



DIVIDED WE FALL: The Trump administration marked a time of high politicization. As each party deviates from the center, our country opens its door to unrest, as seen in summertime protests. Biden now states that, as President, he will work on reuniting the country.

(Photo/Bella Ramirez)

Our election

Our future was in our teachers', families' and seniors' hands. Can a divided country come together for tomorrow?

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With the historic year of 2020, the people are both the winner and loser in this past election. No matter what party you identify with, there are clear pros and cons for everyone.

Voter suppression

Due to the pandemic and the effects of redlining (discriminatory mapping to deny loans on typically minority groups) on voter districts, many voters were suppressed during this election. The New York Times suspects that the Republicans used voter suppression tactics in more diverse communities in an attempt to keep in control as minorities typically swing Democrat. The Pew Center for Public Integrity described these tactics as slowing down the mail, shutting down polling places in Black communities, opening more polling places in white communities and undercounting minorities in the census to have less representation in Congress. The Public Integrity Institute also noted that 20 states added new restrictions on the right to vote after the 2010 election (two years into the Obama Administration).

As citizens began to shine a light on problems with voter accessibility, the government opened up more opportunities to vote. These opportunities resulted in slower counts in close elections like in Nevada and Pennsylvania. Due to Trump's fearmongering toward mail-in ballots, those ended up becoming the key determiner in most state elections with 46% of votes coming from absentee or mail-in, according to Pew Research.

Making history

Besides cheers throughout the streets of liberal communities Nov. 7 when Joe Biden was officially predicted to win the electoral college, the results of the election made history. With Joe Biden holding this election's win, he also makes history as the oldest president to take office. Further, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will be the first female, Black and South Asian American in such a high office. Her new position may open the door to greater acceptance of a woman in higher office, a prejudice that plagued Hillary Clinton's run in 2016. Further, Biden is hoping to appoint more people of color and women in his cabinet than seen before, a clear play to prioritize representation from his diverse electorate. From an all-female media team to the possible first Hispanic to become Secretary of Defense, our incoming administration is set to become an administration of firsts.





PINNING THE VOTE: As a swing state, Florida typically receives some of the most campaigning out of all the states. This year, Trump and Biden combined spent at least \$264 million on advertising in Florida alone, according to Fortune.

Young people's election

The election of 2020 marked a historic voter turnout for young people. Compared to the 2016 election, the youth turnout increased by 8 percentage points, and their vote had more weight in the election than in previous years making up 17% of the total vote. This voting block specifically helped Biden gain his victory and may have caused certain states like Texas to split the vote more than usual during the vote counts.

According to the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), if only young people voted, out of 39 polled states, Trump would have won only 7 states and Biden would have won Florida by 30%. This is likely due to the shrinking non-Hispanic white electorate in younger generations as the population grows more diverse.

The New York Times suspects that if the Republican party wishes to stay relevant with the younger, more diverse electorate, they will need to expand their platform to become more inclusive the way the Democrats have. As a bureaucratic and oftentimes homogenous party, Republicans will either have to move their whole platform to prioritize race and inclusivity or become more factionalized like the Democrats with their progressive subgroups, as the young people of today become the main voting block.





(Photo/Bella Ramirez)

Youth activism

With 2020 marking the largest percentage of young people voting in history, publications around the world are looking into what is mobilizing the youth vote. Generation Z is often defined in the context of tragedy; Teen Vogue notes the main credits as: 9/11, school shootings, living through a pandemic, economic instability and racial unrest. Each of these key events impacts teens' political socialization as they become more aware of the impact government and society has on them. Teen Vogue predicts that the marks of these events on Generation Z's psyche and their determination to be politically active won't fade, especially as more young people reach voting age.

"Young people are going to keep grinding on this work," Sarah Audelo, executive director of Alliance for Youth Action said. "Young people should be seen as key allies and stakeholders in building that future and in governing moving forward."



The future for Biden-Harris

Biden's ideas for "healing" from the Trump Administration and "building back better" are a clear attempt to unite the highly divided country. Biden's catering to both parties forces him to take a more moderate stance and angers the progressive faction of the Democrats. Former "Bernie Bros" (people who pledged their vote to senator Bernie Sanders in the primaries) in particular are finding criticism in Biden's cabinet and stances. Despite Biden-Harris's best intentions to unite, their inability to cement their side may subject them to criticism from both parties.

The future for Gen Z

Biden-Harris notes in their education policy that they wish to double the number of psychologists, counselors, nurses, social workers and health professionals in schools. Biden also attests he will "defeat the National Rifle Association" by requiring universal background checks and banning assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. He also hopes to improve teacher diversity and eliminate the funding gap between rich and poor districts by including more funding for Title I schools.

Since most young voters voted for Biden, he has expanded his platform to accommodate more of their concerns, including climate change and forgiving student debt. With Generation Z's experience in activism and rallies (pandemic or not), it's likely that any concerns regarding his policy will be heard (even if ignored). Already progressive teens in organizations like the Sunrise Movement, a youth-led activist group in favor of the Green New Deal, are criticizing Biden's actions publicly on platforms like Twitter or even on news networks.

"We have got to be out on the offensive on day one," Varshini Prakash, co-founder of Sunrise Movement, said to NPR.

A new year

Since the Supreme Court overturned the attorney general of Texas, Ken Paxton's, lawsuit backed by 17 states (including Florida) that attempted to reverse the election by throwing out millions of votes, Joe Biden will definitively take office Jan. 20 on Inauguration Day. The election still continues until electorates cast and finalize their votes Dec. 14 to formally instate Joe Biden.



Why

Key issues that brought people to the polls for the highest voter turnout in election history.

