

Voter Confidence in Election Integrity Is Not Just a GOP Problem

Since the election, there have been quite a few surveys out showing that a majority of Republicans believe that Biden won the election because of voter fraud. Some have used that to create a narrative that Republicans refuse to accept that Biden won the election due to their loyalty to Trump. But given the response to Trump winning in 2016, it did not seem like there was broad acceptance from Democrats that Trump won that election, with the main rationale being the Democratic belief that Trump won because of Russian interference.

So how did the two parties respond to their respective candidate losing? In a February survey for Winning the Issues (February 9-12), we asked voters whether Biden won the 2020 election fairly or if he won because of voter fraud. We also asked in the same survey whether Trump had won fairly in 2016 or won because of Russian interference. The survey found that 57% thought Biden won fairly last November, and 51% thought that Trump won fairly in 2016 — remarkably low percentages. In looking at their own candidate's success, 87% of Democrats thought Biden won fairly, and 82% of Republicans thought Trump won fairly. **However, in looking at the reason why their own candidate lost, both parties behaved similarly. Among Democrats, 62% believed Trump won because of Russian interference, and among Republicans, 61% thought Biden won because of voter fraud.** However, slightly more Republicans (28%) thought Biden won fairly than Democrats (21%) thought Trump won fairly. Additionally, just bare majorities of independents (55% in 2020 and 52% in 2016) believed each of the candidates won fairly.

2020 Presidential Election	Overall	Republican	Independent	Democrat
Biden won the election fairly	57	28	55	87
Biden won the election because of voter fraud	34	61	28	12
2016 Presidential Election				
Trump won the election fairly	51	82	52	21
Trump won the election because of Russian interference	33	10	24	62
Believe Both Biden and Trump Won Fairly	19	20	23	15

When looking at the current state of our democracy, one of our survey's most significant findings is that only 19% of the electorate believes that both Biden and Trump won fairly. While you might expect that number to be low for the respective parties, among independents, it was remarkably low at 23%. More Republicans (20%) thought both won fairly than Democrats (15%).

So, this is not just a "Republican problem." It is a challenge for both parties and the country as a whole. The need to have confidence in the outcome of elections is essential for a successful democracy, and the question is how to restore that confidence.