

Cultural Research Center Post-Election Survey: At a Glance **Report #02: Finding Common Ground in 2021**

Despite Intense Political Conflict, New CRC Post-Election Survey Identifies Key Issues Supported by Bipartisan “Supermajority” of Americans

Although 2020 will likely be remembered as one of the most contentious presidential elections in American history, a new post-election survey shows strikingly strong bipartisan support—representing a “supermajority” of more than two-thirds of Republican voters and two-thirds of Democratic voters—for a number of seeming win-win policy issues in the new year.

According to a new survey by Dr. George Barna, Research Director of the [Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University](#), despite the ongoing media narrative of an irredeemably divided America, the political “wish list” of Americans of both parties after the election embraces a number of broadly popular policies:

- **Increasing U.S. manufacturing jobs.**
- **Rebuilding the nation’s infrastructure**
- **Making Social Security and Medicare financially solvent**
- **Reducing the federal debt**
- **Reducing federal income taxes for individuals**
- **Expanding school choice**

Incredibly, all of the above policies receive at least two-thirds support from voters for each presidential candidate, and many have the support of even 75 and 80 percent of American voters. These findings provide hope that in the wake of the 2020 election, national unity and post-election healing are possible, especially if the incoming president and other elected officials focus on these consensus issues in 2021.

Conversely, the survey found a clear lack of bipartisan support for a number of key issues in the Biden Agenda—pursuing these policy agenda items will likely increase political polarization and conflict:

- **Universal healthcare provided by the U.S. government**
- **redistributing wealth to reduce income inequalities**
- **more restrictive laws regarding private gun ownership**
- **eliminating the use of fossil fuels as part of the “Green New Deal”**
- **increasing the number of U.S. Supreme Court judges from 9 to 13**

Full results of *CRC Post-Election Survey Report #2: “Finding Common Ground in 2021”* are found below.

Political Mandate? National Unity? Survey Says ‘We the People’ Are Pointing the Way Forward

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Americans are generally fed up with their political leaders, regardless of their party or ideological identification. As the nation prepares for the Democrat Party to take control of the federal government and introduce a vastly different agenda than that of the outgoing Trump Administration, a survey conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University indicates that the American people have a substantially different wish list for the nation. If heeded by their elected officials, the public's preferred agenda could well move the country toward the desperately needed healing and unification process that has not been provided by America's political leaders for decades.

The Supermajority

The Cultural Research Center study revealed six changes that a supermajority of the nation's adults— that is, two-thirds or more—endorse, whether they voted for Donald Trump or Joe Biden in the November election. While the mainstream news media would lead the people to believe there is no common ground between those two camps, the survey results show otherwise.

Here are the six courses of action that large majorities of both Trump and Biden voters support:

1. *Increasing manufacturing jobs within the U.S.*

More than four out of five Americans (83%) support the idea of expanding the domestic manufacturing base. This idea has strong and nearly identical levels of bipartisan support: 87% of Trump voters and 84% of Biden supporters are in favor of this effort.

2. *Restore the nation's infrastructure*

Four out of five adults (81%) support the notion of investing—“heavily”—in the improvement of our national infrastructure. This commitment draws lofty and equal levels of support from those who voted for Donald Trump (83%) and Joe Biden (84%).

3. *Make Social Security and Medicare financially solvent*

Restoring financial solvency to both Social Security and Medicare is another win-win proposition with eight out of ten adults backing such a concept. More than three-fourths of Trump voters (78%) and an even higher proportion of Biden voters (86%) see virtue in pursuing this outcome.

4. *Reduce federal debt*

Increasing numbers of citizens are worried about the future economic effects of our rapidly rising government debt. The idea of significantly reducing the federal government's debt has widespread support: three-quarters of all adults (77%) approve of the idea, spread evenly between pro-Trump (82%) and pro-Biden (78%) voters.

