%	31%	13%	15%	11%	19%
Someone intimidates a voter into not voting	7%	33%	16%	16%	9%	19%
Someone being denied the opportunity to vote who is an eligible voter by a poll worker or other election official	6%	25%	14%	22%	14%	19%
Voting machines fail to record votes correctly	11%	28%	12%	20%	12%	17%

There are substantial differences in these values across racial demographics.

- White voters (46%) and Hispanic voters (46%) are more likely to say that bribery occurs at least some of the time than Black voters (17%).

- On the other hand, 36% of Black voters say that eligible voters are denied the right to vote by a poll worker at least some of the time, compared to 27% of Hispanic voters and 30% of White voters.
- 41% of White voters think that voters are intimidated into voting for candidates they do not support at least some of the time, while that number drops to 37% for Hispanics and 34% for Black voters.
- Hispanic voters (52%) are far more likely to think that absentee ballots are stolen and thrown away after being submitted at least some of the time than are White (42%) or Black (13%) voters.

We built perceptions of voter fraud index that ranges from 1 (low fraud) to 5 (high fraud), using all 7 items to examine demographic and partisan differences⁴⁰. A score of 3 is then the midpoint of this scale.

- The global mean for our sample is 2.27 out of 5.
- We find no substantive differences between men's and women's perceptions of fraud.
- We find large differences between partisans (see Figure 4.2). Democrats are far less likely to believe that fraud happens frequently than Republicans, and NPAs are roughly between the two.
- We find that as education increases, estimates regarding the frequency of fraud decrease (see Figure 4.2), except for those with less than a high school degree. This suggests that knowledge and information are important to sifting through fraudulent claims about voting. Education materials focusing on election security and election privacy could be valuable in reducing beliefs about fraud.
- We find that younger voters and older voters have the lowest estimates for the frequency of fraud, and middle-aged voters have the highest.
- We find that voters who identified as Hispanic had the highest estimates for the frequency of fraud, while Black voters had the lowest (see Figure 4.3).

⁴⁰ We used a Polytomous (multiple response option) Item Response Theory model to estimate voters' values on this latent trait.

