



JOHNS HOPKINS

STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION
SNF AGORA INSTITUTE

JHU-Gallup 2023 Trust in U.S. Elections Study

Sarah Fioroni, Gallup

Lilliana Mason, *SNF Agora Institute Associate Professor of Political Science*

Scott Warren, *SNF Agora Fellow*

Mark De La Iglesia, *SNF Agora Consultant*

Methodology

Web Survey:

- Administered Oct. 3-12, 2023
- Non-probability, opt-in panel of U.S. adults 18+
- Total sample: 2,012 including an oversample of 300 Republicans, Republican-leaning independents and conservatives

Research Goals:

- Measure current levels of trust in U.S. presidential elections.
- Explore factors — such as personal characteristics and opinions/attitudes — that distinguish conservatives who believe Biden won the 2020 election from those who believe Trump won the 2020 election.
- Basic test of interventions for improving trust:
 - Who is the messenger of election information?
 - What degree of information about election security is shared?

METHODS NOTES:

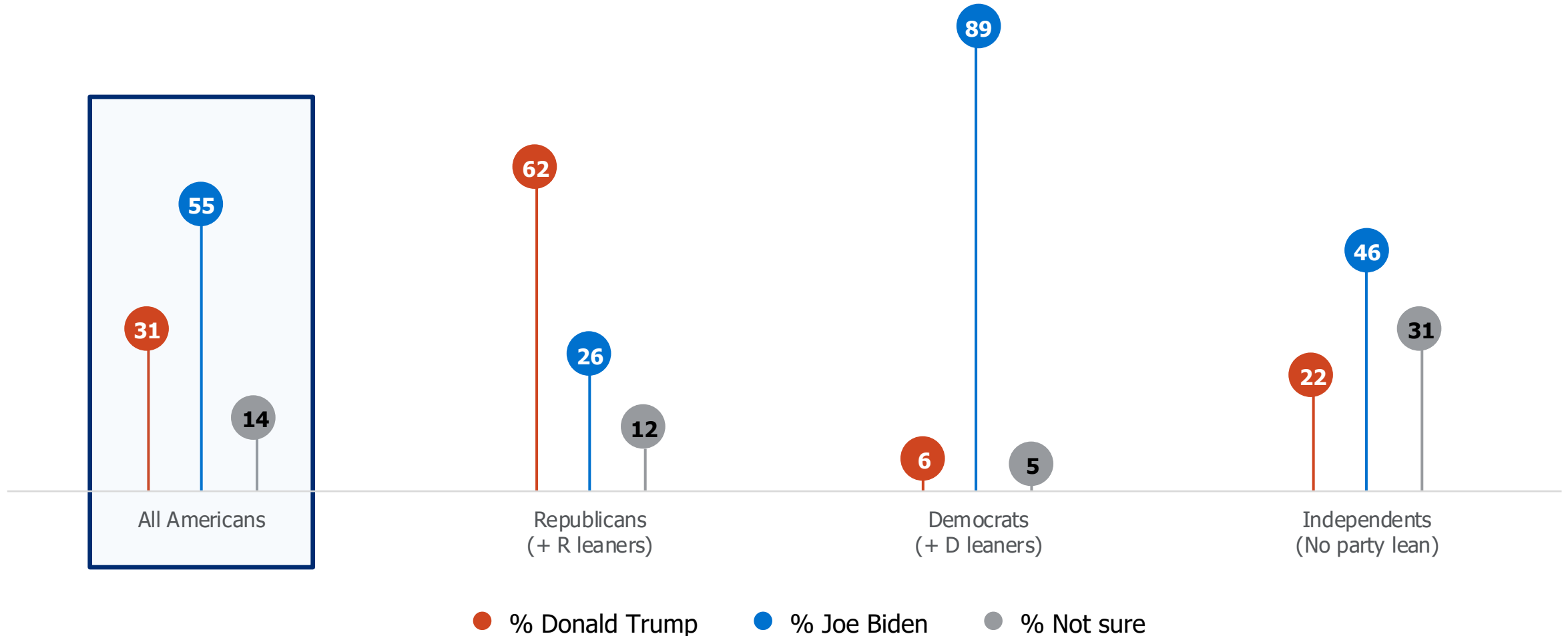
- General margin of error is ± 2.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.*
- MoE for subgroups are higher.
- Demographic quotas were used to ensure the sample of respondents was broadly representative of the adult U.S. population based on ACS 2021 data.

