



MEMORANDUM

To: Alliance for Youth Action
From: Drew Linzer, Civiqs
Date: July 20, 2020
RE: Results of Battleground State Poll of Young Democrats & Leaning Independents

Major Findings

A Civiqs poll conducted for the Alliance for Youth Action finds that the coronavirus pandemic is the most important 2020 election issue for young Democrats and Democratic-leaning Independents in ten key battleground states. The second highest priority is ending systemic racism and discrimination, followed by affordable healthcare and climate change.

In facing the coronavirus, young progressives (age 18-39) are most worried about the health of themselves and their parents, above all other factors. Economic concerns—including losing their job, and the ability to pay rent, a mortgage, or other bills—are secondary.

A plurality of young Democrats and Democratic-leaning Independents in swing states believe that defunding the police is the most important step needed to address changes to policing and the criminal justice system. The second-most widely held priority is putting an end to private, for-profit prisons and detention centers.

The survey finds some ambivalence towards Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, although he is still greatly preferred to President Donald Trump. Fully 37% of young swing-state progressives have either a neutral or unfavorable opinion of Joe Biden, with opposition largest among voters aged 18-25. However, in a head-to-head matchup with Trump, Biden receives 89% of the vote, compared to 4% for Trump.

Young Democrats are generally secure that their vote will get counted this November, whether in person or by mail. Only 9% express no faith that their votes will be counted. Young Black voters are more likely than other groups to currently plan to vote in person.

Top Issues: Coronavirus, Systemic Racism, Healthcare

A quarter (24%) of young swing state progressives consider the coronavirus outbreak to be the most important issue of the upcoming election. One in five (19%) believe that ending

systemic racism and discrimination is the most important, and 16% think it is affordable healthcare. Nearly half (48%) list affordable healthcare as one of their top three priorities, making it the most prevalent issue; 45% ranked ending systemic racism and discrimination and 43% ranked the coronavirus as one of their top three issues in the upcoming election.

Democrats and Democratic-leaning Independents differ on their most important election issue. The coronavirus is the most important issue to nearly a third (30%) of Democrats, followed by ending systemic racism (19%) and affordable healthcare (14%). However, systemic racism is the most important issue for a plurality Democratic-leaning Independents (20%) followed by affordable healthcare (18%). Only 16% of Democratic-leaning Independents think that the pandemic is the most important issue of the upcoming election.

When thinking about the coronavirus, 51% of young Democrats are most concerned about the health of their parents (30%) or themselves (21%). This outweighs economic concerns such as losing their jobs (18%) or paying rent or other bills (12%). The youngest Democrats (aged 18-25) are most likely to be worried about their parents' health first (34%), rather than their own (18%). Younger millennials (ages 26-32) are the only age group among Democrats who are more worried about losing their job (23%) than their own health (19%).

A plurality of young Democrats (29%) think that defunding the police is the most important step needed to address changes to the criminal justice system. This is followed by ending for-profit prisons and detention centers (18%) and de-escalation training for police officers (17%). Younger swing state progressives prioritize defunding the police: 40% of those aged 18-25 think it is the most important issue, compared to 20% of those aged 33-39.

The 2020 Presidential Election

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden still has a ways to go with young swing state progressives. Only two-thirds (63%) have a very or somewhat favorable view of the candidate, and 12% have a very unfavorable view of Biden.

However, these same voters overwhelmingly dislike President Trump, with 95% viewing the president very unfavorably. Nine in ten young swing state Democrats (89%) would vote for Biden today, including 98% of Democrats and 75% of Democratic-leaning Independents. Voters who are more enthusiastic about turning out to vote also support Biden at higher rates—95% compared to 80% of voters who are less motivated to vote.

Slightly more than half (60%) of young Democrats in swing states have been contacted by the Biden campaign or the Democratic Party in the past month. They are reaching these voters through a variety of methods: 21% have received multiple forms of communication, 17% have been contacted by text message, and 16% have seen digital ads.

The Trump campaign, in contrast, is blanketing young Democrats—particularly those aged 18-25—in digital advertisements. Remarkably, considering their preference for Biden over

Trump, over half (51%) of young Democrats in swing states have been contacted by the Trump campaign or the Republican Party in the past month. And nearly half (47%) of Democrats aged 18-25 have seen digital ads for the Trump campaign, compared to 24% of Democrats aged 25-32 and 17% of Democrats aged 33-39.

Confidence in the American Voting System

Young Democrats in swing states have a high degree of confidence in the American voting system. A plurality (42%) believe that either in-person or mail voting ensures their vote gets counted. A third (27%) think that voting in person is more secure, while 18% think that voting by mail is more secure.

Younger voters are more confident in the voting system. Half (50%) of those 18-25 believe that either mail or in-person voting will work, compared to 36% of those aged 33-39. Black voters are most likely to favor in-person voting. Nearly half (48%) of Black voters plan to vote in person in November, compared to 40% of Latinx voters and 30% of white voters.

National News Outlets Are Trusted, Social Media is Not

A large plurality (37%) of young swing-state Democrats see national news outlets like the New York Times and Washington Post as the most trustworthy source for political news and information. Cable news and podcasts were tied for most-trusted at 16%, with social media lagging at a distant fourth at 12%. Cable news is the second choice for Democrats, whereas Independents trust both podcasts and social media more.

Nearly half of those surveyed (49%) do not trust social media for political information. Among those who do, 40% trust Twitter the most. There is a generational divide in trust in social media, with younger Democrats the most trusting: 37% of those aged 18-25 don't trust social media, compared to 54% of those aged 26-32 and 52% of those aged 33-39.

Methodology

Civiqs interviewed 1,241 Democrats and Democratic-leaning Independents aged 18-39 in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin from July 18-20, 2020. The survey was conducted online, among selected members of the Civiqs research panel. Sampled individuals were emailed by Civiqs and responded using a personalized link to the survey at civiqs.com. The survey results are weighted by age, race, gender, education, party identification, and state to be representative of the population of registered Democrats and Democratic-leaning Independents aged 18-39 in the ten states. The survey has a margin of error of $\pm 3.2\%$ at the 95% confidence level, accounting for the weighting design effect. More information about Civiqs can be found online at civiqs.com/methodology.