Figure 4.2. Fraud Index by Party

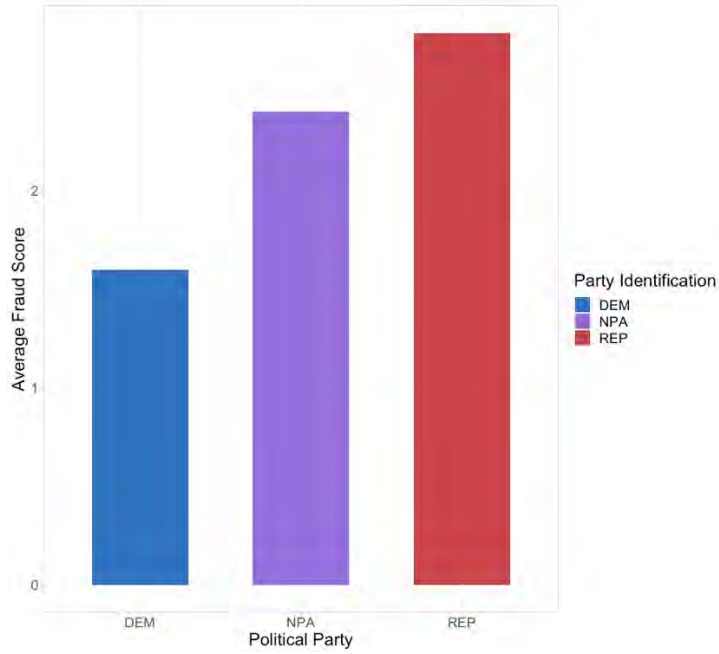


Figure 4.3. Fraud Index by Education

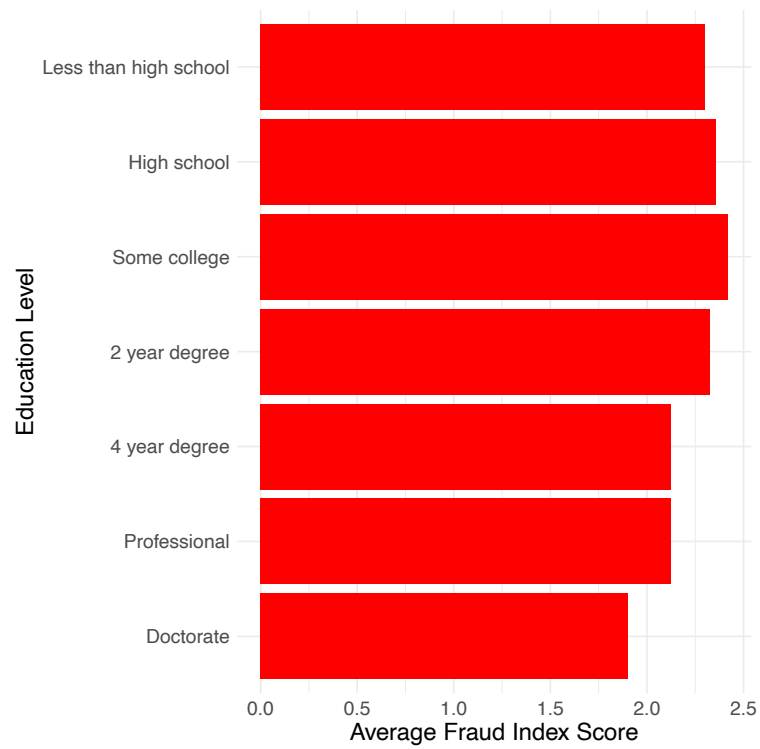
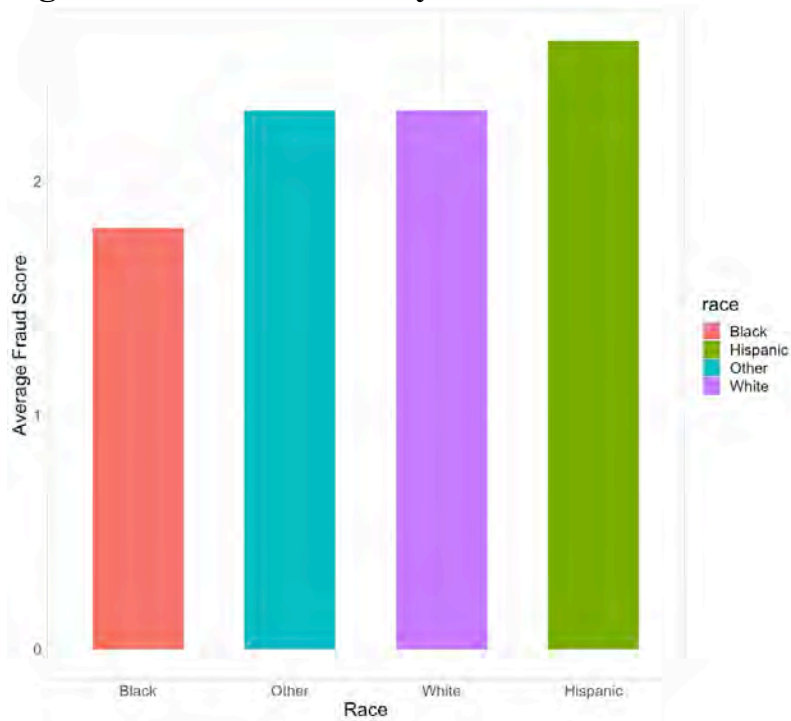


Figure 4.4. Fraud Index by Race



Finally, we asked voters if they thought that voter fraud changed the outcome of the presidential election in Florida. The results are presented in Table 4.13. We find that nearly three in four voters (68%) did not attribute changes in the Presidential election to voter fraud, but there were numerous demographic differences.

Table 4.13. Do you think fraud changed the outcome of the Presidential election in your state?

No	68%
Don't know	8%
Yes	24%

- We find differences between racial demographics. Twenty-three percent of White voters and 43% of Hispanic voters thought that fraud changed the outcome of the election, as opposed to 1% of African American voters.
- Similar to the individual fraud questions, we find that as education increases, views that fraud changed the election decrease. While 31% of voters with less than a high school degree, 28% with a high school degree, and 33% with a two-year degree thought that fraud changed the election outcome, that number drops to 15% for college graduates and 11% for those with doctorate degrees.
- Party identification has the most significant impact on responses. In total, 42% of Republican voters thought that fraud changed the outcome of the presidential election in Florida. This number drops to 24% for NPA voters and a mere 2% for Democrats.