*The design effect calculation reflects the post-stratification weights and does not incorporate any model-based calculation of unknown inclusion probabilities. Design effect calculation is based on SRS formula taking into account unequal weighting effect (Kish 1965): $n * (\text{sum of squared weights}) / [(\text{sum of weights}) * (\text{sum of weights})]$. The margin of error is calculated around a proportion at the 95% confidence level. The maximum margin of error was calculated assuming a reported percentage of 50% and takes into account the design effect as described earlier margin of error calculation: $\sqrt{(0.25/N) * 1.96 * \sqrt{DE}}$

2020 Election Beliefs

Slightly more than half of Americans believe Biden won the 2020 election.

In your view, who was the legitimate winner of the 2020 presidential election?



Conservatives' beliefs about the 2020 election are not uniform.

Conservative Trump

- Unweighted N = 528
- Republicans/Conservatives
- Independent Republican leaners
- Independent conservatives
- Non-party conservatives
- Who believed **Trump** won the 2020 election

Conservative Biden

- Unweighted N = 371
- Republicans/Conservatives
- Independent Republican leaners
- Independent conservatives
- Non-party conservatives
- Who believed **Biden** won or were **unsure** of the 2020 election results

Liberals/ Democrats

- Unweighted N = 1100
- All Democrats/Liberals
- Independent Democratic leaners
- True independents
- Independent moderates and liberals
- Non-party moderates and liberals

Which conservatives believe Biden won vs. Trump won in 2020?

Conservative Trump 2020

- + Slightly more white
- + More likely to identify as Republican or Republican leaning
- + “Conservative” Republican
- + Political identity is more important to them
- + Slightly younger, more millennials
- + Moderately or very religious
- + More likely to own a gun

Conservative Biden 2020

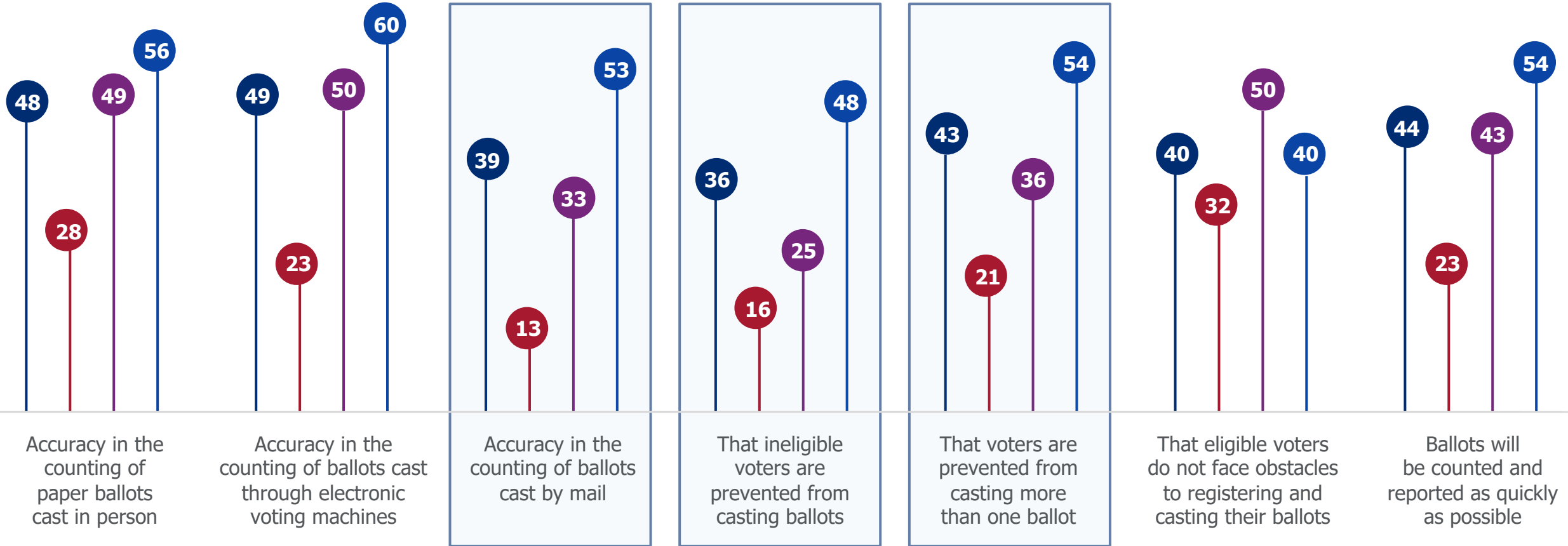
- + College degree
- + “Moderate” Republican
- + Slightly higher income
- + Slightly older: average age of 53 compared to 46 for Trump believers
- + Higher interest in news
- + More likely to say they talk about politics to a good mix of Democrats and Republicans
- + More likely to trust local government, Supreme Court, science

