

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

WEBINAR

ELECTION 2020: RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. DIONNE: I love this period in our history because it's the only time in my life where people say to me unmute yourself. So now that I'm unmuted I can introduce our event. Welcome to the Brookings Institution and our event on what was a very exciting election and continues to be. But I'd like to underscore at the very beginning, it's exciting but it's perfectly normal. The vote counting that is going on in states around the country is the kind of vote counting that happens in every election. If there is a difference it's because millions more people voted by mail in this election because of the pandemic. In a couple of states, like Pennsylvania, state legislatures declined to reform their laws so ballots could be prepared earlier, so it's taking longer to count the ballots in Pennsylvania than it is in other states. And the kinds of leads candidates enjoy in some of the states are no closer than leads we've seen in many elections. At the moment, Joe Biden is ahead of Donald Trump by margins equal to or greater than the margins Trump won by in Michigan and Wisconsin. Biden does have a small margin in Nevada where they are still counting vote.

One other fact about the election I think is worth underscoring is as of this moment, Biden either has secured or leads in states with exactly 270 electoral votes. And with the states of Pennsylvania and Georgia in particular still very much in play. My colleague, Elaine Kamarck will tell us much more about that.

But I think it's just important in this climate, especially given some of the things the President said last night, to underscore again this is normal democracy and vote counting.

I've got an awesome panel of colleagues here. By the way, my name is E.J. Dionne. I am, as you can see on your little screen, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. I'm really honored to be joined by a group of extraordinary colleagues. I also want to thank everyone who has sent questions in advance, and we're going to try to answer a lot of those. For example, there is an excellent series of questions on youth voting and what young people did and might do after this election. Camille wants to take those on. There are other questions about the Senate and House races that Molly will take on.

We are probably not going to answer the questions on what would a Joe Biden

administration look like or what will they do in foreign policy because we think it probably makes the most sense to have this election finally decided, which we probably will have to wait a day or two for.

But the other thing I want to say is you can submit your own questions two ways, either to Events@Brookings.edu or on Twitter, #Election2020. And those questions are going to filter back to me and I'm going to try to use as many of them as I can as the event goes forward because the smart people out there may well think of better questions than I will. So I want to thank you for your participation.

So let me briefly introduce Camille Busette, a senior fellow in Governance Studies with affiliated appointments in our Economic Studies and Metropolitan Studies programs. She is director of the Race, Prosperity, and Inclusion Initiative, a Brookings cross-program initiative focused on issues of equity, racial justice, and economic mobility for low-income communities and communities of color. Her work is focused on systematic racism, economic advancement of Black and Native American boys, the importance of social relationship to economic mobility, and equity in healthcare, and local and state government policy priorities. You can tell she's been very busy in this period of the pandemic. Welcome, Camille.

MS. BUSETTE: Thank you.

MR. DIONNE: I want to introduce next, in alphabetical order, my colleague John Hudak, the deputy director of the Center for Effective Public Management, a senior fellow in Governance Studies. His research examines questions of presidential power in the context of administration, personnel, and public policy. He focuses on campaigns and elections, legislative executive intersection, and state and federal marijuana policy. This is the place to be if you want to find out where all of those — what happened in all of those marijuana referendums that were on the ballot around the country yesterday. And he is just awesome on electoral politics and polling, which is one of the things he'll discuss.

Elaine Kamarck is a senior fellow in the Governance Studies Program, as well as director of the Center for Effective Public Management. She is an expert on American electoral politics, government innovation and reform in the U.S., but also in OECD nations and developing countries. She is the author of "Primary Politics: Everything You Need to Know About How America Nominated its

Presidential Candidates.” And she is also a lecturer in public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of government.

Finally, but in no means least, our dear colleague, Molly Reynolds, a senior fellow in Governance Studies. She studies Congress, which is very useful for us today in particular, with an emphasis on how congressional rules and procedures effect domestic policy outcomes. She is the author of the book "Exceptions to the Rule: The Politics of Filibuster Limitations in the U.S. Senate," which may or may not become relevant soon, and "The Consequences of the Budget Reconciliation Process and Other Procedures in the U.S. Senate." And she also supervises the maintenance of a wonderful Brookings — used to be book, now I think it's mostly online, that if I remember right, was started by our colleague Tom Mann and also Norm Ornstein over at the American Enterprise Institute, "Vital Statistics on Congress."

So let me begin by turning to Elaine. I laid out the sort of very raw data on the results of this election. Tell us what's happening and what we are likely to see over the next couple of days.

Unmute yourself. You're muted, Elaine.

MS. KAMARCK: Yes. (Laughing) All right.

MR. DIONNE: There you go.

MS. KAMARCK: Thank you, E.J., and good afternoon everyone. Thank you for joining us for this Brookings webinar.

This is a very, very tight race and the count is taking a very long time, but we knew that would happen. We knew that the combination of an extraordinary number of absentee and early votes, plus a very, very tight race would mean a long count. And as I think as Americans, we all want this count to be as careful and as deliberate as it possibly can be. Given that, we are down to a handful of states. And some — let me just talk about some of them and give you a sense of what's happening in each one.

In Nevada, Biden has a very, very narrow lead. And they have announced that they're not going to count anymore votes until Thursday at noon — and they'll announce them Thursday at noon. They're not making anymore announcements. What is giving Democrats hope in Nevada is the fact that

Clark County, which is home to Las Vegas and Reno, the two population centers of an otherwise very rural state, a lot of those ballots have not been counted yet. So Democrats are hoping that the 0.6% margin that Biden now enjoys will get bigger.

In Arizona, which some networks have already called for Biden, there is 3.4% lead by Biden, 86 percent of the vote is in, but Maricopa County, which is Phoenix, which is the population center of that state and which is also very Democratic, that is still — Phoenix is still counting votes. So that could actually get bigger.

Wisconsin has almost all of the votes in and there the Biden lead looks to be 0.6%, same as in Nevada ironically. And it looks like they may be headed for an automatic recount. Trump has already stated that he wants a recount there, and given how extraordinarily close that is, that's probably fine. This election could come down to Wisconsin.

And, finally, in Michigan — and I'm going to talk about Michigan and Pennsylvania — Michigan, again, Biden has a very narrow lead, under 1%. 94% of the vote is in, however, in Wayne County, which is Detroit, which is a heavily Democratic vote, only 81% of the vote is in. And in Grand Rapids, another Democratic center in the state, only 85% of the vote is in. So Biden runs a chance of exceeding that 0.9% when those counties come in.