4.3 Attitudes Toward Voter Identification

Voter authentication and identification is an important component of election administration because only qualified electors are allowed to vote. The 2002 Help America Vote Act (HAVA) established a minimum threshold for voter identification in federal elections, which requires voters who are voting for the first time and did not provide verification of their identity when they registered to show some sort of identification. This could be a current and valid photo identification or a non-photo id such as a utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or any government document that has the name and address of the voter.⁴¹

Thirty-six states have laws requiring some sort of voter identification at the polls for in-person voters.⁴² The remaining 14 states and DC use other methods to identify voters. In Florida voters who vote in-person are required to show a photo ID that is not expired and includes their signature. These include Florida driver's license, Florida State ID, U.S. Passport, debit or credit card, military ID, Student ID, Retirement Center ID, Neighborhood Association ID, public assistance, veterans' health ID, military ID, license to carry concealed weapon, employee ID card from a Florida state agency, a federal entity, a Florida municipality, or Florida County government.⁴³

We asked respondents questions related to voter ID requirements. Attitudes toward voter identification are complex and take on different perspectives depending on how the question is framed. Because of the complexities and the nature of the debates going on across the country on this issue, we examine an expanded set of questions and attitudes toward voter identification.

- First, we asked respondents “do you support or oppose requiring all people to show government issued photo ID when they vote?” We found that four out of five (81%) of voters’ support voter ID requirements.
- Only 11% did not support this policy, while the other 7% were unsure.
- A majority of voters in all partisan groups supported voter identification policies, but substantial differences remain. We found 61% of Democrats supported voter ID laws, while 14% did not. Almost all (99%) of Republicans support voter ID laws. NPA/other also support voter ID laws (81%).
- Across levels of education, support ranges from 73% to 92%, except for respondents with doctorate degrees, where it drops to 58% (see Table 4.14.).
- Support also varies by gender, with slightly more women supporting photo ID for voting than men (see Figure 4.5).

⁴¹ See the Help America Vote Act section 15483(b)(2)(A).

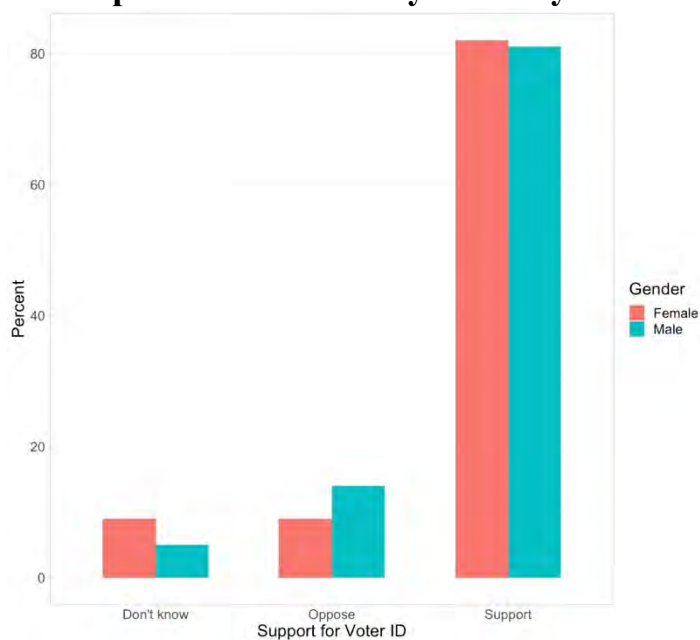
⁴² For a good overview of laws across states relating to voter ID in 2020 see: <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx>.

⁴³ See <https://www.voteriders.org/states/florida/> for a discussion about rules and laws related to voter ID.

Table 4.14. Do you support or oppose requiring all people to show government issued photo ID when they vote? by Education

Response	No high school	High school	Some college	2-year degree	4-year degree	Professional degree	Doctorate degree
Oppose	23%	7%	9%	8%	17%	12%	36%
Don't know	0%	1%	11%	2%	10%	8%	5%
Support	77%	92%	81%	90%	73%	81%	58%

Figure 4.5. Do you support or oppose requiring all people to show government issued photo ID when they vote? by Gender



Electoral Tradeoffs

To assess attitudes toward the trade-off between vote fraud and greater access, we asked “Thinking about elections and election reforms, which is more important to you, ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote or protecting the voting system against fraud?”

- A slight majority (55%) favor protection over system access.
- Black voters were the most likely racial group to feel it was more important to ensure everyone who is eligible has the right to vote (84%) than protect the system against fraud (16%). Whites and Hispanics were more likely to support protecting the system against fraud (60% and 66%) than ensuring everyone has the right to vote (39% and 31%).
- More educated voters had greater support for ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote. 58% of voters with a college degree and 64% of those with a doctorate indicated it was more important to ensure that everyone has the right to vote, compared to only 35% of voters with a high school degree. However, voters with less than a high school degree are more supportive of ensuring everyone has access (61%).

- We also find substantial partisan differences (see Table 4.15.).