General Election Beliefs

Trust lacking in preventing voter fraud, voter registration obstacles.

Rate your level of trust in each of the following:

% Completely + a lot

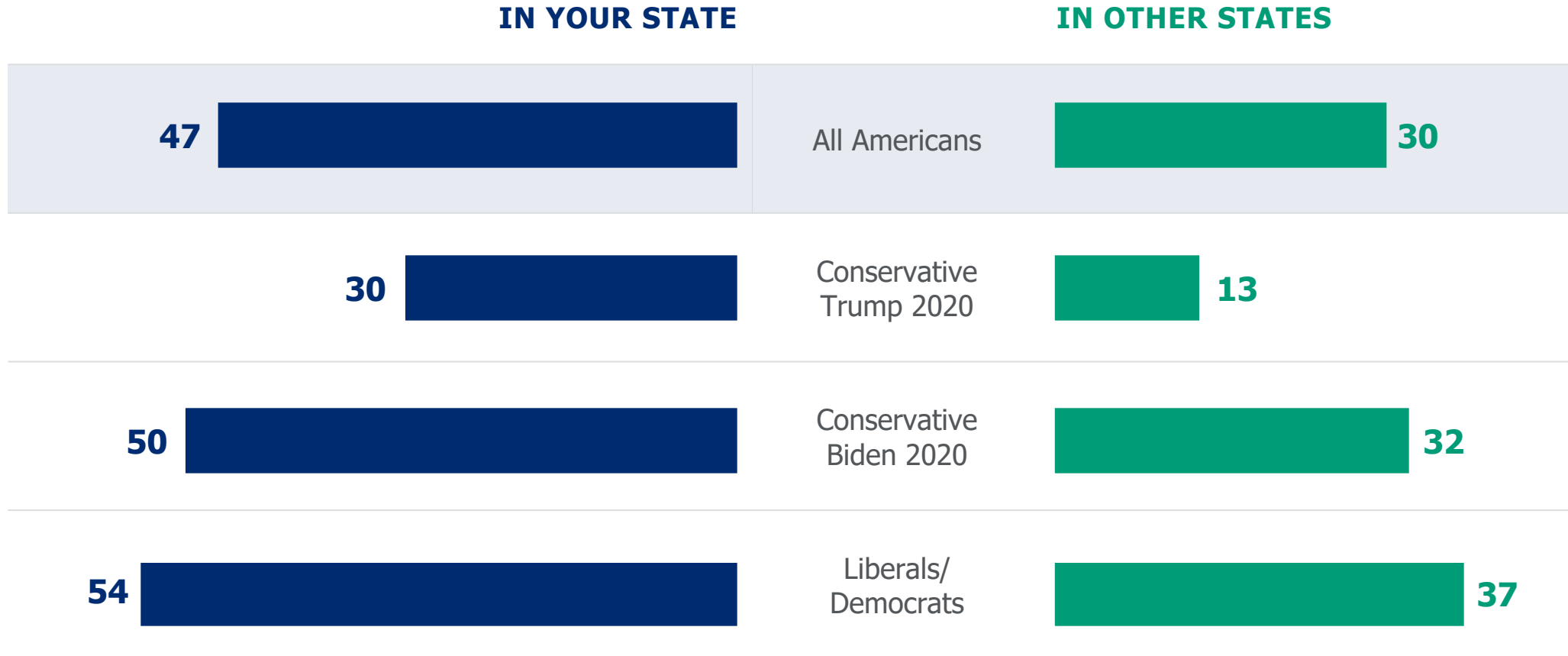


● All Americans
 ● Conservative Trump 2020
 ● Conservative Biden 2020
 ● Liberals/Democrats

There is greater trust of election integrity in-state than out.

