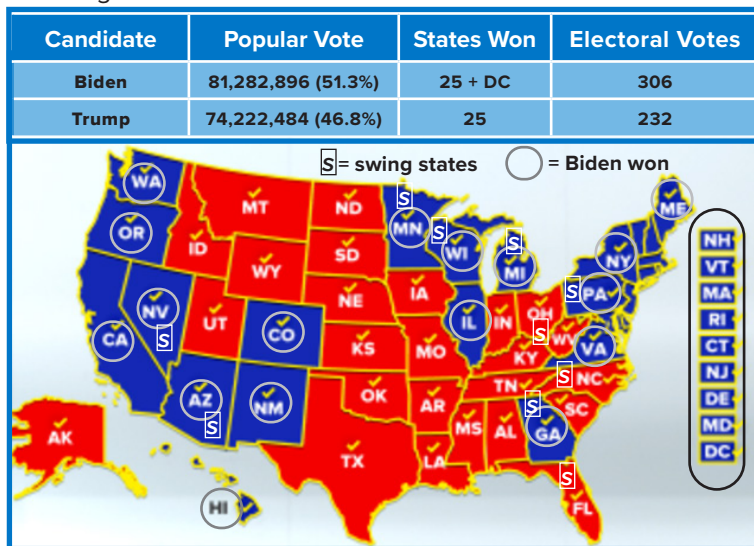


## Lessons From The 2020 Election

The 2020 presidential election featured the Republican incumbent, President Donald Trump, and former vice president, Democrat Joe Biden. Each political party accused the other of promoting unfair election tactics. Democrats urged voters to mail-in ballots and vote early, citing concerns over the coronavirus, changes at the United States Postal Service that could slow delivery, and long lines at voting locations. Republicans sought to limit the collection and counting of mail-in ballots, voicing concerns about the prospects for widespread voter fraud.

In the end, the 2020 election drew record turnout, with over 157 million Americans casting ballots. The election was contentious, fueling a turnout estimated to be the highest since 1900. Younger voters, ages 18 to 29, made their voices heard in historic numbers, and mail-in voting broke records in states around the nation, mostly because of health concerns over the pandemic. Battle lines were drawn over the handling of the COVID-19 outbreak and resulting economic fallout; national protests over racial inequity; the future of the Affordable Care Act; climate change; and Supreme Court nominees.

The country waited four days past Election Day to find out who had been elected to the president's office. President-elect Joe Biden had a clear and convincing victory, both in the popular vote and the Electoral College. President Trump was the first incumbent president to lose the popular vote in his re-election campaign in almost three decades since George H. W. Bush in 1992.



## Threats to Our Democracy

The 2020 election saw unprecedented attacks seeking to undermine public confidence in our elections:

- voters fearing violence during or after the election;
- citizens concerned their votes would not be counted;
- politicians attempting to prevent votes from being counted;
- disinformation campaigns on social media;
- efforts to convince state legislatures to ignore the popular vote and;
- the concern for a peaceful transfer of power.

These are all threats to our democracy, and our leaders and citizens must work to bring the country together. A democracy cannot function long under those conditions. With the lessons of 2020, new steps to defend our democracy must begin now.

## Our Elections Are Secure

In the end, the result was that our elections are secure. That was the conclusion of the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and election officials of both parties in crucial battleground states. More than two dozen lawsuits filed by President Donald Trump's legal team were dismissed either by federal or state judges. Each state certified their election results followed by the Electoral College's official votes, leading to 306 electoral votes (270 needed to win) for Joe Biden.

## Every Vote Counts

More and more, we see election results with razor-thin margins. Even with long lines for voters, it was heartening to see so many millions of Americans determined to exercise their constitutional right to cast a ballot. The record-breaking turnout reaffirmed that voting is a right Americans are no longer taking for granted.

The U.S. does not have a national election system by design. The 2020 election illustrated different rules and regulations across 10,000 election jurisdictions. Our representatives will need to explore more uniform federal election standards that could simplify matters for voters, especially on issues such as voter registration, early voting, and access to by-mail voting. The challenge is to do this without conflicting with the 10th Amendment and the right of states to administer elections in the manner they choose.

## QUESTIONS

**TRUE OR FALSE?** Write a **T** or **F** in the space provided.

- \_\_\_ 1. Joe Biden won the electoral vote, but lost the popular vote.
- \_\_\_ 2. The 2020 election had the largest turnout since 1900.
- \_\_\_ 3. The election results took several days to become official due to the large number of mail-in votes.
- \_\_\_ 4. The federal government sets strict standards on how each state conducts elections.
- \_\_\_ 5. President Trump was the first incumbent president to lose the popular vote since 1992.

## SHORT ANSWER - REFER TO ELECTION MAP

1. Which party dominates which region? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Which party is favored in rural areas? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which party is favored in urban areas? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Define "swing states" and give an example. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_