5. *Reduce federal income taxes for individuals*

Three-quarters of adults (73%) are pining for a decrease in their personal income taxes imposed by the federal government. Trump voters were slightly more excited about this possibility (79%) but almost three-quarters of Biden voters (72%) expressed their support, as well.

6. *Increase school choice*

A large majority of Americans (73%) want to give parents more school choices for their children. That desire is equally strong among Trump supporters (75%) and Biden backers (72%).

Pursuing these six outcomes could begin the process of rallying Americans around the things on which they agree, rather than further dividing the nation on the basis of divergent and ideologically irreconcilable points of view.

Secondary Efforts

Should federal officials succeed in implementing the six policies that the public widely agrees are important and appealing, there are another four options that also generated support from not only the bulk of the American public, but from majorities (though not super-majorities) of both the Trump and Biden voting blocs. Those four changes were:

1. reducing racial discrimination through legal means (74% national support; 62% Trump voter support; 87% Biden voter support)
2. developing and enforcing more stringent environmental standards (69% general public support, including 53% of Trump backers and 85% of Biden adherents)
3. strict enforcement of existing immigration laws (embraced by 64% of citizens, 84% of Trump voters, and 54% of Biden voters)
4. substantially reducing the number of federal government regulations (backed by 62% of Americans, including 74% of Trump voters and 58% of Biden voters)

Misunderstanding the “Biden Mandate”

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, as well as other Democrats, have been quoted as saying that Joe Biden has a “mandate” to implement his proposed progressive agenda. Realistically, winning a presidential election by four percentage points is not considered a mandate. Neither is the fact that the Democrats actually sustained a net loss of 25 seats in the House and a net gain of just three seats in the Senate.

Public Support for Government Action			
Question: The next questions are about the future of America and what you hope that future will be like, now that the election is over. There are many changes that the federal government might consider in the next few years. Please indicate if you, personally, support or oppose the federal government making each of the possible changes listed below. If you support the action, please indicate if you think it should be a top priority or a secondary priority. (NOTE: Data shown reflects those who support the prescribed action, either as a “top priority” or as a “secondary priority”.)			
		Voted for	
	All Adults	Trump	Biden
Substantially increase the number of manufacturing jobs in the U.S	83%	87%	84%
Invest heavily in improving our national infrastructure	81	83	84
Restore financial solvency to Social Security and Medicare	80	78	86
Significantly reduce the federal government’s debt	77	82	78
Reduce racial discrimination through legal means	74	62	87
Reduce personal income taxes imposed by the federal government	73	79	72
Give parents more school choices for their children	73	75	72
Set and enforce more stringent environmental standards	69	53	85
Provide universal healthcare insurance through the federal government	67	47	85
Redistribute wealth to substantially reduce income inequalities	61	43	76
Strict enforcement of existing immigration laws	64	84	54
Substantially reduce the number of federal government regulations	62	74	58
Adopt more restrictive laws regarding private gun ownership	60	40	79
Eliminate the use of fossil fuels in America	56	36	75
Increase the number of U.S. Supreme Court judges from 9 to 13	47	38	61
Repeal the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1973 <i>Roe v. Wade</i> abortion ruling	41	50	38
Integrated Disciples are adults with a biblical worldview: Emergent Followers are adults who lack a biblical worldview but are close to possessing such a body of beliefs and behaviors.			
Source: Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University; 2020 Post-Election Survey; N=1,000 adults, conducted November 2020			

In fact, certain elements of the “Biden mandate” would most likely raise tensions in the nation rather than advance peace and progress. The Cultural Research Center survey discovered that the following actions could cause additional strife:

- providing universal healthcare insurance through the federal government: while a large majority of Biden backers (85%) like this idea, less than half of the Trump voters (47%) support it
- redistributing peoples’ wealth in an effort to substantially reduce income inequalities: three-quarters of Biden’s supporters (76%) are for this process but less than half of Trump’s voters (43%) are supportive
- adopting more restrictive laws regarding private gun ownership: a favorite of progressive politicians and Biden voters (79%), conservatives and Trump voters (40%) are largely dismissive of this notion
- eliminating the use of fossil fuels in America is a cornerstone of the “Green New Deal,” but it is not a shared desire in our divided nation, with Trump supporters (36%) less than half as likely as Biden supporters (75%) to consider such a move to be desirable
- increasing the number of U.S. Supreme Court justices from 9 to 13 is another partisan idea that has the backing of Biden voters (61%) but not of Trump voters (38%)
- repealing the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* abortion ruling has been discussed for years but remains a lightning rod issue, with half of Trump voters (50%) in favor of the idea but just 38% of Biden voters similarly in line

Governance and Public Opinion

Americans must understand, however, that sometimes their desires are not in their own best interests or that they may be incompatible with competing desires they possess. For instance, the research shows that the people want an active government—one that will take action and get things done in a variety of life dimensions (education, economics, government process, etc.). Yet, government action never happens in a vacuum: changes in the law and public policy always come at a cost. The implications of many of the desired changes identified by the survey respondents is that those actions will conflict with some of their expressed desires, such as having fewer government regulations, the elimination of federal government debt, a balanced budget for the feds, and lower personal income tax rates.

Past studies have documented how Americans have become less ideologically consistent during the last half century. It is now shockingly common for conservatives to embrace liberal social or political positions and for liberals to embrace conservative social or political positions—without recognizing or being concerned about the inconsistency or incompatibility of their views.

For instance, the CRC research found that while conservatives generally want to shrink government— its size, authority, and cost—close to half of them said they would endorse universal healthcare insurance being offered and managed by the federal government. Another example: conservative ideology is founded on the concept of government keeping its hands out of people’s pockets, yet four out of every ten Trump voters said they support redistributing peoples’ wealth in the pursuit of income equality—a foundational belief of socialism, the archenemy of conservatism.

One of the intriguing realities about the Biden voters is that they were consistently in favor of the federal government taking action. A majority of those voters supported government taking action regarding 15 of the 16 policy prescriptions evaluated. As government expansionists, that makes sense.

What does not make sense are the conflicting policy stands they supported. For instance, nearly six out of 10 Biden voters want the federal government to “substantially reduce” the number of federal regulations, yet they widely embraced a truckload of extensive new government policies and programs (i.e., new laws pertaining to wealth redistribution, racial discrimination, environmental standards, healthcare insurance, gun ownership, etc.).

Perhaps the most challenging policy reality, however, relates to the moral choices Americans must make through their laws and public policies. Given CRC’s worldview research, most Americans now possess a rather inconsistent slate

of moral perspectives that lean more to the selfish than servant side of the ledger. Indeed, this post-election survey reiterated that two-thirds of adults contend that there are no absolute moral truths, that moral truth is a subjective and personal set of choices. That leaves judgments related to issues such as abortion, poverty, marriage, personal responsibility, and religious freedom to be determined by the emotions of each individual. At some point in the future America must have a reckoning about the basis on which it will make its important national moral decisions.

About the Research

The research described above is based on findings from a demographically balanced national survey of 1,000 adults, conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University. The data were collected online from a nationwide panel of adults immediately after the November 2020 election.

About the Cultural Research Center

The Cultural Research Center (CRC) at Arizona Christian University is located on the school's campus in Glendale, Arizona, in the Phoenix metropolitan area. CRC conducts nationwide research studies to understand the intersection of faith and culture and shares that information with organizations dedicated to transforming American culture with biblical truth. Like ACU, CRC embraces the Christian faith, as described in the Bible, but remains non-denominational and non-partisan. Access to past surveys conducted by CRC, as well as additional information about the Cultural Research Center, is available at www.culturalresearchcenter.com. Further information about Arizona Christian University is available at www.arizonachristian.edu.