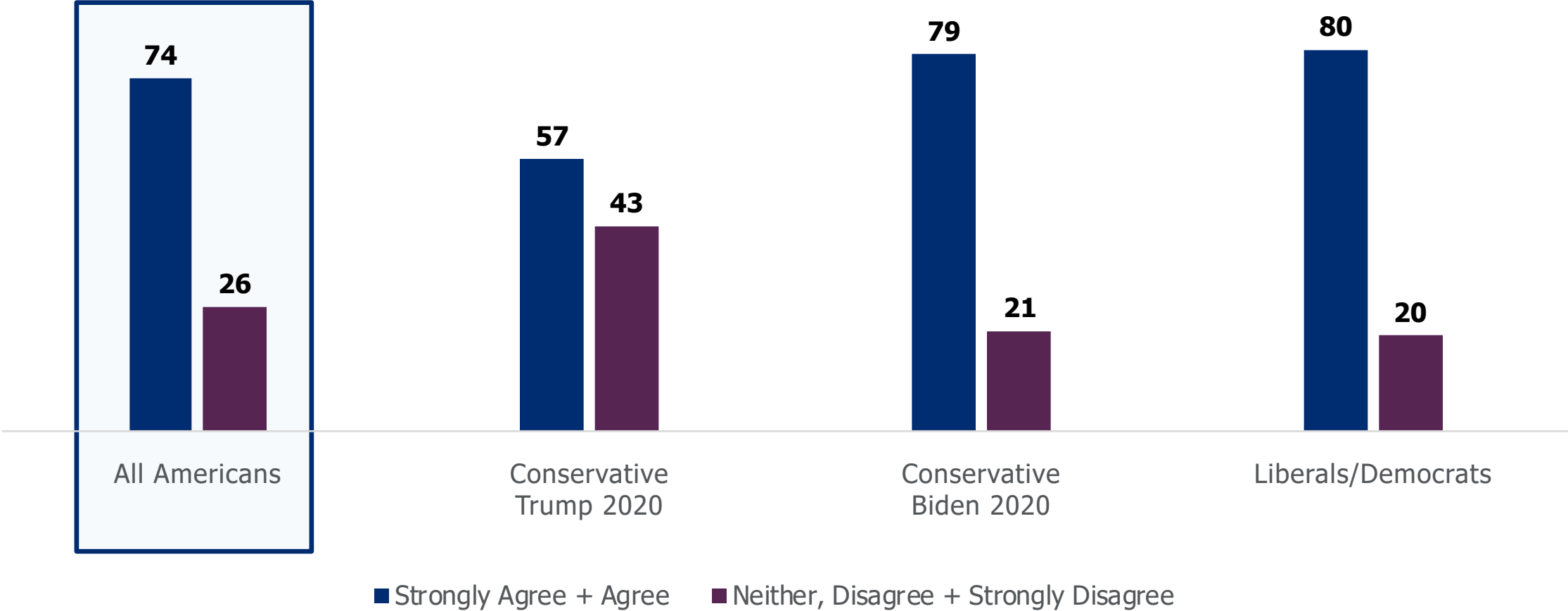
How much do you trust the accuracy and integrity of elections:

% A lot of confidence



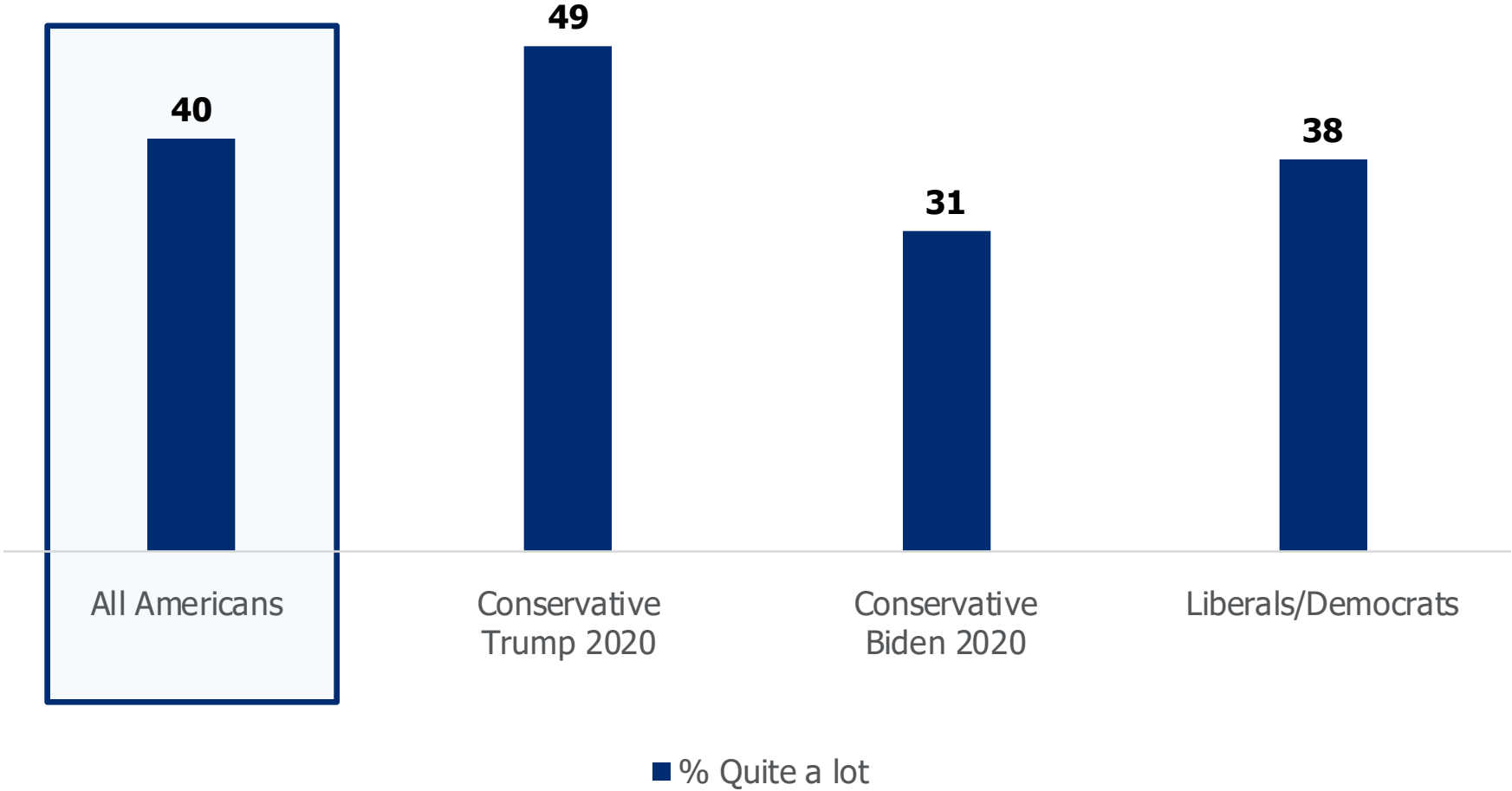
Conservative Biden believe it's important to accept election results, even if it doesn't go their way.

Generally speaking, I believe it is important to accept the outcome of elections even when my preferred candidate loses.



2 in 5 Americans are concerned a lot about misinformation in elections.

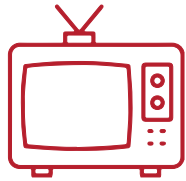
To what extent are you concerned about misinformation in US elections?



Television most relied on for election news.

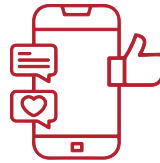
When it comes to getting news about politics and elections, which of the following do you rely on?
Please select up to 3 sources you use most.

Conservative Trump 2020



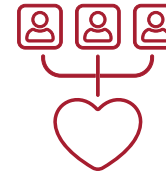
Television

51%



Social media

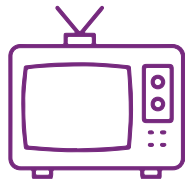
33%



Friends and family

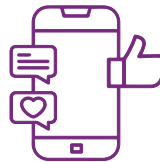
34%

Conservative Biden 2020



Television

63%



Social media

21%



Friends and family

26%

Looking to 2024...

Most Americans are bracing for an election dispute in 2024.

Do you think **Republicans** will accept the 2024 presidential election result if they lose?

