UNIVERSITY of SOUTH FLORIDA

January 20, 2022
Electoral Reform Survey

Summary: Researchers at the University of South Florida – in collaboration with researchers at Florida International University – conducted a national survey of 1,000 eligible voters to measure public opinion on a variety of current policy issues. The results presented in this report address public opinions about several proposed electoral/voting reforms, as well as attitudes about the Electoral College. The survey included a representative sample of Americans, fielded between January 6th and 10th, 2022. Topline results are reported below with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error +/- 3.1.

A majority of Americans support key provisions of the "Freedom to Vote Act". Nearly three quarters say that they would either "strongly" or "somewhat support" a requirement for states to hold early voting for at least two weeks prior to election day (74.9%). A similar percent (74.6%) support making election day a federal holiday. Additional result include:

- Requiring states to allow same day voter registration (64.8%)
- Requiring states to allow voting by mail (63.8%)
- Requiring states to allow online voter registration (62.6%)
- Requiring states to automatically register citizens to vote based on their official state documents – such as a drivers' license (60.6%)

While there is widespread support for election reforms, most Americans say that a valid photo ID should be required when voting. A larger majority of respondents (83.9%) say that voters should be required to show a valid photo ID when voting. Two-thirds of Americans say that it's not difficult to register to vote under the current system (67.0%). Only 16.8% say that it is, while 16.2% are unsure.

Americans are divided on the security of voting by mail. A slight majority (50.5%) said that voting by mail is less secure than in-person voting, while 44.3% said that it's about the same.

Sharp partisan divisions on the fairness of American elections. Respondents were divided on the fairness of America's national elections: 54.6% were "very" or "somewhat confident" that "America's national elections are conducted fairly", though 46.4% said that they were "not very confident" or "not at all confident". Partisan differences were pronounced, with 85.5% of Democrats being "very" or "somewhat confident", compared to only 27.5% of Republicans and 52.4% of Independents.

A small majority of Americans would favor a change to a national popular vote when electing the President, but they are divided on the electoral implications of such a switch. A slim majority of 52.6% say that they would favor a change to the national popular vote (over the current Electoral College system). A majority (69.8%) feel that this would significantly change the outcome of Americans elections.

Overall opinions about the current Electoral College system are split:

- 40.4% say that the Electoral College ensures the representation of diverse interests
- 43.9% say that the Electoral College forces candidates to run "national" campaigns
- 49.5% say that the Electoral College protects the interests of small states
- 17.5% say that the Electoral College unfairly favors Democratic candidates
- 20.4% say that the Electoral College unfairly favors Republican candidates

(See pages below for full tabular results)

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Summary of Responses

Thinking about voting and elections, would you support the federal government taking each of the following steps? ***Requiring states to allow same day voter registration (i.e. allowing individuals to register to vote when they arrive at the polls).***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	301	30.1
Somewhat Support	347	34.7
Somewhat Oppose	184	18.4
Strongly Oppose	168	16.8

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Support: Democrats = 78.2%; Independents = 64.4%; Republicans = 45.2%)

Thinking about voting and elections, would you support the federal government taking each of the following steps? ***Requiring states to hold early voting for at least two weeks prior to election day.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	366	36.6
Somewhat Support	383	38.3
Somewhat Oppose	158	15.8
Strongly Oppose	93	9.3

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Support: Democrats = 87.5%; Independents = 74.7%; Republicans = 61.7%)

Thinking about voting and elections, would you support the federal government taking each of the following steps? ***Making election day a federal holiday.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	425	42.5
Somewhat Support	321	32.1
Somewhat Oppose	166	16.6
Strongly Oppose	88	8.8

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Support: Democrats = 85.8%; Independents = 75.6%; Republicans = 63.2%)

Thinking about voting and elections, would you support the federal government taking each of the following steps? ***Requiring states to allow voting by mail.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	401	40.1
Somewhat Support	237	23.7
Somewhat Oppose	179	17.9
Strongly Oppose	183	18.3

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Support: Democrats = 89.1%; Independents = 63.5%; Republicans = 39.5%)

Thinking about voting and elections, would you support the federal government taking each of the following steps? ***Requiring states to allow online voter registration.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	343	34.3
Somewhat Support	283	28.3
Somewhat Oppose	196	19.6
Strongly Oppose	178	17.8

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Support: Democrats = 81.2%; Independents = 63.3%; Republicans = 42.9%)

Thinking about voting and elections, would you support the federal government taking each of the following steps? ***Requiring states to automatically register citizens to vote based on their official state documents (such as drivers' license).***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Support	304	30.4
Somewhat Support	302	30.2
Somewhat Oppose	208	20.8
Strongly Oppose	186	18.6

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Support: Democrats = 78.2%; Independents = 58.5%; Republicans = 47.9%)

In your opinion, should electoral reforms be made primarily by the federal government, or should they be left to the individual states?

	Frequency	Percentage
By the federal government	414	41.4
By individual states	307	30.7
Unsure	279	27.9

N=1,000 (By the federal government: Democrats = 58.1%; Independents = 37.4%; Republicans = 32.2%)

How confident are you that America's national elections are conducted fairly?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Confident	223	22.3
Somewhat Confident	323	32.3
Not Very Confident	286	29.6
Not at All Confident	168	16.8

N=1,000 (Very/Somewhat Confident: Democrats = 85.5%; Independents = 52.4%; Republicans = 27.5%)

In your opinion, is it difficult for Americans to register to vote under our current system?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	168	16.8
No	670	67.0
Unsure	162	16.2

N=1,000 (Yes: Democrats = 28.7%; Independents = 13.8%; Republicans = 7.3%)

Do you believe that individuals should be required to show a valid photo ID in order to vote?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	839	83.9
No	99	9.9
Unsure	62	6.2

N=1,000 (Yes: Democrats = 71.0%; Independents = 85.0%; Republicans = 95.8%)

In your opinion, is voting by mail more secure, less secure, or about the same as in-person voting?