Table 4.15. Thinking about elections and election reform, which is more important? by Party

Response	Republican	NPA	Democrat
Ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote	12%	47%	81%
Protecting the voting system against fraud	86%	50%	18%
Don't know	2%	3%	1%

- Slightly more than eight in ten Democrats (81%), compared to slightly more than one in ten Republicans (12%) believe it is more important to ensure that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote.
- Republicans and Democrats express similarly divergent opinions about fraud protection; almost nine in ten Republicans (86%), compared to nearly two in ten Democrats (18%) believe that protecting the system against fraud is more important than expanding the franchise.
- NPAs/others are split exactly down the middle, with approximately 50% favoring each option, with a slight lean toward fraud prevention.

4.4 Attitudes Toward the National Popular Vote

Finally, we ask voters about their views toward the electoral college. This question returned evenly divided results overall, but we did find partisan response differences.

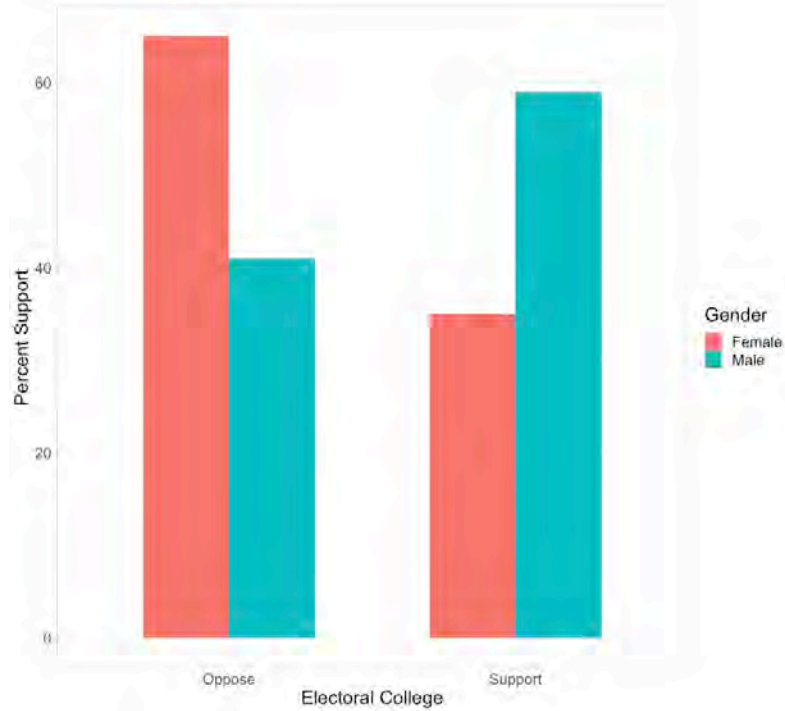
A number of states have passed the National Popular Vote law, which mandates that Electoral College votes go to the presidential candidate that wins the popular vote nationally. The law goes into effect once enough states pass the measure to ensure that the candidate that wins the national popular vote will also win the Electoral College. Currently the states that have passed this law total 196 elector votes (270 needed).

- A slight majority (54%) think that the candidate who gets the most votes in all 50 states should become president, while 46% prefer the current system.
- We find large partisan differences in responses. 76% of Republicans favored the current electoral college system, while 11% of Democrats said the same and NPAs are almost evenly split (see Table 4.14).
- There are also substantial gender differences, as 65% of women think that that the candidate who gets the most votes in all 50 states should become president, while only 41% of men think the same (see Figure 4.6)

Table 4.16. How do you think we should elect the President: the candidate who gets the most votes in all 50 states, or the current Electoral College system? by Party

Response	Republican	NPA	Democrat
The candidate who gets the most votes in all 50 states	24%	56%	89%
The current Electoral College system	76%	44%	11%

Figure 4.6. Support for the Electoral College by Gender



Postscript: 2020 and Beyond

This report represents the first systematic examination of Floridian's voter experiences and attitudes with their election ecosystem. The report shows an election ecosystem that is strong, functioning well, and is fundamentally working as designed. Importantly voters have a high degree of confidence that their votes were counted correctly. Nearly all Democrats (98%) were very or somewhat confident their ballot was counted correctly, and three-quarters of Republicans and 85% of Independents reported the same high levels of confidence.

In 2022 we will field a larger study that drills down more deeply at the county level, where elections are administered. With new election reforms in place at the state level the 2020 report and data will provide a baseline for comparison for the 2022 election and beyond.

As we interact with the system and collect more data, we will provide more recommendations for improvements. We hope that our report will be useful to local election officials, state policy makers, election activists, journalists, and other academics who are interested in the process of elections and an evidence-based approach to reform and change.

