Trust in Elections: Deepening Partisan Divide in US and NH

USC Election Cybersecurity Workshop

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Trust in Elections Essential

- For accepting results
- Trust/support of winning candidate & policies

Public confidence “is closely related to the State’s interest in preventing voter fraud, public confidence in the integrity of the electoral process has independent significance, because it encourages citizen participation in the democratic process.”

Justice Stevens, Crawford v. Marion County Election Board
Confidence in Honesty of Elections in OECD Countries 2019, Percent Confident

Gallup World Polls, 2019
Confidence in Honesty in US Elections: 2006 - 2019

Gallup World Polls, 2019
Confident your vote was counted as intended

% “Very Confident

Note: Data for 2008–2012 are from the Survey of the Performance of American Elections
Threats to Trust in US Elections

• Lack of Constitutional understanding
  – State variations in electoral procedures
  – Misunderstanding of Electoral College

• Inaccurate count
  – Computer hacking
  – Lack of paper trail

• Illegal voting
  – Non-residents
  – Non citizens
  – Multiple votes

• Voter Disqualification
  – Purging voter rolls
  – Lack of polling places

• Disinformation
  – Foreign based
  – Domestic based
What is the biggest threat to keeping elections safe and accurate?

- Misleading Information: 35%
- Voter Fraud: 25%
- Voter Suppression: 15%
- Foreign Interference: 10%
- Problems at polling place: 5%

NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll, 2019
US: Confident that November 2020 election will be conducted fairly and accurately

Source: Pew Research Center
April 7-12, 2020
US: Confident that all citizens who want to vote in the November 2020 election will be able to.

Source: Pew Research Center
April 7-12, 2020
Elections in New Hampshire
Trust in NH elections:
Confidence vote in previous election was accurately counted

Source: Granite State Poll
UNH Survey Center
Less confidence in Electronic Voting than Paper Ballots: Increasing over recent years

Source: Granite State Poll
UNH Survey Center
Confidence Vote in 2020 NH Primary Counted Accurately

Source: Granite State Poll / CNN Primary Poll
UNH Survey Center
Perceived Ease of Voting in 2020 NH Primary

Source: Granite State Poll / CNN Primary Poll
UNH Survey Center
Perceived Ease of Voting in 2020 NH Primary by Age

All Voters, Post-Primary

18 to 34

35 to 49

50 to 64

65 +

Source: Granite State Poll / CNN Primary Poll
UNH Survey Center
Perceived Ease of Voting in 2020 NH Primary by Years Lived in NH

Source: Granite State Poll / CNN Primary Poll
UNH Survey Center
Perceived Ease of Voting in 2020 NH Primary by Media Usage

Source: Granite State Poll / CNN Primary Poll
UNH Survey Center
Summary

• Citizens need to have confidence in elections:
  – Tradeoffs between stricter voting laws to increase trust and barriers that may discourage voting

• Confidence in voting is Partisan!
  – If your party wins, you are confident in the system

• NH voters think voting is easy
  – Younger adults and newcomers to NH least likely to believe voting is easy

• NH voters confident vote was counted correctly
Thank You!
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