	Frequency	Percentage
More secure than in-person voting	52	5.2
About the same as in-person voting	443	44.3
Less secure than in-person voting	505	50.5

N=1,000 (Less Secure: Democrats = 21.5%; Independents = 51.2%; Republicans =78.2%)

Do you feel that a witness signature should be required on all vote by mail ballots?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	427	42.7
No	330	33.0
Unsure	243	24.3

N=1,000 (Yes: Democrats = 29.0%; Independents = 39.1%; Republicans = 60.5%)

Should individuals who vote by mail be required to show evidence of an inability to vote at a physical polling location?

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	370	37.0
No	477	47.7
Unsure	153	15.3

N=1,000 (Yes: Democrats = 21.1%; Independents = 31.5%; Republicans = 60.2%)

How familiar are you with the arguments both for and against the Electoral College?

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Familiar	213	21.3
Somewhat Familiar	506	50.6
Not Very Familiar	200	20.0
Not at All Familiar	81	8.1

N=1,000 (Very/Somewhat Familiar: Democrats = 74.0%; Independents = 73.5%; Republicans = 77.4%)

Thinking about Presidential elections, do you believe that it would be in the best interest of the United States to keep the current Electoral College system or to adopt a national popular vote instead?

	Frequency	Percentage
Keep the Electoral College system	321	32.1
Change to a national popular vote	526	52.6
Unsure	153	15.3

N=1,000 (Change to a national popular vote: Democrats = 67.7%; Independents = 53.5%; Republicans = 36.8%)

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: ***The Electoral College ensures that diverse interests are represented in Presidential elections.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	170	17.0
Somewhat Agree	234	23.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	289	28.9
Somewhat Disagree	165	16.5
Strongly Disagree	142	14.2

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Agree: Democrats = 32.3%; Independents = 39.1%; Republicans = 55.2%)

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: ***The Electoral College ensures that candidates run "national" campaigns.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	184	18.4
Somewhat Agree	255	25.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	322	32.2
Somewhat Disagree	128	12.8
Strongly Disagree	111	11.1

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Agree: Democrats = 38.6%; Independents = 42.1%; Republicans = 55.1%)

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: ***The Electoral College protects the interests of small states.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	251	25.1
Somewhat Agree	244	24.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	251	25.1
Somewhat Disagree	131	13.1
Strongly Disagree	123	12.3

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Agree: Democrats = 43.5%; Independents = 50.0%; Republicans = 60.5%)

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: ***Abolishing the Electoral College would significantly change the outcomes of American elections.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	388	38.8
Somewhat Agree	310	31.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	228	22.8
Somewhat Disagree	52	5.2
Strongly Disagree	22	2.2

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Agree: Democrats = 69.7%; Independents = 71.8%; Republicans = 71.6%)

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: ***The Electoral College unfairly favors small states.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	98	9.8
Somewhat Agree	159	15.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	350	35.0
Somewhat Disagree	204	20.4
Strongly Disagree	189	18.9

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Agree: Democrats = 36.6%; Independents = 25.6%; Republicans = 15.3%)

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: ***The Electoral College unfairly favors Democratic candidates.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	69	6.9
Somewhat Agree	106	10.6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	349	34.9
Somewhat Disagree	218	21.8
Strongly Disagree	258	25.8

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Agree: Democrats = 9.9%; Independents = 17.1%; Republicans = 26.8%)

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements: ***The Electoral College unfairly favors Republican candidates.***

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	86	8.6
Somewhat Agree	118	11.8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	390	39.0
Somewhat Disagree	201	20.1
Strongly Disagree	205	20.5

N=1,000 (Strongly/Somewhat Agree: Democrats = 34.3%; Independents = 17.7%; Republicans = 11.4%)

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Survey Information

1,000 eligible U.S. voters were surveyed via an online web-panel using Prodege MR, an industry leading market research provider. The survey was fielded from January 6th through 10th, and the results are reported with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of +/- 3.1. Respondents were selected via a stratified, quota sampling approach to ensure a representative sample. Quotas for gender, age, race/ethnicity, and education were determined based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 ACS survey. Quotas were stratified by Census region to ensure geographical representativeness.

Sample Comparison

	USF Survey Sample	Census Demographics*
Gender		
Female	50.5%	51.1%
Male	48.9%	48.9%
Other	0.6%	-
Age		
18-24	11.1%	11.9%
25-34	17.9%	17.8%
35-44	16.1%	16.5%
45-54	16.1%	16.0%
55-64	17.1%	16.6%
65+	21.7%	21.2%
Race		
Black/African American	15.1%	15.1%
White/Caucasian	74.6%	76.4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.8%	7.4%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.9%	0.8%
Other	2.6%	0.2%
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	19.1%	17.5%
Non-Hispanic	80.9%	82.5%
Education		
High School Diploma or Less	37.7%	39.0%
Some College/Associates Degree	31.6%	30.4%
4-Year College Degree	19.6%	19.3%
Professional/Graduate Degree	11.1%	11.4%
Political Affiliation (registered voters only, n=904)		
Democrat	33.5%	33.0%
Independent/Other	37.6%	38.0%
Republican	28.9%	29.0%
Region		
Northeast	17.5%	17.3%
Midwest	21.8%	20.8%
South	38.3%	38.1%
West	22.4%	23.8%

*Gender, race, ethnicity, education, and region quotas based on U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2019): https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/news/updates/2019.html ; Political affiliation data based on Pew Research Center https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/06/02/democratic-edge-in-party-identification-narrows-slightly/

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About our Research Team

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About the University of South Florida

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