Appendix A: The Integrity of Mail Voting in the 2020 Election – Florida Frequency Report

A.1 Voting Method Frequencies

Q1.2 How did you vote in this fall's general election? (n=1,090)

Absentee/vote by mail	43%
Early in-person	35%
Election day in-person	22%

A.2 Absentee/Vote by Mail

Q2.1 How many contests did you vote in on your 2020 ballot? (n=567)

All of the contests	88%
Nearly all of the contests	8%
Most of the contests	2%
About half of the contests	1%
Just a few contests	1%

Q2.2 Why did you request an absentee ballot? Please select all that apply. (n=567)

Absent	9%
Convenience	58%
Scheduling	8%
Military	2%
Disability	8%
Official poll worker	2%
Religion	0%
Covid-19	44%
Vote-by-mail only option	2%
Other	9%

Q2.3 Have you voted absentee or by mail in a previous election? (n=567)

No	33%
Yes	67%

Q2.4 How did you request an absentee ballot? (n=565)

Online	61%
Mail	16%
Emailed	1%
Called	8%
Went in-person	4%
Mail (received from 3 rd party)	1%
Other	9%

Q2.5 Did you log on to your voter registration record to do any of the following? Please select all that apply. (n=562)

Yes, check when sent	30%
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Yes, check when delivered	62%
Yes, sample ballot	23%
Yes, check registration	43%
Yes, other	3%
No	21%

Q2.6 How was your mail ballot delivered to you? (n=565)

USPS mail	96%
Email	1%
Fax	1%
Picked up in person	1%
Other	1%

Q2.7 Did you fill out your ballot with anyone else, such as a family member or friend, or did you complete your ballot by yourself? (n=567)

With someone	14%
Alone	86%

Q2.8 With whom did you complete your ballot? Mark all that apply (only if selected “With someone else”). (n=66)

Spouse or partner	68%
Roommate	1%
Friend	8%
Party or campaign worker	0%
Nursing home or medical aid	0%
Other	23%
Don't know	0%

Q2.9 When did you return your mail ballot? (n=566)

4 or more weeks before Election Day	22%
2-3 weeks before Election Day	54%
Up to one week before Election Day	24%
On Election Day	1%

Q2.10 Who returned your ballot or dropped it in the mail? (n=566)

I did	88%
A member of my family did	10%
A friend of mine did	0%
A political party or interest group member did	0%
Other	2%

Q2.11 How did you return your ballot? (Only if “I did”). (n=508)

Post office box at a U.S. Postal Service location	25%
Official post office box not at a U.S. Postal Service location	5%
Picked up by the postal worker who delivers mail to my home	26%
Other	4%
A drop box used only for ballots	13%

Dropped it off at the County Clerk's office	12%
Dropped it off at an early voting center or election precinct	15%
Email	0%
Don't know	0%

Q2.12 If someone else returned your ballot, how did they return your ballot? (if not "I did").
(n=55)

Post office box at a U.S. Postal Service location	28%
A drop box used only for ballots	19%
Dropped it off at the County Clerk's office	19%
Dropped it off at an early voting center or election precinct	21%
Emailed	0%
Other	2%
Official post office box not at a U.S. Postal Service location	8%
Picked up by the postal worker who delivers mail to my home	3%
Don't know	0%

Q2.13 Did you return anyone else's ballot? (if "I did"). (n=499)

No	79%
Yes	22%

Q2.14 Whose ballot(s) did you return? Please select all that apply (if "Yes"). (n=105)

Spouse	76%
Parent	5%
Child	19%
Other family member	16%
Friend	10%
Other	3%

Q2.15 How many ballots did you return? (if "Yes"). (n=100)

1	6%
2	65%
3	21%
4	8%
5	1%
6+	0%

Q2.16 Why did you decide to drop off your ballot rather than mail the ballot back in? Please select all that apply (if "Dropbox, County clerk, Voting center, or Other"). (n=215)

It was very convenient to drop it off	40%
I didn't trust the USPS to deliver it on time	46%
I didn't have enough time to use the USPS for return delivery	1%
I wanted to be certain that it arrived	79%
Other	8%

Q2.17 Were you contacted by your local election official because there was a problem with your ballot, and it could not be counted? (n=566)

No	97%
Yes	3%

Q2.18 Were you able to resolve the problem? (If “Yes”). (n=8)

Yes	100%
No	0%

Q2.21 Overall, how difficult was it to follow all the instructions necessary to cast your ballot and return it to be counted? (n=566)

Very hard	0%
Somewhat hard	1%
Somewhat easy	17%
Very easy	81%

Q2.22 How concerned were you that your ballot would arrive at the County Clerk’s office in time to be counted? (n=566)

Not at all concerned	37%
Not too concerned	27%
Somewhat concerned	21%
Very concerned	15%