	Yes	No	Unsure
All Americans	28%	35%	37%
Conservative Trump 2020	37%	22%	41%
Conservative Biden 2020	42%	18%	40%
Liberals/Democrats	20%	46%	34%

Do you think **Democrats** will accept the 2024 presidential election result if they lose?

	Yes	No	Unsure
All Americans	48%	26%	26%
Conservative Trump 2020	19%	53%	28%
Conservative Biden 2020	38%	24%	37%
Liberals/Democrats	63%	15%	22%

Americans are lacking confidence in elections, but in different ways.

Conservatives Biden 2020 are concerned about...

- prevention of voter fraud
- prevention of voter obstacles
- *Overall, much higher trust in elections than conservatives who believe Trump won in 2020.*

Conservatives Trump 2020 are concerned about...

- prevention of voter fraud
- counting accuracy
- Democrats cheating
- election misinformation

Less than half of liberals, independents* trust completely or a lot that ...

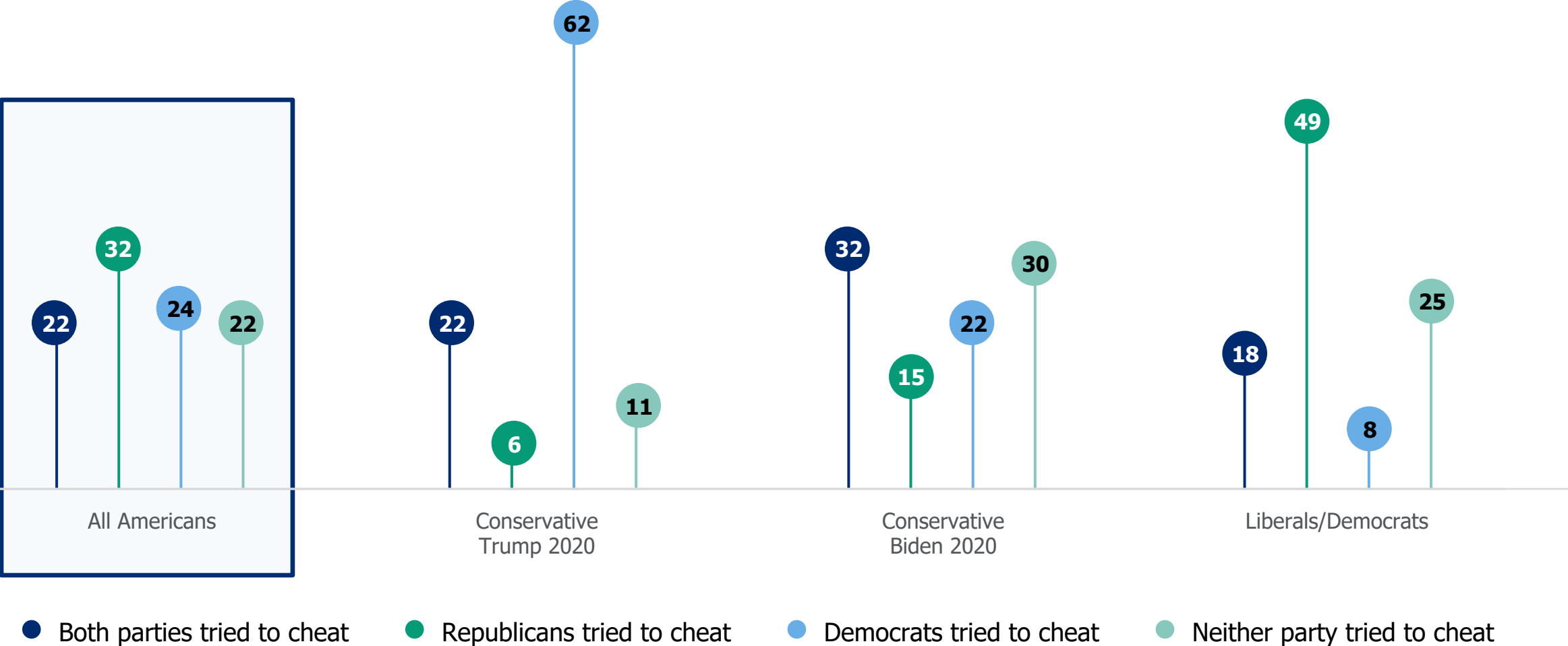
- eligible voters can vote without obstacles
- ineligible voters are prevented from voting

** Independents who are leaning Democratic, moderate or liberal.*

APPENDIX

Only 1 in 5 Americans say no one tried to cheat in the 2020 election.