The reason I gave you those four first is that at this moment the Biden campaign is saying they've got 270 electoral college votes and they've got it. If they get those four states and nothing untoward happens in the other states, they've got it. That means, interestingly enough, that they don't need to win — Biden doesn't need to win Pennsylvania — may not need to win Pennsylvania. And that may be a good thing, because, frankly, Trump has a very large lead in Pennsylvania. I mean the polls were just way off on Pennsylvania. The polls were showing an average of a 5-point lead in Pennsylvania, Trump's lead is 8.1% right now. However, again, only 19 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties have reported their absentee ballots. If you'll remember, Pennsylvania, like Wisconsin, is one of those states where the state — the Republican state legislature said, nope, can't count the absentee ballots before election day. So they just started counting on election day. And that's — you know, that's a huge, huge number of

votes in Pennsylvania.

Among the counties where they need to count the absentee ballots are Philadelphia and Allegheny County, which is the City of Pittsburgh. Both of those population centers are places where Biden has been leading in the polling. And if you combine the votes that are out from there, plus the fact that most of these absentee ballots we've been seeing have tended to lean Democratic, it's possible that Pennsylvania will fall into the Democratic column, but that's a stretch.

So, you know, right now we are looking at an exquisitely narrow race. I mean maybe we have a 270 to 268 result here, which is practically a tie in the electoral college, although not a tie.

And a lot of this — my final comment will be that a lot of what we saw last night, and the anxiety and the drama, has to do with this dramatically new way of voting. If you were a Democrat last night and you tuned in right at 7 o'clock, you were really excited because, guess what, Florida was blue, North Carolina was blue, and Ohio was blue. Well, that's because they counted their absentee ballots early. So the Democratic vote came in first. What we're seeing in other states, of course, is that the states that came in where the ballots or the absentee ballots are coming later, they are red initially by big margins, and then the margins are shrinking as they absentee ballots come in.

So the bad news is we're going to have to wait a couple of days to really see what this picture is. The good news is that states seem to be taking their time, doing this carefully, and if you — just a reminder to everybody out there, when these votes are counted in the room, there is a representative of the Republican Party and a representative of the Democratic Party. They are watching every single count all across the country. And, of course, both parties are armed with lawyers, ready to go right to court if they think something untoward is happening.

So there's a lot of transparency to this process and we are just going to have to wait a couple of days to see where it ends up.

MR. DIONNE: Could I just ask a quick follow up? The Biden campaign argues that in fact in Pennsylvania there really are a whole lot of outstanding ballots from Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and they are speaking and — and I don't think it's put on, although we'll find out — with a fair amount of

confidence that they can actually overcome this margin. And then there's also talk that a lot of ballots are missing, haven't been counted yet — not missing, just there are a lot of uncounted ballots in Fulton and DeKalb Counties, i.e. Atlanta and those suburbs that are Democratic. And so Georgia still seems in play.

Could you just deal with that?

MS. KAMARCK: Yeah.

MR. DIONNE: One last sort of moving piece here.

MS. KAMARCK: Yeah. Georgia is already at 93% of the vote counted, okay. So the missing ballot — and that's true that Atlanta, or Fulton County and DeKalb County, where Biden is strong, aren't all in. DeKalb County, Biden is winning, but it's only 85% in. So there's a possibility there. I wouldn't necessarily count on Georgia, frankly, just given the history of it, given the results of the Senate races, which I know Molly will talk about. I wouldn't really put Georgia in the bank yet.

Pennsylvania is a very interesting question. You know, it's a state that's got Philly and Pittsburgh and the joke is that Pennsylvania is Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Alabama in the middle. And that big middle swath of the state is extraordinarily conservative on just all sorts of questions, including race, which is why they call it Alabama in the middle.

Those counties, as I was watching last night — and I know a little bit about Philadelphia, was there on — about Pennsylvania, was there on election day — those rural counties were coming in with huge Trump margins. I mean they were — even though they're small counties, not a lot of voters, they were coming in 71, 72 to 75% Trump. So there has to be an awful lot of votes in Philly and Pittsburgh to make up this 8% gap we're seeing now. And I know that the Biden campaign is, you know, enthusiastic about it and thinks they're eventually going to win Pennsylvania, but I wouldn't be as sure of that as I am say of Michigan.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you.

John Hudak, you have spent a lot of time with the exit polls. And as we talked about this before, exit polls were particularly vexed this year since an awful lot of people were not there to exit a polling place because they didn't vote at a polling place. But there have been some adjustments where

by combining methods there was one produced. And, John, you've taken a look at it very carefully and we would — I'm sure everybody out there would be interested in what you have found about what we all did yesterday.

MR. HUDAK: Sure. Thanks, E.J. —

MR. DIONNE: Or what we all did actually for the last month.

MR. HUDAK: Thanks, E.J. And I just want to reiterate your comments at the top that it's frustrating that we don't know whether President Trump is being reelected or whether Joe Biden has won, and that should not signal to anyone that the process isn't working. It is a signal that the process is working. These votes are being counted. And, again, while it's frustrating, the alternative of this being a sham process is much worse than frustrating. I think we should be happy with the care that election officials are taking in a lot of — really in every state, but especially in these key states, over the coming days.

So the exit polls told really two sort of different stories, two sort of competing stories, particularly compared to 2016. In some ways this was a repeat of what we saw in 2016. A lot of the demographics looked fairly similar in terms of turnout. Given that exit polls, of course, also have a margin of error. You know, a 1% or 2% difference between now and 2016 really is indistinguishable. And so when you look at, for instance, women turned out. They were 53% of the electorate in 2016, they were 53% of the electorate in 2020. In 2016 Clinton won women by a margin of 13 points, in 2020 Biden won women by a margin of 13 points. There are a lot of consistencies between the two years.

There are a couple of differences though. So, again, a couple of points here and there, it's hard to distinguish, but it suggested that the electorate was a little bit older this year than it was in 2016. In 2016 44% of the turnout came from people under the age of 45. That number was 41% in 2020. In 2016 50% of the electorate held a college degree, 50% did not. Last night 56% of the electorate did not hold a college degree. And so that would suggest a sort of benefit for Trump. We always hear about the white working class voters and the benefits that they were able to deliver to President Trump. But the Trump margin evaporated among individuals without a college degree. So in 2016 individuals without a

college degree, Trump won them by 7 points. It was a tie last night. It was 49/49 for Biden and Trump. Those are some interesting numbers.