Q2.23 Did you encounter any problems marking or completing your ballot that may have interfered with your ability to cast your vote as intended? (n=567)

No	97%
Yes	2%
I don’t know	1%

Q2.25 Given your experience this year with mail in voting, how likely are you to vote absentee next time? (n=610)

Not at all likely	6%
Not too likely	6%
Somewhat likely	13%
Very likely	75%

A.3 In Person Voting

Q3.1 How many contests did you vote on your 2020 ballot? (n=520)

All contests	87%
Nearly all contests	7%
Most contests	3%
About ½ of all contests	2%
Just a few contests	1%
No contests	0%

Q3.2 Approximately how long did you have to wait in line to vote? (n=523)

Not at all	35%
Less than 10 minutes	30%
10-30 minutes	20%
31 minutes to one hour	7%
More than one hour	7%

Q3.3 When you first checked in at the polling place to vote, which of the following statements most closely describes how you were asked to identify yourself? (If “Election Day in-person” or “Early in-person”). (n=522)

Gave my name and address, but did not show any identification of any kind	3%
Showed a letter, a bill, or something else with my name and address on it	0%
Showed my voter registration card	6%
Showed my driver's license or state-issued photo ID	89%
Showed a military ID card	0%
Some other form of identification	1%

Q3.4 Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the voting location where you voted. (If “Election Day in-person” or “Early in-person”).

The location was easy to find. (n=520)

Strongly disagree	2%
Disagree	1%
Agree	27%
Strongly agree	69%

I had to go far out of my way to vote. (n=515)

Strongly disagree	65%
Disagree	31%
Agree	3%
Strongly agree	0%

It was hard to find a place to park. (n=515)

Strongly disagree	54%
Disagree	35%
Agree	8%
Strongly agree	2%

The poll workers were helpful (n=517)

Strongly disagree	1%
Disagree	4%
Agree	39%
Strongly agree	56%

My ballot privacy was protected (n=515)

Strongly disagree	3%
Disagree	8%
Agree	35%

Strongly agree	54%
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The ballot was too long (n=515)

Strongly disagree	30%
Disagree	57%
Agree	10%
Strongly agree	4%

I felt safe from COVID-19 while voting in-person (n=516)

Strongly disagree	3%
Disagree	7%
Agree	32%
Strongly agree	58%

Q3.5 Please answer the following questions: (If “Election Day in-person” or “Early in-person”).

Did someone in line at the polling place ask you who you were voting for? (n=522)

No	95%
Yes	4%
I don’t know	0%

Did a poll worker look at your ballot and see who you were voting for? (n=522)

No	84%
Yes	6%
I don’t know	10%

Did another voter look at your ballot while you were voting or while you were in line to feed it into the vote tabulator? (n=523)

No	92%
Yes	2%
I don’t know	6%

Did you keep your ballot in a privacy sleeve while you were moving around the vote center? (n=522)

No	29%
Yes	69%
I don’t know	2%

Q3.6 How would you rate efforts at your polling location to prevent voters and poll workers from contracting the COVID-19 virus? (n=519)

Poor	4%
Fair	10%
Good	36%
Excellent	48%
I don’t know	2%

A.4 Voting Experiences

Q2.1 & Q3.1 How many contests did you vote in on your 2020 ballot? (n=1,087)

No contests	0%
Just a few contests	1%
About half of the contests	2%
Most of the contests	3%
Nearly all of the contests	7%
All of the contests	88%

Q4.1 How would you rate your voting experience overall? (n=1,086)

Poor	2%
Fair	5%
Good	29%
Excellent	64%

Q4.2 How confident are you that YOUR vote in the General Election was counted as you intended? (n=1,088)

Not at all confident	9%
Not too confident	6%
Somewhat confident	22%
Very confident	63%

Q4.3 Thinking about your county, state, and the nation, how confident are you that all of the ballots were counted as the voters intended?

Your county (n=1,090)

Not at all confident	14%
Not too confident	6%
Somewhat confident	21%
Very confident	59%

Your state (n=1,070)

Not at all confident	8%
Not too confident	8%
Somewhat confident	32%
Very confident	53%

Nationwide (n=1,072)

Not at all confident	41%
Not too confident	9%
Somewhat confident	11%
Very confident	40%

A.5 Election Security

Q5.1 Please answer the following questions.