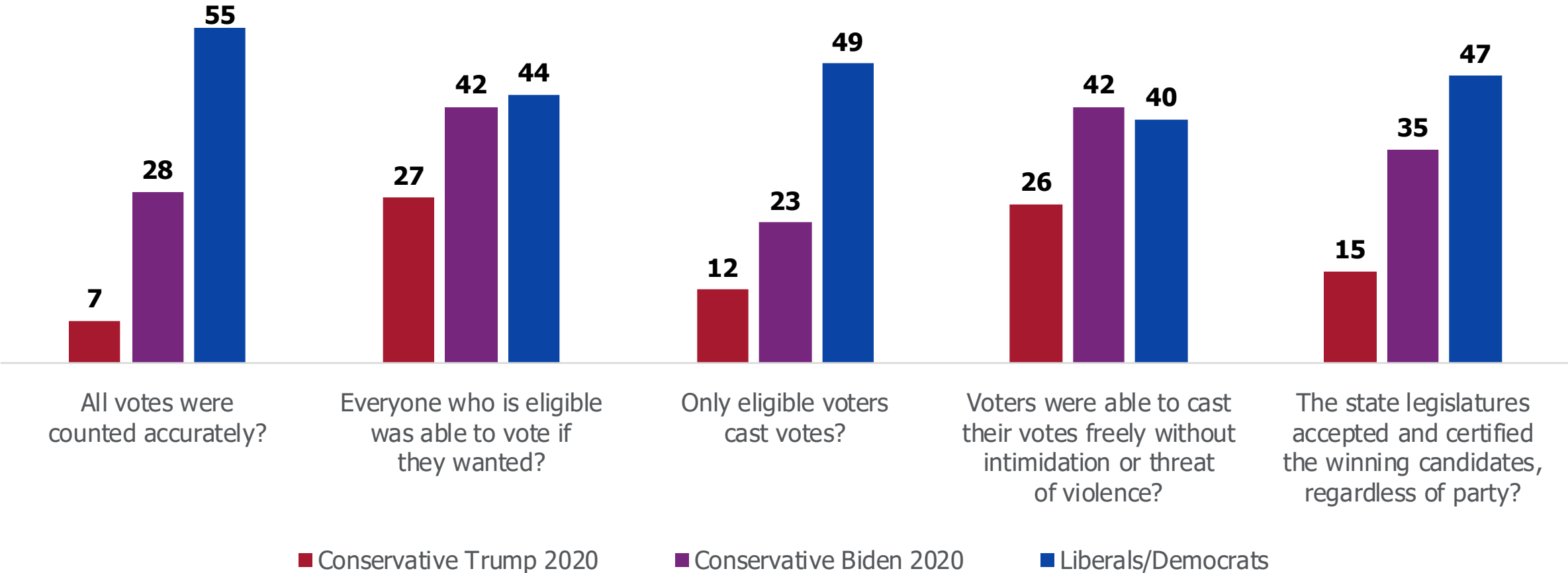
Do you think one or both parties tried to cheat to win the 2020 presidential elections, or neither?



Conservatives lack confidence that all votes were counted, only eligible voters voted in 2020 election.

When it comes to the 2020 presidential elections, how much confidence do you have that ...

% A lot of confidence



Intervention Experiment

Experiment Methods

Experiment 1: Testing the messenger.

- Evaluating trust in the accuracy of elections by who speaks about it publicly.
- Set stage: out-party won 2024 election.
- [INSERT TREATMENT] reports publicly that the election was conducted fairly and the votes counted accurately.
- Treatment conditions:
 - Null: No information about the election fairness or accuracy
 - State election officials
 - Your county election officials
 - Your community’s religious leaders
- Post-exposure measure of trust in accuracy of the election.
- Between-subject design.

Experiment 2: Exposure to election security measures.