It also showed that there is a continuing trend. Our colleague, Bill Frey, has written about this pretty significantly. I know Camille is going to talk a little bit about this too. The electorate was less white last night than it was in 2016. In 2016 71% of the electorate was white, last night that was 65%. That is a trend that we are going to continue to see. Bill Frey's work shows us just how diverse America is getting, how diverse the electorate is getting. And that has significant effects.

And so that this was a close race is not surprising when we look at the exit polls because 2016 was a close race. And if we see these differences as fairly minimal in terms of what the electorate looked like, its' not a surprise that this is going to be maybe a small win for Joe Biden, maybe a small win for Donald Trump, but just like in 2016, where President Trump won the election because of 78,000 votes spread across Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin, it looks like the victor is going to come down, as Elaine said, to just a couple of states, and probably razor thin margins in a couple of those states.

Now, that said, there were some pretty significant changes last night when we look at what happened. Biden, as Elaine said, some of the outlets have called Arizona for Biden. I'm pretty sure Biden is going to win Arizona. That's a historic change, a change that a lot of us saw coming over time, but a change nonetheless. The narrowing of the Republican advantage in states like Georgia is also a trend that we're going to be looking at. Stacey Abrams' run for governor, a razor thin loss two years ago I think foretold this was happening in Georgia. And it looks like President Trump will probably win Georgia by a hair, but Biden might because of DeKalb County and Fulton County — might be able to eke out a win. But if you rewind four years ago or eight years ago, we weren't talking about this in Georgia. We weren't having this kind of conversation with Georgia. And it does suggest that there are these changes in the electorate in some states that perhaps don't change things in 2020, but maybe they do change things in 2024, states like Texas as well. I think that's going to be a big part of the conversation.

And so that the electorate didn't look all that different from 2020 I think might be an interesting story. But I also think that we are looking at a razor thin election fits pretty neatly in with

President Trump's political strategy over his four years in office so far and during his campaign, and that was not to expand his opportunities, not to try doing new things or appealing to different voters in different ways. It was a very pure base campaign to connect with the people who voted for him in 2016, which if you're Barack Obama in 2012 and try to connect with your voters from 2008, that's a hell of a lot of voters to connect to when you have a very comfortable margin. But when you've won by such a narrow margin, not trying to expand your appeal means one of two things is going to happen, you're either going to lose or you're going to win by a razor thin margin, and I think that's where we're at right now. America is deeply divided and I think the campaigns that were run ended up appealing to a lot of the same voters who each campaign won in 2016.

MR. DIONNE: Could I just point out one thing, which is Joe Biden at the moment, as of this very moment, has 69,941,000 votes. He's easily going to tip over into 70 million. Joe Biden will get more votes than any presidential candidate in our history. His popular vote margin — you're quite right, John, about razor thin in a number of states — his popular vote margin is nationally over 2 points. Right now, it's 3 million votes. And given how many votes are out in California and urban areas, it's very likely that Joe Biden's popular vote margin will be up around 5 or 6 million by the time this is all over, maybe more.

And I just — obviously those of us who are interested in reforming the electoral college can't resist noting that, but I also think it's an important optic to see the election in and not simply focus on razor thin margins in the states.

Would you dissent from that in any way?

MR. HUDAK: No, I agree. And I think the conversation in the national popular vote campaign and in other organizations that are looking to get rid of the electoral college, this is going to be one more example of why that reform would drastically change electoral politics in the United States. And it's also important to note, you know, there's a lot we don't know about how this race is going to turn out, but you're right, E.J., we do know that Joe Biden will win the popular vote. That is a certainty at this point.

And so that means since 1992, Republicans have won the popular vote in the United

States once, in 2004. And I was talking to Elaine last week and I said what that means is we are going to have voters voting on election day in 2024 who have not been alive during a time when Republicans won the popular vote in the United States — 18 and 19-year-olds will have been born in 2005 and 2006. And that's a fairly remarkable situation in electoral politics, particularly when you rewind back from 1992 and you look at significant popular vote wins during the Bush and Reagan years. That is a drastic transformation in our politics.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you very much.

I wanted to — Camille wanted to take on a number of questions, including, by the way, some of the very questions that came in before the event from many of our thoughtful participants. I'll read a couple of those and then go to the other issues you want to take on.

Is there any indication that new and first-time voters will remain active beyond this election, or the election, with the younger voters begin to have more political voice and power? How are young people being given a voice outside the general election? How can we empower youth to be a voice?

And, Camille, there was real racial polarization in this election, there were important developments in the Latino vote. We were talking before about looking at how different the Latino vote was in, for example, Maricopa County, Arizona and Miami-Dade County in Florida.

Please take on this whole panoply of questions, including the ones from our thoughtful viewers. I'm just asking you to deal with everything.

MS. BUSETTE: Okay, well, great. No worries there. (Laughter) Like my colleagues before that, I will do my best.

But, first of all, I just want to welcome everybody. Thank you for joining us and thanks, E.J. for teeing up the area that I'm going to deal with.

I just want to start by saying that this morning the Süddeutsche Zeitung, which is a paper, a large paper in southern Germany, started off by saying that American democracy is kaput. And I just want to join my colleagues in saying what we've seen here last night and over the last month has been an

extraordinary exercise in democracy. And I think in many, many ways makes it very clear that democracy in the U.S. is pretty healthy. And the care, the caution with which votes are now being counted I think also again underscores the health of our democracy.

So I think we are actually in a really good place, from a perspective of having a really well functioning democracy and having incredible turnout. So kudos to all my fellow Americans for really participating.

What I wanted to talk about in my segment really was some of these different ethnic voting blocks. And I wanted to start by saying that what I thought I saw in the exit polls and also in the votes as they were being counted is that there were actually two countervailing trends here that probably explain some of what we're seeing and how tight these margins are in particular states.

So the first is, you know, as John had mentioned, you know, the demographics in the United States are clearly shifting. You have a smaller percentage of the voting public is white and a larger percentage are people of color. And that is kind of an inescapable sort of direction in which we're moving. And the other sort of trend or countervailing kind of pattern I saw is that this is really — there was really a lot about race and racism in this particular election. And I think those are actually a little bit — those two trends can help explain some of the differences that we saw and the tightness of these elections.

Let me talk about that a little bit. I want to talk about, first of all, Latino votes, right. We always think about the Latino vote and I want us to be pretty cautious about saying that as we move forward. There are so many different Latino constituencies with very different histories (inaudible) in the U.S. and different sort of cultural references, etc., different racial identities. So I think it's really — you know, we use it as a shorthand, but I think it's really important, particularly as you look through some of these electoral results, that you can really differentiate between the different kinds of Latino votes.

I'm going to do that here using as an example Maricopa County in Arizona and Miami-Dade in Florida. So in Maricopa County you have an increasingly large Latino electorate. Most of those folks have some — their heritage is Mexican, largely Mexican. So they may be several generations away

from Mexico or they may be very recently arrived, but that is largely a Mexican-American constituency. Within that constituency what we saw is that a lot of young people got really, really activated in Maricopa County, a lot of young Latinos got very activated there. And that pattern actually started in 2018 cycle. The Democratic Party put some resources into the, you know, Latino — young Latino voters in Maricopa County and that has paid off pretty handsomely.

So what you see when you look at the issue areas that Latinos voted on in Maricopa County, they were primarily concerned with COVID, the economy, and jobs. Those are the things that they were most concerned with.

If you now move over to Miami-Dade, where Biden really underperformed Hillary Clinton. So Hillary Clinton did pretty well in Miami-Dade, particularly among Latinos, in 2016. That is not true for Biden. Biden still carried Miami-Dade, but it was really, really much thinner margins than Hillary Clinton had enjoyed. And the reason for that actually is a depression in the Latino vote for Biden.

So what does that Latino vote for Biden look like in Miami-Dade? Well, that is primarily the Cuban-American base and Cuban-Americans historically have been much more Republican, but I think what really emerged in this election is that Cuban-Americans have a very organized machine in Miami-Dade, they hold a lot of electoral offices, they have a lot of resources for pulling out the vote. And in terms of issue areas, the key issue areas for them, among the top three issue areas were the economy and violent crime.

So when you think about — you hear the term violent crime, it's the — you're talking about this old set of issues around law and order, which is really code for, you know, making sure that people of color are — continue to be supervised — let me put it that way — by law enforcement entities. And so what's interesting about the Cuban-American vote is that it's mostly white. So Cuban-Americans, who particularly have a history of having come over here just, you know, pre-Castro or immediately post-Castro were from the elite in Cuba. Cuba has a lot of Black Cubans, but those Black Cubans mostly stayed in Cuba. So the people we have here are people who are — you know, they're sort of reemphasizing that kind of racial split that you had in Cuba that allowed them to do well in Cuba, allowed

them to come over here and make new lives for themselves.

And so when Trump talked about law and order, that actually had a lot of resonance for Cuban-Americans who largely here are white and do not see themselves as having anything in common with other Latinos, particularly Latinos who have — you know, who have African heritage, or some part of their heritage is African. So those are very distinct votes. The Mexican-American vote in Maricopa County, which is not, you know — which when we talk about racial issues, actually is much more concerned with how different types of people are treated in the U.S. That turned out to be an important issue for them as well. When we come back to Miami-Dade, we're talking about Cuban-Americans, particularly white Cuban-Americans, which make up 97% of the Latino vote in Miami-Dade. You are talking about racial politics.

So there I think, you know, there's racial politics and then there's demographics, and I think those two combined gives some pretty interesting results in the Latino communities.

I also want to talk a little bit about Black voters. So there was a lot of chatter before the election about how Trump was trying to pick off Black men. And we had a number of, you know, rappers and other kinds of personalities, sports figures, coming out to say, you know, that they endorsed Trump. It turns out, when you look at exit polls and other kinds of polls, that Black men actually went to Trump — 82% of Black men went for Trump and for Black —

MR. DIONNE: Wait, 82% went for Trump?

MS. BUSETTE: No, sorry, for Biden. Sorry.

MR. DIONNE: Yeah, that's —

MS. BUSETTE: Yeah, I misspoke — 82% went for Biden — thank you for correcting me — 82% went for Biden and 91% of Black women went for Biden.

So there's that narrative around Trump really peeling off Black men. It turns out that that didn't actually happen. And so Black pretty much went for Biden and you see that throughout a variety of different polls and results.

The last thing I want to talk about is young people. So this is an election where we had a

very, very strong turnout from people who were in that sort of 18-30 age range. And part of that is people were galvanized by the racial justice politics, part of it was people were galvanized by some of the economic issues that were coming out, but we saw a lot of really good participation from young people. And now the question is how do each of these parties, both Democrat and Republican, continue to energize young people as we move forward. And, you know, I venture to say that actually for the Republicans it's going to be a little bit more of a taller order for them because they haven't actually reached out in quite the same way the Democrats have in activating around, you know, Black Lives Matter and other kinds of social justice issues. So that remains to be seen. But I think that's a very interesting component of where the vote was this time and what it portends for 2024.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you for handling so many questions for us. I just want to, on the Cuban-Americans in particular, if anyone wondered why did Donald Trump keep saying that Joe Biden was going to be a secret socialist, that was also a clear appeal to a community that had escaped a communist regime. And I think that may have —

MS. BUSETTE: Absolutely.

MR. DIONNE: — some impact among conservative Latinos from various — who had immigrated from various places, although I'm not sure — it did not seem to have that same power with Mexican-Americans, although there's evidence that South Texas also did not turn out for Biden the way they had hoped. So I think we're going to be talking about the Latino vote a lot in the next four years. But thank you for that.

Molly, you know everything about Congress, so what happened? It appears that the Republicans are going to hold onto the Senate, although maybe we'll have some run offs in Georgia. Tell us what happened on Tuesday and why and what it portends for governing.

MS. REYNOLDS: Sure. Thanks, E.J.

I certainly don't know everything about Congress, but I have some thoughts on what happened yesterday, what's likely to happen in the next couple of weeks, and going into 2021.

So I thought I'd start by talking about the House and then talk a little bit about the Senate.

So I think it's safe to say that what we saw yesterday, and as the results continued to be tabulated, as my colleagues have indicated, the — just as the continuing tabulation of results in the presidential race is completely normal, the continued tabulation of results in congressional races is also completely normal. I'd point folks back to 2018 when in California, for example, it took several weeks before a number of House races were finalized. So this kind of slow methodical tabulating of ballots, again, is not unusual for congressional races either.

But, having said that, we did see an unexpectedly weak performance for House Democrats yesterday. Going into election day, the kind of rhetoric that you were hearing was that a bad night for House Democrats would be if they only picked up five seats and that there was expectation they would pick up say 10 or 15. At the moment, it looks like they stand to potentially lose some seats. And several of these losses were in districts —

MR. DIONNE: Did you say some seats? Did you put a number on that, Molly?

MS. REYNOLDS: I did not put a number on it at this point —

MR. DIONNE: Okay.

MS. REYNOLDS: — because the situation is — they'll still hold the majority, but the situation is fluid enough that I don't want to assign a specific number to it yet. But what I will say is that they also — Democrats have picked up at least two seats in North Carolina, which are — is related to redrawing of North Carolina's district lines. So we'll see where things land eventually.

But on several of the seats that Democrats did lose in the election in the House are held by freshmen who had picked up those seats in 2018. So I want to talk about that group of folks for a second. So in 2018 there were 41 seats that flipped from being controlled by Republicans to being controlled by Democrats. Of those 41 seats, where we are right now is that 19 of those races the Democrat was reelected, in six of them the Democrats lost, and then in nine the Democrat is trailing, and in seven the Democrat is leaving. So kind of wherever we land, this is going to be a little bit of a mixed bag. We'll need to see more of what happened with the presidential vote in each of these districts to have I think a really — a much clearer sense on what I'm about to say. But one thing I will be watching is that

it's entirely possible that what we're seeing in these races is the continued decline of ticket splitting.

So when we look at kind of the history of congressional elections in the post-war era in the United States, the number of voters who go to the polls and vote for a House candidate of one party and the presidential candidate of the other party has declined and continues to be at very low levels. There are two Democratic losses in south Florida, for example, that I think reflect this trend. Camille was talking before about Trump's strength in south Florida. So the idea, or sort of what I'll be watching, to see if the data bears this out is the notion that lots of voters went to the polls yesterday and voted for Donald Trump and then voted for a Republican congressional candidate in districts that the Democrats had picked up in 2018.

And I think as we learn, again, more about the electorate in the 2020 election, one important trend that I'll be looking for in these House races is whether this dynamic of Democrats having picked up seats in the midterms and then having lost them in the presidential year is a consequence of the increasing education polarization between the two parties.

So one thing that we've seen over the past decade plus, was true — was kind of moving before Trump, has continued moving under Trump, is the movement of white voters with college degrees towards the Democratic party and white voters without college degrees away from the Democratic party and towards the Republican party. And that's a shift. We historically — better educated voters were more likely to vote for Republican and simply to turn out to vote. And we know that presidential years turn out more voters than midterm years.

So when you kind of put all these pieces together, one possible story — again, like we'll have to wait for the data to know whether this is a big driver of what we saw — is the idea that as Democrats have become a party that has more high education, more college educated voters, those folks are more likely to turn out all the time. And then Republican voters, the Republican party has more voters who are white voters without college degrees who are less likely to turn out all the time, and thus may be only drawn out in presidential years. That that could be producing some of the dynamic where Democrats fared well in the 2018 midterms because they turned out these high education voters who

voted for Democratic congressional candidates. And then in some of the same districts, when there were more voters without college degrees, they were more likely to vote for the Republican candidate and for Trump.

So we'll have to watch, analyze the data, but that's one possibility that helps contextualize what we saw in the house.

The other thing I'll say that is interesting to — will be interesting to watch now and when the new Congress actually begins in January, is that of the Republicans who picked up seats from Democrats, a large number of these candidates are women, they are minorities, and they are veterans. So as we think about the future of the Republican party, either four more years with President Trump, depending on how the presidential race shakes out, or after Trump, this notion that we area actually — at least in the House Republican conference — seeing some interesting diversity and it's important to keep watching.

On the Senate, my point about ticket splitting I think also holds for what we've seen in the Senate. And so there are some states that where Democrats I think thought the Senate seats might have been winnable, but that were in states that Trump was polling well in, was perhaps likely to win, where it was going to be really difficult to break that linkage between the presidential vote and the Senate vote. So here I'm thinking of places like Iowa, of Montana, quite possibly North Carolina, depending on how things get finalized there. And in Senate races, similarly we see this really strong movement away from ticket splitting.

The one kind of glaring exception to all of this, which I think importantly maybe helps prove the rule, is Susan Collins in Maine, where she stands to be I believe, at least certainly so far this year, the only — so far the only state where a Senate candidate of one party — Senate race was won by a candidate of one party where the states electoral votes — in Maine's case, three of its four — went for a presidential candidate of the other party. And I think what this reflects, and there's some other data that I'll mention in a moment, is that to the extent that we do still see some ticket splitting, again at much lower levels than historically, it is often in kind of anticipation of wanting to provide — voters wanting to provide

a check on a president of the other party. And it happens when voters are quite sure that the president of the other party is going to win.

So there's a political scientist named Bob Erickson who refers to this as anticipatory balancing. So the idea — and there's evidence to support this for presidential elections in the 20th century post-war elections to 2012, which is that basically when voters, particularly high information voters, voters who pay a lot of attention to politics, think that a Democratic president is going to win the White House, they ticket split more down ballot because they want to provide a Republican check in Congress on that Democratic president. And I think that could help explain what we saw in Maine. I think it also helps explain — so in Colorado, for example, well Colorado was one pretty (inaudible) by both Biden and by John Hickenlooper in a pickup for Democrats. Biden ran ahead, or at least presently is running ahead of Hickenlooper. Biden also ran ahead of MJ Hegar, the Democratic Senate candidate in Texas. So the idea that there are some people in Texas who went to the polls, voted for Biden, and then probably also voted for John Cornyn. As we look at what's happening in Michigan, I think we could see Biden perform better than Gary Peters, the Democratic senator there.

So this idea that to the extent that we are seeing some divergence between the presidential race and some senate races, not too much in the outcomes, but in the margins, that it may be because, a gain, some of these voters, particularly engage voters, are looking at the situation, looking at their expectations of a Biden victory and saying I'm going to vote for Biden, but I'm also going to vote for a Republican down ballot to provide a check on that in the White House.

So I'm just going to say briefly

MR. DIONNE: Let me just ask a —

MS. REYNOLDS: Yeah, go ahead.

MR. DIONNE: Go ahead.

MS. REYNOLDS: Oh, I was going to talk a little bit about —

MR. DIONNE: No, I just wanted to ask — yeah, go ahead, you continue. I was going to simply ask a question, could it have just been that there were Republicans out there who just didn't like

President Trump?

MS. REYNOLDS: So that's certainly possible as well.

MR. DIONNE: And then went back to their party. In other words, they weren't making a calculation, they just would normally vote Republican, but just couldn't vote for Trump.

MS. REYNOLDS: So that's possible. I mean I'll remind us all of something that I said a lot after the 2016 election, which — and I expect that this will be borne out in this election as well — that most of what happened in 2016 is that Republicans voted for Trump because he was the Republican nominee and Democrats voted for Clinton because she was the Democratic nominee.

MR. DIONNE: Yes.

MS. REYNOLDS: And, again, I expect that to — when we get data on kind of party lines

—

MR. DIONNE: 93% of Republicans in the exit poll voted for Donald Trump. Exactly, yes.

MS. REYNOLDS: Yeah. So I think that that's most of it, but, again, lots of things. And we still see some ticket splitting. Different explanations. But I do think in some of these key races the kind of wide expectation of a Biden victory may have filtered down and led some voters to split their tickets.

The last thing that I'll say is kind of what happens. It's hard to say, but a couple of things to keep an eye on. So E.J. did mention that at least one of Georgia's Senate races looks to be headed for a run off, which will happen the first week in January. That is a run off for the special election in Georgia and that will be between Kelly Loeffler, who is currently appointed to hold that seat, and Raphael Warnock, a Democrat who is a pastor of a prominent African American church in Atlanta. So that is headed for the run off. Depending on how the final vote count shakes out there, it is possible that Georgia's other Senate race between David Perdue and Jon Ossoff could also go to a run off. Perdue, last I checked before we started, is still above the 50% mark.

But I think the Democrats' chances for getting to a 50-50 tie in the Senate if Biden does win the presidential race are increasingly narrowing. There's still a path, but it's much harder to see than

it was 24 hours ago.

And so what would that mean? Kind of a narrow Republican majority in the Senate, a Democratic majority in the House, and a Democratic president in the White House. I think it's not necessarily a recipe for — certainly for robust legislating on the agenda on which Joe Biden ran. It's hard to sort of map out exactly what things they would take up. I think a solid indicator early on of how that relationship between a narrow Republican majority in the Senate and Joe Biden in the White House would proceed would be to see how a Republican-controlled Senate handles Biden's perspective — President Biden's Cabinet nominees. Do they kind of confirm them, do they simply not bring some of them to floor, what does that all look like? That's a very — that's something I'll be watching closely if that is what comes to pass in 2021.

And then in the House you started to see some sort of reporting on whether there's going to be through disarray or arguments within the House Democratic caucus about the fact that folks went into the election with a set of expectations that were not met. You've even seen some questions about whether someone will challenge Nancy Pelosi for speaker. My take on that is that if you can identify a credible alternative, then we can start to talk about whether she would be vulnerable to a challenge. I don't know who that would be at this point. The kind of conversation around House Democratic leadership elections will unfold over the next couple of weeks. So just sort of pay attention to that, sort of where the House Democratic Caucus kind of lands and where it finds itself. And some of that I think will be affected by how some of these races that are still — haven't been called yet — shake out and just, you know, are there some of those folks who end up winning in a way that kind of tamps down the little bit of internal unrest, if it's there, in the House Democratic Caucus.

But we'll — I'll be paying attention to this and we'll see where things go.

So, thank you.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you so much.

Just two pieces of news. The AP and I guess the New York Times has called Wisconsin for Biden. So that's another — take it. That's another pick up if it holds, but it's very close there.

Second, just looking at the numbers on the second run off in Georgia, Senator Perdue is at 50.6%, which means that if there actually are a lot of missing votes from DeKalb and Fulton Counties, that he might just be pushed slightly under. So you — for political —

MS. REYNOLDS: Yeah, those votes —

MR. DIONNE: Sorry?

MS. REYNOLDS: I just — yeah, that the idea that there are votes remaining to be counted — I don't like to call them missing because we know where they are.

MR. DIONNE: Yes, yes, thank you very much.

MS. REYNOLDS: They just haven't been counted yet.

MR. DIONNE: I make them entirely —

MS. REYNOLDS: And —

MR. DIONNE: I'm just trying to be innocent about my missing. No, yes, uncounted votes. Thank you very much for that.

MS. REYNOLDS: But, yes, they could — depending on how they would break, that would be what would lead Perdue to fall under that 50% mark. We'll just have to see what happens.

MR. DIONNE: Armageddon in Georgia. It would be really an amazing January.

MS. REYNOLDS: And I would remind all of us that there would be a very strong sense of déjà vu because that is how we began 2017, which is with a special election in suburban Atlanta featuring Jon Ossoff.

MR. DIONNE: Here's what I'd like to do, I want to toss a bunch of questions out and have each of you decide — this is almost Hayekian of me, which is odd since I'm not a Hayekian — but leaving people free to pick the questions they want. Because I would like Elaine to talk a bit about what it would be like without Donald Trump. Is there a chance of the Republican Party changing? How would that change the nature of things?

I would like Camille — I — yeah, I'd like John Hudak to talk about the referendum. And perhaps Camille and John to talk about how bad were the polls or were they as bad or did people simply

read them the way they wanted to read them more than what the polls actually said. And there were questions about how a recount would work. There are questions about — here's one we can answer — there was a question about the Obama Trump voters and where they went. I don't think we know that entirely yet, but — and then what happens with the electors. You know, if you got 270 electors for Biden you could have just a wild time in the electoral college for the first time. That was one question. Lastly, somebody asked would the gap between Trump and Biden be bigger or smaller than the gap with Clinton. I think it will be bigger based on what we know right now, because Biden has already hit roughly the gap that Clinton was at, and it looks like it's going to grow. So that's the one question I'll answer.

So, Camille, do you want to start picking on any of those or taking it where you wanted to briefly? And then I want to just go around the horn. We've got about 14 minutes.

And one last thing, if anybody wants to toss a question in before we close, it is Events@Brookings.edu or Twitter at #Election2020.

Let me start with Camille. I'll go on my screen, Camille, John, Elaine, and Molly.

MS. BUSETTE: Well, this is great. Thanks, E.J.

And we've gotten some really fantastic questions, so I think this is going to be a lot of fun. I'm just going to answer — there was a really quick question about the Venezuelan vote in Miami, any significant impact. I would say no. Primarily your main Latino voting blocks in the Miami-Florida area are Cuban-Americans and Puerto Ricans. Those are the big ones. And Venezuelans are — you know, they're there, but they're not as significant.

So if you're talking about reporting Latino votes in Florida and in Miami, you are talking about Puerto Ricans and Cubans. So but Cubans far — you know, there is a far greater number of Cubans in Miami-Dade than Puerto Ricans, Puerto Ricans tend to concentrate mostly in central Florida.

So I also want to talk about polls, and I hope John will unmute so we can do this together. But my sense of the polls is, you know, polls always tighten up, right, a little bit. There's always a margin of error. So you expect some tightening. I think this may be very similar to what we saw last time. To me, one of the big differences is I think that it's hard for pollsters to get an accurate read on how people

face racial issues. And if I had to pinpoint sort of one issue that I think people are a little bit less than honest about, I would say that it's national conversation around race. And I do think that that national conversation around race brought out a lot of people who were going to vote for Trump, but didn't say it because they weren't necessarily galvanized on the issue of the economy or the issue of the Coronavirus.

So that's my take, but, you know, John, you probably have a lot more to say about that.

MR. HUDAK: Yeah, I agree with you completely, Camille. It's a galvanizing issue. We've known for decades what happens when pollsters ask voters or prospective voters that are specifically about race or deal with race, the race of a candidate, etc. And that can create some real complications.

In terms of — you know, we've all heard the question, and we're going to get asked it a million more times, why were the polls so wrong. I'll push back a bit on that. I think the national poll is probably — you know, the national polling average is probably going to be, you know, within the margin of error of where this ends up being, which is probably Biden winning the popular vote by 3% to 4%. The average of polls leading up to the election was 5% to 6% for Biden, around there. I think they performed well.

Again, at the state level, most of these swing state polls were within the margin of error. Now, they were all, with the exception of Ohio and Florida, they were all breaking toward Biden. But most of them were 1%, 2%, 3%, 4%, 5% margins. And so it's important to note that margins of error are a real thing and we need to recognize that when we're looking at polls. You know, polling isn't a lost cause. They were really performing well in 2018. And this year I think if we take a breath, wait for the results to come in, and take a look, it's going to tell us that they were generally fairly accurate within a margin of error. But I will say this, what happened in 2016 is that the polls were largely breaking toward Clinton within the margin of error, and Trump did better than all of them. It was sort of on Trump's side of the margin of error.

The same seemed to be happening in a lot of places this year, Trump over performing the polls. So it raises the question, what is it when Donald Trump is on the ballot that underestimates

support for him? And it's a serious question at the national level, it's a serious question at the state level. It's not a problem with polling per se, it's not a problem with the science of polling. It's I think a problem around how we are able to build likely voter models when Donald Trump is on the ticket. And I think pollsters, like after every election, are going to go back and take a look and see what they did right and see what they did wrong, but there is this Trump effect that I think is confounding and it's going to inform pollsters moving forward, not just about how to deal with the person who's on the top of the ticket, but to deal with the voters who are supporting that person.

MR. DIONNE: Could I just say one quick thing on that, that it struck me that the states where the polls were very close going in, like Florida, did not go to Biden, you know. And that was not a given that he was going to carry Florida. The states where he had a bigger lead, which would be the Midwestern states, plus Pennsylvania —

MR. HUDAK: And Arizona.

MR. DIONNE: And Arizona and Nevada seem to have gone to Biden, though not by the margins anticipated. Is that fair?

MR. HUDAK: Yeah. But I think that in that entirety is that it's consistent with this break toward Trump, right. So something is happening in the polls in places like Wisconsin, in places like Arizona, Michigan, that lead for Biden was much more comfortable. In most cases still within the margin of error, but much more comfortable, and that break toward Trump just wasn't big enough to pull Biden down, but it could have been, right. I mean we could be talking — you know, give or take another 100,000 votes here or there, we could be talking about a significant Trump victory too.

And so something is happening systematically within polls when it comes to Trump being on the ticket.

MR. DIONNE: Elaine, do you want to take any of these, including the electoral college, the litigation we're likely to see, some people wanted to ask about, and how would a recount work. Anything in that bucket, Elaine, is yours.

MS. KAMARCK: Okay. Well, let's take the straightforward ones first, the procedures for

recounts are well established in state law in all states. So they not going to make this up as they go along. There will be probably be a recount it looks like in Wisconsin and that will take some time, but it will be done in a timely manner.

As for the electoral college, states generally have statutes and the statutes say that the certified winner of the state is the one whose electors get to go to the state capital and sign what is called, in a very old fashioned term, the certificate of ascertainment, which gets sent to the Senate.

So there is a — there are state laws that govern the electors and they've been litigated over the years, there's been court cases on this, etc. The notion that I think has been around, either paranoid by Democrats or trying to cause trouble by others, is that the notion that a state legislature can just willy-nilly switch the electors, it's a little bit hard to do because there are many state statutes that govern it.

But let me go to one of the early things you mentioned, E.J., which is the future of the Republicans and what does the world look like without Trump, assuming that Joe Biden gets his 279 electoral votes, maybe more, by the time the week is over. And I think we're going to know by the time the week is over with some certainty. What does it look like? Well, the depressing thing about these election results was just how big and how wide the gap is in this country between the Trump voters and the Democrats. But on the flip side of this is if you think about the last four years, the single person who had most contributed to polarization is the president himself. And so many things that he's said, the calling his opponents names, the lies, the racist dog whistles, all these things he has exacerbated, exacerbated divisions that already were in America. But we never had a president exacerbating those, right. We had presidents who tried to speak to everybody, whether they were Democrats or Republicans. So we've had a very, very unique president. If Trump is defeated, if he leaves office, which I think he will if he's defeated, I think that we will see a lessening of this polarization for one simple fact, the president of the United States will not be fanning the flames.

And I feel sort of sorry for the press, because the press for the last four years has been in this bind. They know that many of the things Trump has been saying don't make sense, are outright

untruths, whatever, and yet he is the president. They have to follow him. That is not the case for Donald Trump, private citizen. And there doesn't look — while there are people in the Republican Party who share the president's philosophy, I don't see anybody up and coming behind him who are likely to be as talented, shall we say, at stirring the pot, as only Donald Trump can be.

So I'm, E.J., like you, I'm sort of an optimist rather than a pessimist, and I actually see that even though the divisions in this election are deep, I think the removal of Trump from the scene will actually help to smooth over some of those division.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you. You know what, funny, I am an optimist like you are. On that one I am struck by something a conservative friend told me a couple of days ago, which is every Republican politician will be aware that the vast majority of the party voted for Donald Trump. And so even though he is someone who would like to reform the party, he is not as optimistic that there will be quick pull away from Trumpism. But I think there is no question that not having a period of what I like to call glorious tranquility would make a difference here.

By the way, someone asked how did Independents vote. According to the exit poll people who checked the independent or something else box voted 54/40 for Biden.

MS. REYNOLDS: E.J., I have just one thing to follow up on Elaine's point about —

MR. DIONNE: Oh, please do. That's where I was going to push you anyway.

MS. REYNOLDS: — Republicans after Trump. So I think that one thing to keep in mind if Trump does lose and we are thinking about what governing with a Democratic president, smaller Democratic majority in the House, and the current Republican majority in the Senate is that a non-trivial number of the Republicans in the Senate would like themselves to run for president in 2024. And so, again, if frankly either — if Trump wins or loses. And so what that means for how they conduct themselves within the conference I think is important. When it looked more like Democrats would take a majority in the Senate I had been saying that this was going to take the form of sort of very strident return to anti-deficit and debt politics, and we can't spend money, we can't spend more on COVID relief, and so on and so forth. I think there's still a possibility of that going forward, that we'll see some of these folks.

But to the point you just made, E.J., about Republicans knowing that the people who elected Donald Trump also elected them is really I think going to be affecting how some of these — kind of the Tom Cottons and the Josh Hawleys of the world who would like to run for president conduct themselves in the Republican conference in the Senate.

MR. DIONNE: Yeah, in fact, depending on the outcome of this election, if there is a post-Trump Republican debate, I'm hoping we can all reconvene and just — with some friends on the right to discuss the many possible philosophical factions that we might see in that party. And I'm grateful for your description of the United States Senate. In some ways, the definition of a senator is someone who thinks that he or she would make a better president than all the other people they work with every day. It's amazing how many would be presidents are in that group.

Let me just — Camille has to run off to a meeting, so if it makes it easier, I want to give you a chance to jump in, if there's anything that's inspired you, to comment before you go. I want to answer a question and just see if anyone has closing comments.

Do you have a last thought to share with us?

MS. BUSETTE: I don't. I don't have a last thought, except that I'm very, very hopeful that however the election turns out, everyone will have learned a very important civics lesson that hopefully will stick with us as we go through, you know, 2024 and beyond.

MS. DIONNE: Bless you for that. Thank you. I really appreciate that.

I want to answer very quickly — Godspeed — I wanted to answer very quickly a question, has a recount ever flipped results? Very rarely. This is a pretty big margin. I guess my worry about this recount is that the Trump campaign won't simply try to recount the ballots, they may go in to try to challenge the legitimacy of a lot of ballots. If they go down that road, we will be in for a real mess. I hope they don't go there. But, you know, there's no sense that they wouldn't.

I just want to ask all three of you — we need to shut down — something that you think we will take away or that you're going to likely think about five years from now about this election. Just a principle takeaway. Besides, by the way, passing marijuana in four states, which we never got to passing

the minimum wage in Florida, even as it was going for Donald Trump. As John mentioned before we started, we never got there.

Just, each of you, a quick takeaway before we go.

MS. KAMARCK: You know, I'll start with that E.J.

I was really struck, as I was four years ago, but this time again, at the enormity of the urban-rural divide in this country. I mean as those counties were coming in and we were watching Florida and Pennsylvania and Michigan so carefully, there's a big difference in the world view between urban and rural. And, you know, if Biden becomes the president, he is certainly running — he certainly ran as a uniter. I'm hoping that he will be able to kind of begin to bridge that gap. It's a disturbing difference and it's backed up by some hostility, a lot of misunderstanding. And I think that that's something we really need to work on.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you.

MR. HUDAK: I'll go quickly, E.J.

I'll do both, a takeaway, but also very quickly, you know, Barack Obama said we're not a red America or a blue America, we're the United States of America. I think last night showed us we're not a red America or a blue America, we're a green America. On marijuana legalization, ballot initiatives were in five states, four for adult use and one for medical, in five of the most divergent states you could imagine — Arizona, Montana, New Jersey, South Dakota, and Mississippi. They passed overwhelmingly in each of those states. And the people who were working on those campaigns put in a lot of hard work over the past several months and really years and found remarkable success in all corners of the United States. And I think it shows some unity in this country around an issue, and there's a lot of unity around sets of issues in this country that I think a close presidential race like this often glosses over, that we might be divided about the president, but on specific issues we can, you know, hold hands, play nice, and come together.

That said, the sort of takeaway for me from last night and what we might be talking about in five years, you know, I've heard from a lot of Democratic friends over the past weeks and months that

they saw the 2016 election as America making a mistake. But America didn't make a mistake in 2016, rather it felt like it didn't make one last night. It looked at Donald Trump after four years in office and 66 million Americans went back to the polls and said, yes, I would like him to continue to be our president. What motivates individuals to vote for Donald Trump is something fundamental in our politics. It is not something that in our politics people are willing to say was a mistake or believe was a mistake. There are tens of millions of Americans who are happy to sign up for the types of policies and leadership that Donald Trump exhibits. And I think Democrats who write that off as a fluke do so at their own peril.

MR. DIONNE: Molly?

MS. REYNOLDS: Yeah, I think that's a good segue into what my biggest takeaway is, which is just frankly how stable this race was the whole time. That if you look at kind of the approval ratings of both candidates, of the vote intention for both candidates, even all of the things that have happened since the beginning of 2020 that, you know, they are — we are where we're — we were in January and we are in the middle of a global pandemic and we impeached the President in that time and we are basically where we were at the beginning.

And so, just to John's point, is that the current moment, for all of its kind of day to day chaos, has a lot of partisan stability of voters into two increasingly well sorted partisan teams. And that's where kind of where we are. And as we think about where we're going, I think we should keep that in mind.

MR. DIONNE: Thank you so much. I want to thank the absent Camille, I want to thank Elaine and John and Molly. And that's a really powerful point to end on, Molly. If you look at the polling averages, Joe Biden was ahead of Donald Trump in September of 2019 by a few points, and he ended up on Election Day in November of 2020 ahead of Donald Trump by a few points. And so I don't know what that tells us about the campaign and its effect. I don't even know what that tells us about COVID and its effect. It may tell you that people had made up their mind on Donald Trump a long time ago.

Thank you all so much. Thank you everyone out there for listening. And please join us again because we're going to be exploring the next term of the — the first term of the new president, or

what happens if things go the other way, for some time to come. And we're also going to be exploring election reform and a lot of other issues at Brookings.

Thank you so much for being with us.

* * * * *

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