How often does anyone, including friends or family, ask you which candidate you prefer or voted for? (n=1,090)

Never	16%
Rarely	26%
Sometimes	33%
Most of the time	14%
All or almost all of the time	11%

If a friend or family member asks you who you prefer in an election, how often do you name a candidate? (n=1,088)

Never	5%
Rarely	7%
Sometimes	11%
Most of the time	21%
All or almost all of the time	57%

If you tell a close friend or family member which candidate you prefer, how often do you tell the truth? (n=1,082)

Never	1%
Rarely	2%
Sometimes	3%
Most of the time	8%
All or almost all of the time	85%

Ballots are changed by election workers. (n=1,060)

Never	45%
Rarely	11%
Sometimes	30%
Most of the time	7%
All or almost all of the time	6%

Elected officials make rules that favor one party or another. (n=1,079)

Never	18%
Rarely	5%
Sometimes	31%
Most of the time	21%
All or almost all of the time	25%

Q5.2 Did anyone do any of the following? Please select all that apply. (n=1,085)

Try and convince you to vote for someone that you didn't want to vote for	11%
Tell you to vote for someone that you didn't want to vote for	8%
Threaten you to get you to vote for someone you didn't want to vote for	2%
Mark your ballot for you, making choices that you would not have made	0%
No one did any of these	87%

Q5.3 What was the result of this interaction? (If “Convince”, “Tell”, “Threaten”, or “Mark)” (n=143)

Ignored the request and marked your ballot the way you wanted	88%
Pretended to vote the way they wanted but marked the ballot with your choices	11%
Voted the way they told you to vote	1%

Q5.4 Who tried to make you vote the way you didn’t want to? (If “Convince”, “Tell”, “Threaten”, or “Mark)” (n=142)

My spouse	3%
Another family member that wasn’t my spouse	15%
My employer	1%
A friend or acquaintance	47%
Someone else	34%

Q5.5 According to the law, which candidate you vote for is supposed to be kept secret unless you tell someone. Even so, how easy or hard do you think it would be for politicians, union officials, or the people you work for to find out who you voted for, even if you told no one? (n=1,090)

Impossible, my vote is secret	18%
It would be very hard, but not impossible	23%
It would be somewhat hard	11%
It would be somewhat easy	18%
It would be very easy	21%
I don’t know	9%

Q5.6 Do you think elected officials can access voting records and figure out who a voter has voted for? (n=1,089)

No	22%
Don’t know	28%
Yes	50%

Q5.7 Have you personally witnessed what you believe to be election or voter fraud in the 2020 Presidential Election? (n=1,089)

No	90%
Yes	10%

Q5.8 Which of the following situations did you personally observe in the 2020 Presidential Election? Please select all that apply. (If “Yes”). (n=96)

Bribery or paying for votes	7%
Someone being improperly denied the chance to vote	3%
Someone filling out an absentee ballot for someone else	24%
Voting machines failing to record votes correctly	17%
Someone using a false identity to vote illegally	17%
Voter intimidation at the polling place	22%
A ballot came to your house that did not belong to anyone in your household	21%
A ballot you or someone in your household requested that did not arrive	9%
Someone stuffing a lot of ballots into an official ballot drop box	7%
Other	21%
None of these	29%

Q5.9 Below is a list of possible illegal election activities that may or may not take place in your state. How often you think each event occurs?

Voted absentee ballots are stolen and thrown away after being submitted (n=1,088)

Never	18%
Hardly ever	17%
Not much	7%
Some of the time	29%
All or almost all of the time	11%
Don't know	19%

Someone intimidates a voter into voting for someone they didn't want to (n=1,084)

Never	11%
Hardly ever	20%
Not much	17%
Some of the time	27%
All or almost all of the time	7%
Don't know	18%

Someone steals an absentee ballot, changes the ballot, and casts it. (n=1,085)

Never	17%
Hardly ever	20%
Not much	8%
Some of the time	28%
All or almost all of the time	9%
Don't know	18%

Someone bribes someone or pays them money for their vote (n=1,085)

Never	11%
Hardly ever	15%
Not much	13%
Some of the time	31%
All or almost all of the time	10%
Don't know	19%

Someone intimidates a voter into not voting (n=1,086)

Never	9%
Hardly ever	16%
Not much	16%
Some of the time	33%
All or almost all of the time	7%
Don't know	19%

Someone being denied the opportunity to vote who is an eligible voter by a poll worker or other election official (n=1,086)

Never	14%
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Hardly ever	22%
Not much	14%
Some of the time	25%
All or almost all of the time	6%
Don't know	19%

Voting machines fail to record votes correctly (n=1,083)

Never	12%
Hardly ever	20%
Not much	12%
Some of the time	29%
All or almost all of the time	11%
Don't know	17%

Q5.10 Do you support or oppose requiring all people to show government issued photo ID when they vote? (n=1,098)

Oppose	11%
Support	81%
Don't know	7%

Q5.11 Do you think fraud changed the outcome of the Presidential election in your state? (n=1,087)

No	68%
Yes	24%
Don't know	8%

A.6 Thinking About Politics

Q6.1 Party, aggregated from 6.1,6.2, & 6.3. (n=1,190)

Strong Republican	29%
Not very strong Republican	8%
Lean Republican	4%
Independent	6%
Lean Democrat	12%
Not very strong Democrat	10%
Strong Democrat	22%

Q6.4 Compared to a year ago how are each of the following doing economically?

You and your family (n=1,090)

Much worse	7%
Somewhat worse	14%
Same	41%
Somewhat better	18%
Much better	20%

State economy (n=1,081)

Much worse	31%
Somewhat worse	27%
Same	9%
Somewhat better	11%
Much better	22%

National economy (n=1,080)

Much worse	27%
Somewhat worse	28%
Same	13%
Somewhat better	14%
Much better	18%

Q6.5 For whom did you vote for in the race for U.S. President? (n=1,073)

Biden	47%
Trump	51%
Third-Party	1%
Other	2%

Q6.6 Thinking about elections and election reform, which is more important? (n=1,089)

Ensuring that everyone who is eligible has the right to vote	43%
Protecting the voting system against fraud	55%
Don't know	2%

Q6.7 How do you think we should elect the President: the candidate who gets the most votes in all 50 states, or the current Electoral College system? (n=1,089)

The candidate who gets the most votes in all 50 states	54%
The current Electoral College system	46%

Q6.8 Thinking about issues in politics today that matter to you, how often would you say your side has been winning or losing? (n=1,084)

Losing a great deal more often than winning	11%
Losing somewhat more often than winning	24%
Winning and losing about equally	32%
Winning somewhat more often than losing	20%
Winning a great deal more often than losing	13%

Q7.1 How worried are you that you or someone in your family will be exposed to COVID-19? (n=1,089)

Not worried at all	13.0%
Not too worried	23%
Somewhat worried	33%
Very worried	30%
Don't know	0%

A.7 Sample Demographics

Q7.2 Age (n=1,090)

18-24	7%
25-34	9%
35-44	18%
45-54	15%
55-64	19%
65+	32%

Q7.3 What is your gender? (n=1,090)

Man	47%
Woman	53%
Non-binary	0%
Other	0%

Q7.4 What is the highest level of education you have completed? (n=1,090)

Less than high school	1%
High school	10%
Some college	31%
2 year or technical degree	21%
4-year degree	19%
Professional degree	14%
Doctorate	4%

Q7.5 How would you best describe your employment status? (n=1,089)

Employed fulltime	43%
Employed part time	6%
Unemployed looking for work	4%
Unemployed not looking for work	2%
Retired	34%
Student	4%
Disabled	3.0%
Other	3%

Q7.6 Are you of Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin? (n=1,089)

No	82%
Yes	18%

Q7.7 How would you describe your Hispanic, Latinx or Spanish origin? (If "Yes"). (n=113)

Mexican	7%
Spanish	16%
Puerto Rican	31%
Central American	5%
Something else	40%

Q7.8 Which racial and/or ethnic groups do you consider yourself a member of? Please select as many as apply. (n=1,090)

White	64%
Black or African American	13%
Asian	1%
Hispanic	18%
Other	3%

Q7.9 What is your current marital status? (n=1,086)

Married	54%
Divorced	15%
Living with partner	9%
Widowed	7%
Separated	2%
Single and never married	14%

Q7.10 How would you best describe your spouses' or partner's employment status? (n=728)

Employed fulltime	45%
Employed part time	6%
Unemployed looking for work	3%
Unemployed not looking for work	4%
Retired	36%
Student	0%
Disabled	1%
Other	5%

Q7.11 How would you best describe your spouses' or partner's education status? (n=725)

Less than high school	1%
High school	17%
Some college	23%
2 year or technical degree	11%
4-year degree	26%
Professional degree	18%
Doctorate	5%

Q7.12 How old is your spouse or partner? (n=664)

18-24	2%
25-34	11%
35-44	21%
45-54	13%
55-64	23%
65+	31%

Q7.13 Did you and your spouse or partner vote for the same candidate for President? (n=726)

No	7%
Yes	83%
My partner did not vote	4%
Not sure	4%
Spouse not eligible to vote	1%

7.14 How often do you and your spouse or partner vote for the same candidates? (n=719)

Never	2%
Rarely	3%
Sometimes	14%
Often	36%
Always	42%
Spouse not eligible to vote	2%

Q7.15 Who is the primary income earner in your household? (n=766)

You	35%
Your spouse or partner	27%
My spouse or partner and I contribute equally	38%

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