- Evaluating trust in accuracy of elections in your state and the U.S. by exposure to verification details.
- Details all the measures taken in [INSERT TREATMENT] to ensure elections are secure and free from fraud:
 - Testing voting machines
 - Storing paper ballots
 - Ballot audit
- Treatment conditions:
 - Null: No information about the election security measures
 - Your state of residence (named the state)
 - The United States
- Post-exposure measure of trust in accuracy of elections.
- Between-subject design.

Experiment Results: Even with weak treatment, any exposure helps.

Experiment 1: Testing the messenger.

- Overall sample results: *no movement in trust.*
- Democrats + D-leaning independents: *no movement in trust.*
- Republican + R-leaning independents:
 - All treatment conditions moved trust compared to NULL for most questions
 - Only from “not at all” to “some + a little” trust
 - Slightly stronger for “county” officials*

Experiment 2: Exposure to election security measures.

- Overall sample results: exposure to any security measures slightly moved trust in state level elections.*
- Democrats + D-leaning independents: same as above.*
- Republican + R-leaning independents: *little movement in trust.*

* Not statistically significant.

Independents excluded from this analysis as there was insufficient sample size of independents by experimental condition for reliable reporting.

Sample sizes for party ID + experimental conditions

Q22	REPS + REP LEANERS	DEMS + DEM LEANERS
NULL	205	204
State	216	202
County	198	188
Religious leader	221	181

Q24	REPS + REP LEANERS	DEMS + DEM LEANERS
NULL	282	270
US	269	251
State	289	254

“The messenger” slightly moved the trust needle for Republicans.

The experiment did not significantly influence trust across the sample overall, nor for Democrats.*

Generally speaking, how much would you trust the accuracy of the 2024 presidential election outcome?

Republicans + Rep Leaners

Q22a	County	NULL	Religious Leader	State
Completely + a lot	34	32	31	33
Some + only a little	57	44	56	56
None at all	9	24	13	12

Thinking specifically about the elections in your state, how much would you trust the accuracy of the presidential election outcome in your state?

Republicans + Rep Leaners

Q22b	County	NULL	Religious Leader	State
Completely + a lot	41	40	41	41
Some + only a little	51	44	49	47
None at all	8	16	10	12

In this same scenario, imagine the [Republican/Democratic candidate – out party] refuses to accept the outcome, claiming there was fraud. If that were the case, how much would you trust the accuracy of the election outcome?

Republicans + Rep Leaners

Q22c	County	NULL	Religious Leader	State
Completely + a lot	35	29	32	34
Some + only a little	56	49	57	54
None at all	10	22	11	11

Now imagine it is one month after the election and courts have rejected all legal challenges from the [Republican/Democratic – out party] candidate, who still refuses to accept the outcome. If that were the case, how much would you trust the accuracy of the election outcome?

Republicans + Rep Leaners

Q22d	County	NULL	Religious Leader	State
Completely + a lot	38	35	39	36
Some + only a little	51	54	51	52
None at all	10	11	10	12

*Independents excluded from this analysis as there was insufficient sample size of independents by experimental condition for reliable reporting.

Exposure to election security measures moved trust, marginally.

Overall

<i>% Completely + a lot</i>	NULL	US	State
Generally speaking, how much do you trust the accuracy of elections in your state?	51	56	54
Generally speaking, how much do you trust the accuracy of elections in the United States?	45	45	42

By Party ID

	NULL	NULL	US	US	State	State
<i>% Completely + a lot</i>	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep	Dem
Generally speaking, how much do you trust the accuracy of elections in your state?	43	65	49	70	44	72
Generally speaking, how much do you trust the accuracy of elections in the United States?	28	66	32	63	23	64

Copyright Standards

This document contains proprietary research, copyrighted materials and literary property of Gallup, Inc. It is for the guidance of your organization only and is not to be copied, quoted, published or divulged to others outside your organization. All of Gallup, Inc.'s content is protected by copyright. Neither the client nor the participants shall copy, modify, resell, reuse or distribute the program materials beyond the scope of what is agreed upon in writing by Gallup, Inc. Any violation of this Agreement shall be considered a breach of contract and misuse of Gallup, Inc.'s intellectual property.

This document is of great value to Gallup, Inc. Accordingly, international and domestic laws and penalties guaranteeing patent, copyright, trademark and trade secret protection safeguard the ideas, concepts and recommendations related within this document.

No changes may be made to this document without the express written permission of Gallup, Inc.

Gallup® is a trademark of Gallup, Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners.