

# Priorities of Trump Voters vs. Biden Voters in the Orthodox Jewish Community: A Post-Election Analysis

November 17, 2020



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# Introduction and Methodology

## Introduction

Studies have shown great diversity of political opinions across the Jewish community. For example, American Jewish Committee studies have found non-Orthodox Jews voting very predominantly Democrat, while Orthodox Jews tended toward Republican. Prior Nishma studies have found the Orthodox to be split between Haredi (ultra-Orthodox), very much in the Republican camp, while Modern Orthodox had more evenly split voting patterns.

The primary purpose of this research is not to determine the Jewish community's voting preferences. Rather, we seek to:

- Explore 35 voting decision factors and identify those that drove the voting decision of Trump voters vs. those that drove the voting decision of Biden voters.
- Identify factors that both groups see as important, as opportunities to build cohesion and advocacy; and factors where the groups disagreed on their importance, as opportunities to create dialogue and engagement.

## Methodology

Reaching the Orthodox community is challenging given its relatively small size and the lack at this time of any centralized, accessible email or phone lists. Our approach was to: (1) contact approximately 2,000 American Jews who have opted in to participate in Nishma Research studies; (2) Contact synagogues through three rabbinic/synagogue organizations: The Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), National Council of Young Israel (NCYI), and The International Rabbinic Fellowship (IRF). Emails were sent to their members, encouraging them (rabbis and congregants) to participate via a provided link to an online survey, using language along the following lines:

*"I am writing to ask for your help. We are about to do a post-election survey. This is not a poll, i.e., to determine who will vote for whom. Rather, this is an attempt to understand why people voted the way they did and to respect people's feelings about the election. We need to learn from each other and come together to achieve mutual goals."*

We follow the guidance of AAPOR (the American Association for Public Opinion Research) that opt-in surveys are not ideal but may be the best approach, lacking other options, as is the case in the Orthodox community. As is true for all surveys, responses should be viewed with appropriate understanding and caution, and through the lens of what is already known.

## Responses

We received 659 responses between November 4 and November 15, 2020, of which 552 identified themselves as Jewish. Of these, 449 identified as Orthodox and 103 identified as non-Orthodox.

This report focuses on the 449 members of the Orthodox community and much of our analysis explores the issues rated as most important by Trump voters (of which there were 146) vs. Biden voters (of which there were 244). We do not represent or profile the Orthodox community's voting patterns. Thus, statistical significance testing focuses on differences between the two groups.

## Contact

Nishma Research sponsored and conducted this research as a service to the community and is responsible for all aspects of the study and analysis. We welcome feedback from the community.

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West Hartford, Connecticut – November 17, 2020

## Summary of Key Findings – and Where Do We Go From Here? (Page 1 of 2)

Our objective was to identify the issues that most influenced voters, based on the percentages who stated that a particular issue was among their “Most Critical Factors.”

Of the 35 issues examined, only three – our nation’s future, Supreme Court appointments, and the candidate’s experience and accomplishments – were viewed as critical in their voting decision by about 40% or more of both Trump voters and Biden voters.

The differences between how Trump voters rated issue importance and how Biden voters rated issue importance were statistically significant for 27 of the 35 issues, and in many cases, views were essentially opposites.

For Trump voters, primary factors were themes of Jewishness, threats, our nation’s governance, and the economy. For Biden voters, primary factors were science and health, our nation’s governance, and the people.

Looking at the specific issues that are included in these themes, 15 issues were viewed as significantly more important by Trump voters. They ranked Israel as their #1 issue, with 80% citing it as critical, compared to 29% of Biden voters. The top issues that Trump voters more often saw as important were as follows:

	% Rating Among “Most Critical Factors”	
	Trump Voters	Biden Voters
Israel	80%	29%
Iran	57%	8%
Terrorism	59%	13%
Taxes	42%	8%
Crime	38%	6%
Religious Freedom	59%	29%

96% of Trump voters rated Israel as critically or very important, compared to 72% of Biden voters.

12 issues were viewed as significantly more important by Biden voters, who ranked the Coronavirus pandemic as their #1 issue with 78% citing it as critical, compared to 12% of Trump voters. The top issues that Biden voters more often saw as important were as follows:

	% Rating Among “Most Critical Factors”	
	Biden Voters	Trump Voters
Coronavirus pandemic	78%	12%
Bringing the country together	49%	8%
Climate change	41%	1%
Health care	56%	16%
How decisions at the top are made	49%	16%
Liking the candidate as a person	35%	3%

Looking at attitudes 3+ days after Election Day, Biden voters were very positive about the election process and results, while Trump voters were quite negative about the results and more than three-fourths questioned the election’s fairness.

*Continued*

## Summary of Key Findings – and Where Do We Go From Here? (Page 2 of 2)

### Where Do We Go From Here?

This research has shown striking differences between the views of Orthodox Jewish Trump voters and Orthodox Jewish Biden voters. Indeed, there are so few areas of agreement that one may become discouraged.

In recent years, Orthodox Jewry has become increasingly fragmented. Some of the issues causing fragmentation have centered around Orthodox practices and norms, e.g. the role of women, acceptance of LGBTQ, etc. In these cases and other areas, the more liberal wings of Orthodoxy have sought changes in normative practices, which the more "right-leaning" segments have resisted.

It has also been known for a number of years that political views differ across the Orthodox spectrum, i.e., Haredi have become more Republican; while Modern Orthodoxy's ideological left is quite politically Democrat/liberal, and its ideological right is quite politically Republican/conservative. Some of the political shift has been due to views relating to treatment of Israel (e.g., the right sees the left as a growing body of anti-Israel animus) and social change (i.e., in areas contrary to the views of *halacha*).

But while there has been awareness of political differences, politics has taken a back seat to religious ideological differences ... until now.

Is the extreme disparity that we see today something the tiny American Orthodox community (comprising about ¼ of 1% of the US population, and about 12% of the total US Jewish population) can abide? Do the recent changes in political polarization represent a true paradigm shift in the Orthodox community? Has the Orthodox community reached a tipping point in its absorption of secular political debate? Or are the differences across Orthodoxy magnified by more temporal political personalities, tribalism and opposition ... and masking underlying areas of agreement?

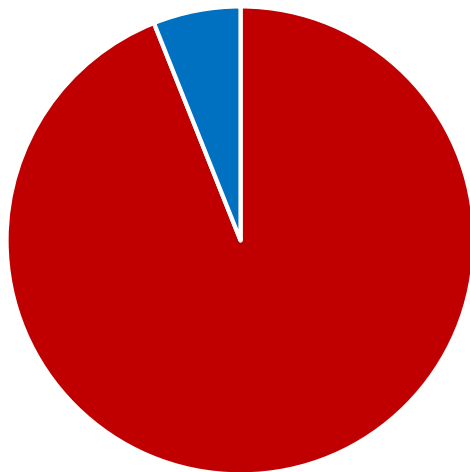
To answer these questions, we could posit that the explicit reasons given for selecting a candidate might not be equivalent to motivation. To some extent, both sets of voters were parroting campaign messages (advertising, talking points, etc.) often heard from their favored candidate, and reflecting their extremely different personalities and ideologies. This may be a piece of good news, because their views might not be as far apart as these data seem to suggest.

We believe the data point to an opportunity for the Orthodox community and its leaders to take a step back and create deeper and more nuanced understanding of Orthodox Jews' "baseline" political views, not necessarily in the context of a specific election. Nishma Research wishes to explore opportunities to build upon our knowledge and welcomes communal participation and support in this endeavor.

**Voting “Stickiness” – Presidential voting was consistent between 2016 and 2020; almost all 2016 Trump voters again voted for Trump and almost all 2016 Clinton voters voted for Biden.**

**2016 Trump Voters**

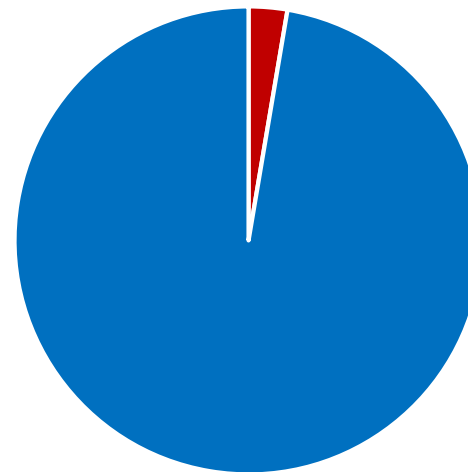
94% Voted for Trump in 2020



■ Trump ■ Biden

**2016 Clinton Voters**

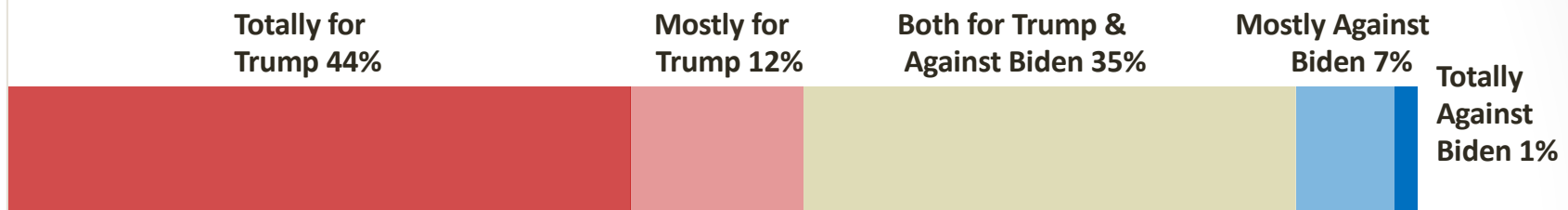
97% Voted for Biden in 2020



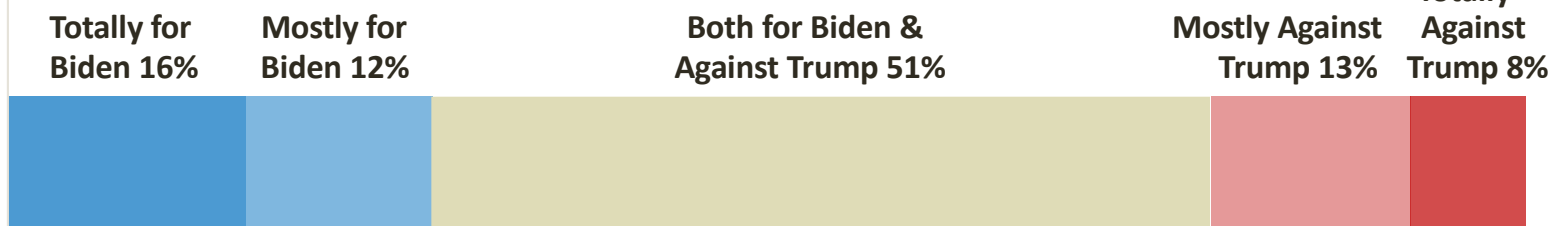
■ Trump ■ Biden

**Voting For Your Candidate or Voting Against the Opponent? – Trump voters much more often voted *for their candidate* than did Biden voters; Biden voters a bit more often were voting *against Trump*.**

**Trump voters said that their vote was:**



**Biden voters said that their vote was:**



See Q9a and Q9b in Appendix III – Survey Questionnaire. n = 140 for Trump voters and 236 for Biden voters

## The Voting Decision Issues – Voter interviews helped us identify 35 issues that potentially affected how people voted.

Issues That Might Affect Voting Decisions	
Abortion	How decisions at the top are made
Advice from religious leaders	How the U.S. is viewed in the world
Anti-Semitism	Immigration
Balance among the three branches of government	Iran
Bringing the country together	Israel
China	Jobs and unemployment
Climate change	My liking the candidate as a person
Coronavirus pandemic	National security
Crime	Our nation's future
Education issues, college-related	Racial inequality and race relations
Education issues, grades K-12	Religious freedom
Experience and accomplishments	Stock market
Federal deficit	Strong federal leadership
Federal government's role	Supreme Court appointments
Fighting for average Americans	Taxes
Gap between rich and poor	Terrorism
Gun ownership	Trade agreements
Health care	

See Q8a and Q8b in Appendix III – Survey Questionnaire; n = 146 for Trump voters and 244 for Biden voters. The following two pages examine the top factors affecting the voting decision. In testing the survey questionnaire, we originally had three response options: Very important, Somewhat important, and Not important. However, we felt that too many voters were selecting the first option for many of the issues presented. Because we wanted to separate out the most critical decision factors from the rest, we ultimately presented the question with four response options: My Most Critical Factors, Quite Important, Somewhat Important, and Not So Important.

Note that 3% of Biden voters self-identified as Haredi and 21% of the Trump voters self-identified as Haredi. This is because Nishma's participant mailing list is more Modern than Haredi, but also because the Haredi more often voted for Trump. We assessed the possible impact of the disparate representation and found that it might minimally (i.e., up to about a 3% impact) affect five of the 35 decision factors' data presented on the next few pages.



## Key Decision Issues varied dramatically between Trump voters and Biden voters.

Impact of Issues on Vote for Trump (% Citing Issues as Among "My Most Critical Factors")			
1. Israel			80%
2. Our nation's future			61%
3. National security			60%
4. Terrorism			59%
5. Religious freedom			59%
6. Iran			57%
7. Supreme Court appointments			47%
8. Taxes			42%
9. Jobs and unemployment			41%
10. Experience and accomplishments			38%
Crime	38%	Federal deficit	15%
Anti-Semitism	37%	Race inequality, race relations	13%
Fighting for Average Americans	32%	Coronavirus pandemic	12%
Federal government's role	28%	How US is viewed in the world	10%
Immigration	23%	Education issues, K-12	8%
Strong federal leadership	21%	Bringing country together	8%
Balance of government branches	21%	Education issues, college	8%
Trade agreements	20%	Gap between rich & poor	6%
China	20%	Abortion	4%
Stock market	19%	Advice from religious leaders	4%
Health care	16%	Liking candidate as a person	3%
How decisions made at the top	16%	Climate change	1%
Gun ownership	16%		

Impact of Issues on Vote for Biden (% Citing Issues as Among "My Most Critical Factors")			
1. Coronavirus pandemic			78%
2. Our nation's future			76%
3. Health care			56%
4. Bringing the country together			49%
5. How decisions at the top are made			49%
6. Supreme Court appointments			47%
7. Race inequality and race relations			42%
8. Experience and accomplishments			41%
9. Climate change			41%
10. Fighting for Average Americans			36%
National security	36%	Education issues, K-12	14%
Liking candidate as a person	35%	Terrorism	13%
Gap between rich and poor	34%	Education issues, college	11%
Religious freedom	29%	Abortion	10%
Israel	29%	Iran	8%
Strong federal leadership	27%	Taxes	8%
How US is viewed in the world	26%	Crime	6%
Balance of government branches	25%	Stock market	5%
Jobs and unemployment	25%	Federal deficit	5%
Gun ownership	21%	Trade agreements	3%
Immigration	21%	China	2%
Anti-Semitism	18%	Advice from religious leaders	<0.5%
Federal government's role	17%		

## Voting Decision Issues: Comparing Trump Voters' vs. Biden Voters' Priorities – The differences between how Trump voters rated issues and how Biden voters rated issues are large and statistically significant for 27 of the 35 issues.

Issues That Are Important to both Trump voters and Biden Voters (40%+)		
Issues	Trump %	Biden %
Our nation's future	61%	76%*
Supreme Court appointments	47%	47%

Issues Significantly More Important to Trump Voters* (in descending order of statistical significance of difference)		
Issues	Trump %	Biden %
Israel	80%	29%
Iran	57%	8%
Terrorism	59%	13%
Taxes	42%	8%
Crime	38%	6%
Religious freedom	59%	29%
National security	60%	36%
Anti-Semitism	37%	18%
Jobs and unemployment	41%	25%
Federal government's role	28%	17%

Issues Significantly More Important to Biden Voters* (in descending order of statistical significance of difference)		
Issues	Trump %	Biden %
Coronavirus pandemic	12%	78%
Bringing the country together	8%	49%
Health care	16%	56%
Climate change	1%	41%
How decisions are made at the top	16%	49%
Liking candidate as a person	3%	35%
Race inequality & race relations	13%	42%
Gap between rich & poor	6%	34%
How US is viewed in the world	10%	26%

Issues of Relatively Equal Importance (in descending order of average importance)		
Issues	Trump %	Biden %
Experience & accomplishments	38%	41%
Fighting for average Americans	32%	36%
Strong federal leadership	21%	27%
Balance of government branches	21%	25%
Immigration	23%	21%
Gun ownership	16%	21%
Federal deficit	15%	5%

Issues Less Important (= <20%) to Both Groups (in descending order of average importance)		
Issues	Trump %	Biden %
Stock market	19%*	5%
Trade agreements	20%*	3%
China	20%*	2%
Education issues, grades K-12	8%	14%*
Education issues, college-related	8%	11%
Abortion	4%	10%*
Advice from religious leaders	4%*	<0.5%

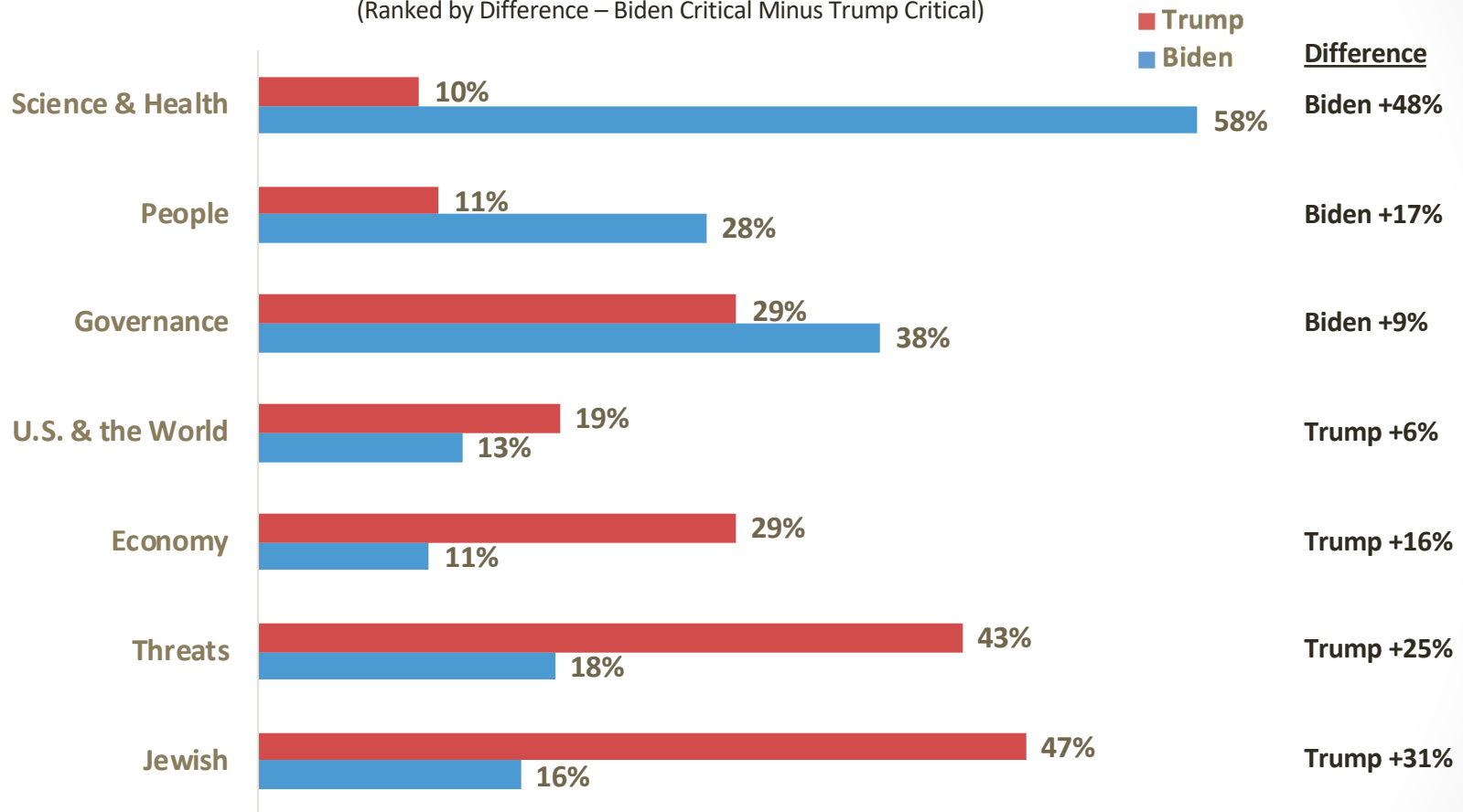
Percentages are for voters citing the issue as among their "most critical factors."

\* Denotes statistically significant differences; where we compare two percentages, the asterisk is displayed next to the higher percentage. For the charts showing "Issues Significantly More Important to Trump/Biden Voters," all differences are significant.

**Voting Decision Issues by Theme – For Trump voters, primary vote drivers were themes of Jewishness, threats, our nation’s governance, and the economy. For Biden voters, primary vote drivers were science and health, our nation’s governance, and the people.**

**Importance of Various Issues – Average % Citing Issues as “Most Critical” by Theme**

(Ranked by Difference – Biden Critical Minus Trump Critical)



While some of the 35 issues straddle more than one theme, we made the effort to categorize the issues into seven broad themes (percentages are the average of voters citing the issue as among their “most critical factors”), as follows: Economy = Federal deficit, Jobs and unemployment, Stock market, Taxes. Governance = Balance among the three branches of government, Experience and accomplishments, Federal government’s role, How decisions at the top are made, My liking the candidate as a person, Our nation’s future, Strong federal leadership, Supreme Court appointments. Jewish = Advice from religious leaders, Anti-Semitism, Iran, Israel, Religious freedom. U.S. & the World = China, How the U.S. is viewed in the world, Immigration, Trade agreements Science & Health = Climate change, Coronavirus pandemic, Health care. The People = Abortion, Bringing the country together, Education issues college-related, Education issues grades K-12, Fighting for average Americans, Gap between rich and poor, Racial inequality and race relations. Threats = Crime, Gun ownership, National security, Terrorism.

## Reactions to the Election Results and Process – Looking at attitudes 3+ days after Election Day, Biden voters were very positive, while Trump voters were quite negative, and more than three-fourths questioned the election’s fairness.

	Trump Voters				Biden Voters			
	Positive	Neither Positive nor Negative	Negative	Don't Know	Positive	Neither Positive nor Negative	Negative	Don't Know
	<b>What are your overall feelings relating to the presidential election result?</b>							
• Responded 11/4-6	17%	28%	32%	23%	33%	9%	17%	41%
• Responded 11/7-15	5%	16%	77%	2%	97%	2%	1%	1%
	<b>What are your overall feelings relating to the presidential election voting process?</b>							
• Responded 11/4-6	32%	18%	47%	3%	58%	19%	20%	3%
• Responded 11/7-15	20%	7%	73%	0%	93%	1%	6%	1%
	<b>What are your overall feelings relating to the election’s fairness?</b>							
• Responded 11/4-6	26%	17%	47%	10%	61%	13%	18%	8%
• Responded 11/7-15	11%	11%	75%	2%	91%	5%	3%	1%
	<b>What are your feelings relating to the overall election results (including congress and states)?</b>							
• Responded 11/4-6	27%	32%	26%	15%	24%	18%	29%	29%
• Responded 11/7-15	23%	11%	61%	5%	69%	12%	18%	1%
	<b>What are your overall feelings relating to our nation’s future?</b>							
• Responded 11/4-6	27%	12%	56%	6%	23%	16%	49%	12%
• Responded 11/7-15	16%	4%	73%	7%	67%	13%	19%	1%

See Q11 in Appendix III – Survey Questionnaire. n = 92 for Trump voters responding 11/4-6 and 44 for Trump voters responding 11/7-15; 107 for Biden voters responding 11/4-6 and 125 for Biden voters responding 11/7-15. The survey was released the day after the election in order to glean respondents’ fresh insights, despite the final results not yet being known. Therefore, the data above is split between the immediate days after the election, and a few days later, when results were better known.

## Appendix I – Demographic Summary and Additional Data & Analysis

## Demographic Summary

The following demographic summary is based on responses from 149 Orthodox Jewish Trump voters and 246 Orthodox Jewish Biden voters:

- **Gender** – Trump voters were more often male. Trump voters were 65% male and 35% female; Biden voters were 52% male and 48% female.
- **Marital status** – There were no significant differences between Trump and Biden voters: 80% are married.
- **Age** – Biden voters are younger. 31% of Trump voters were ages 18-44, with an overall median age of 55; 42% of Biden voters were ages 18-44, with an overall median age of 50.
- **Schooling** – Biden voters have more formal education. 82% have post-college education, compared to 67% of Trump voters.
- **Employment status** - There were no significant differences between Trump and Biden voters: 54% are employed full-time.
- **Household Income** – Biden voters tend to have higher incomes, with a household median of \$159K, compared to \$139K among Trump voters.
- **Geography** – Respondents came from 26 states. The Trump voters were from NY (25%), NJ (13%), FL (12%), MA (10%), and CT (8%). The Biden voters were from NY (26%), MA (21%), DC/MD (12%), NJ (12%), and CT (6%).

# The Voting Decision Issues – Response Data Across All Response Options

	Trump Voters				Biden Voters			
	Most Critical	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not So Important	Most Critical	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not So Important
Abortion	4%	18%	36%	42%	10%	38%	30%	22%
Advice from religious leaders	4%	7%	28%	61%	<0.5%	2%	8%	90%
Anti-Semitism	37%	45%	14%	5%	18%	53%	22%	7%
Balance branches of government	21%	35%	23%	21%	25%	38%	22%	15%
Bringing the country together	8%	26%	37%	30%	49%	38%	10%	3%
China	20%	38%	27%	14%	2%	16%	45%	37%
Climate change	1%	8%	30%	61%	41%	40%	15%	5%
Coronavirus pandemic	12%	29%	35%	24%	78%	19%	3%	0%
Crime	38%	47%	12%	3%	6%	27%	43%	24%
Education issues, college-related	8%	25%	37%	30%	11%	28%	37%	24%
Education issues, grades K-12	8%	25%	40%	27%	14%	30%	33%	24%
Experience and accomplishments	38%	34%	22%	6%	41%	40%	13%	6%
Federal deficit	15%	29%	38%	18%	5%	27%	45%	23%
Federal government's role	28%	46%	19%	8%	17%	45%	26%	12%
Fighting for average Americans	32%	33%	27%	8%	36%	37%	21%	7%
Gap between rich and poor	6%	18%	35%	41%	34%	36%	24%	6%
Gun ownership	16%	31%	23%	30%	21%	29%	21%	29%
Health care	16%	39%	36%	9%	56%	35%	7%	2%

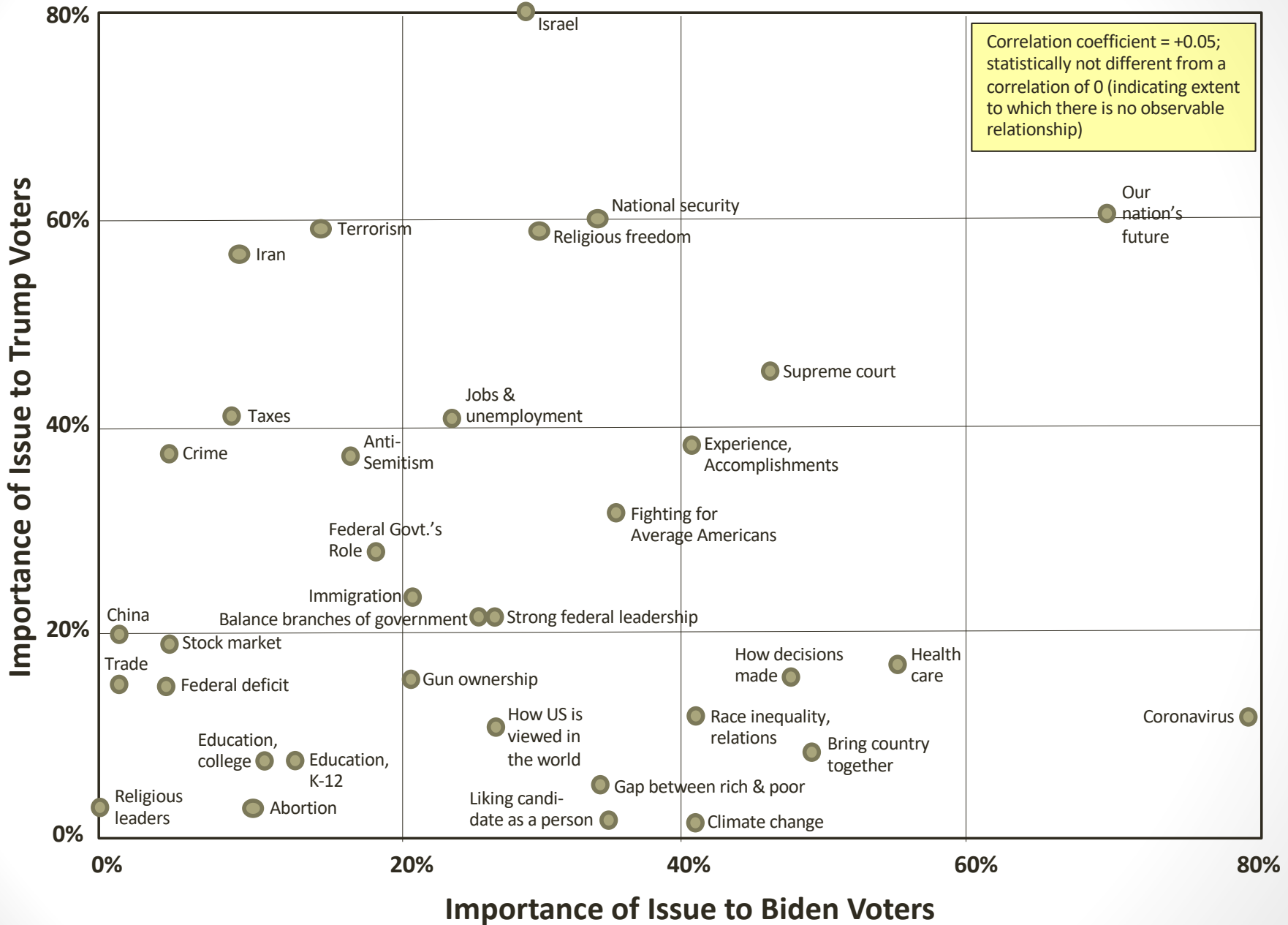
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## The Voting Decision Issues – Response Data Across All Response Options *(Continued)*

	Trump Voters				Biden Voters			
	Most Critical	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not So Important	Most Critical	Quite Important	Somewhat Important	Not So Important
How decisions at the top are made	16%	44%	23%	17%	49%	38%	8%	5%
How U.S. is viewed in the world	10%	29%	24%	36%	26%	54%	15%	4%
Immigration	23%	39%	29%	8%	21%	47%	27%	5%
Iran	57%	37%	3%	3%	8%	42%	38%	12%
Israel	80%	16%	4%	1%	29%	43%	22%	6%
Jobs and unemployment	41%	45%	13%	1%	25%	57%	16%	2%
My liking candidate as a person	3%	11%	24%	62%	35%	35%	20%	10%
National security	60%	34%	5%	1%	36%	47%	16%	2%
Our nation’s future	61%	32%	6%	1%	76%	21%	3%	0%
Racial inequality and race relations	13%	24%	36%	27%	42%	44%	11%	2%
Religious freedom	59%	33%	8%	1%	29%	39%	26%	6%
Stock market	19%	48%	21%	12%	5%	24%	43%	28%
Strong federal leadership	21%	43%	24%	13%	27%	43%	22%	8%
Supreme Court appointments	47%	32%	17%	5%	47%	33%	14%	6%
Taxes	42%	43%	11%	4%	8%	32%	42%	18%
Terrorism	59%	35%	4%	1%	13%	38%	32%	17%
Trade agreements	20%	51%	23%	6%	3%	35%	46%	17%



# Voting Decision Issues Scatter Diagram – Trump Voters’ vs. Biden Voters’ Priorities



## **Biden Administration Announced Priorities – Three of the four Biden Administration initial priorities are not priorities among Orthodox Trump voters. Are these opportunities for dialogue?**

The Biden Administration has listed the following as its four priorities\*

	Where This Issue Ranks Among the 35 Issues	
	Biden Voters	Trump Voters
<b>Response to Covid-19</b>	<b>#1</b>	<b>#25</b>
<b>Economic recovery</b>	<b>#19</b>	<b>#9</b>
<b>Racial equality</b>	<b>#7</b>	<b>#26</b>
<b>Climate change</b>	<b>#9</b>	<b>#35</b>

\* Wall Street Journal, November 10, 2020, citing a Biden Transition Team website launched November 8, 2020.

## Appendix II – Sample Verbatim Responses

The verbatim comments in this appendix are unedited (spelling, typos, upper case, etc. ... they are shown as received in the survey) and were randomly selected. Responses to each question were sorted using a randomization process and then every  $n^{\text{th}}$  comment is shown. This process was adopted in order to provide a relatively brief but random snapshot of respondents' comments. It is a common practice to edit any verbatim responses that contain possibly identifying information (e.g., names of individuals, synagogues, locations, etc.) in order to retain anonymity; in the case of this survey, responses did not have any such potentially identifying information.

## Sample Verbatim Responses: “Is there anything else you want to tell us about what you found appealing or unappealing about either Donald Trump or Joe Biden; or how you made your voting decision?”

### Responses from Trump Voters:

- I voted for Trump because actions speak louder than words. That is also the same reason I didn't vote for Biden.
- Trump's record is stellar. Biden is not physically fit nor mentally capable of being President. I abhor his international policies. Harris is absolutely unacceptable. Both have no ethical or moral compass.
- You would think in this great country of ours, we could come up with better candidates to run this country in a fair non-combative way.
- my vote was mostly for trump and against biden, I don't like the democrat corruption. I don't want Kamala Harris either.
- biden has no real conviction about issues. he'll say whatever you want to hear. flip flopped on fracking. will be swayed by more loud and radical elements in democratic party
- I hated voting for Trump. I voted to flip the Senate to cripple Trump and keep him accountable. Ultimately, fear over Israel should the Blue Wave have swept the election, and what it would mean for the momentum around regional peace for Israel, shifted my vote inside the booth from a vote against Trump into a repulsed vote for him.
- Not only against Biden but against the Democratic party and proxy groups (i.e. House/Senate leaders, NGOs, and media)
- My decision came down to policy over personality. Trump accomplished a lot in the last 4 years. I think Biden will push a progressive agenda which I don't agree with.
- I voted for the policies not the man. Biden is a mensch (if you forget Borking). But, he's likely senile. But, like Reagan, it all depends on how well he delegates. Trump is uncouth and a unicorn But, his policies prove that the American economy should still be the strongest in the world, not China.
- Promises made, promises kept and strong Coronavirus leadership from day one.
- I do not want my grandchildren to live in a socialist country
- I totally dislike the president as a person, but I feel that he has done much for this country in terms of security. He did an enormous amount for the economy as well, but unfortunately most of that was erased by the pandemic. He has done much to help ensure the security of the state of Israel. It is extremely important that Iran be held in check, & I don't believe that the democrats have the desire or the will to do it. I don't care for Mr. Biden as a person, nor do I think that he's competent.

- I voted for Trump due to his accomplishments IN SPITE of his shortcomings. Of course I would prefer if he acted nicer and more "Presidential", but that pales in comparison to what he has done to get the country back on track.
- I dislike Trump's personality but do like his actual policies. My issue with Biden was more the people he has around him than Biden himself
- I am not sure what you mean by gap between rich and poor. If you mean that it is too great, well, it has gotten better since the election of Donald J. Trump.
- The media's lying , distorting and minimizing Mr. Trumps many accomplishments. also his amazing friendship to Israel which we have never seen the likes of, and will definitely not see in the Biden Administration. Secondly, Joe Biden will found to be a way bigger crook than Trump ever was. He is a liability to our national security. Bidens embracing the Left, especially the anti-Zionist Squad. You can't call yourself sympathetic to Zionism and embrace the Squad, Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.
- Trump strongly supports Israel
- I found pretty much every health and ecological policy by Trump abhorrent but I was worried about the anti-Semitism and anti-Israel rhetoric that Biden had shared.
- Trump has helped Israel-----appealing Pro Palestinians-----VERY unappealing
- Joe Biden is a career political hack. He's done nothing & is a corrupt moron that made millions using his role in the gov't. What a total piece of crap!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Trump stopped funding terrorists who pay people to murder Jews
- TRUMP=ISRAEL'S BACK
- I voted for Donald Trump, not because I like him as a person, because he shows the country and the world he doesn't care what people think of him and will do what this country needs. He doesn't back down!
- Concerning Israel, President Trump has been the best friend to the Jewish state. Biden will bring back many of President Obama's insiders who were very bad for Peace in the middle east. Economy was excellent under President Trump, created millions of new jobs. Weak recovery under President Obama. Trump strong on US military strength. I believe Biden will gut the military. Biden will reverse immigration rules. Biden ran on a platform of increasing taxes.

n = 74 comments received from Trump voters; shown above is a random sample of these comments

## Sample Verbatim Responses: “Is there anything else you want to tell us about what you found appealing or unappealing about either Donald Trump or Joe Biden; or how you made your voting decision?”

### Responses from Biden Voters:

- Joe Biden has decades of experience in government and empathy. Trump tweets divisive statements and makes it clear he does not like me for being a Jewish Democrat.
- My decision to vote for Biden was based on Trump's denigration of John McCain's military service as I am a US Army vet. Not to mention his making fun of persons with disabilities etc., etc. etc.
- DJT stands against everything we stand for as Torah Jews. Biden is a flawed but good leader.
- I find Donald Trump's rhetoric to be abhorrent. He encourages racism, anti-semitism, and xenophobia. Anti-semitism rose significantly in the last four years. I also do not believe those on the right who think a Biden presidency is disastrous for Israel. Biden has a long history of being an ally of Israel.
- I am disturbed that for the most part Orthodox Jews support a candidate "because he's good for Israel." I love Israel, but I live in the USA. I need to vote based on who will be best for the USA.
- Trump is a morally deficient autocrat who threatens our democracy with his lies, incitement and unwillingness to respect the law. He divided the country, alienated our allies, and completely failed to manage the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We need a change. I am concerned that our society has been permanently damaged in terms of people being decent and respectful to each other. With Biden, hopefully he can lead by example in this respect. With Trump, there is no doubt that the unacceptable behavior i.e. name calling, lying, conspiracy theories will continue and will no doubt ruin our society. In addition all of the issues mentioned above, were very important to me. Trump sickens and scares me frankly.
- Donald Trump is a liar, a racist bigot, and overall against every Jewish value about how to treat other people - personally and in policy. He also doesn't seem to believe in science/experts/doctors. Biden is solid, experienced, and overall in line with my domestic priorities.
- Trump is a liar, and an admitted rapist. He has no experience, no knowledge, no humanity, nothing that would make me consider him a fellow human. Biden has experience, humility, the ability to listen to others, the ability to accept corrections.
- Biden is very bland. I am afraid of his party steering to the very left. Trump is a national embarrassment, a disgrace to the office and the country.
- Trump has done more to destroy this country than corona. I hope he is voted out of office, goes to jail, and that this country can heal from the damage he has done. Biden is our only hope for allowing us to regain the democratic values that I hold dear.
- I don't like either of them, but I hate Donald Trump's personality, supreme court appointments, stance on the environment, and the divisiveness he exacerbated in this country. Also I'm not sure if everything he did for Israel will be good in the long term.
- At a time when the US faces enormous existential problems, the Republicans are nihilist and only care about power, not policy or democracy.
- Donald T is the worst president in 100 years and the republican leadership won't stand up to him. This country's democratic safeguards are fragile.
- My vote was for Biden, but it was also most definitely against Trump.
- Ability to make thoughtful judgements, respect experience, expertise, and and work well with others turned me away from Trump. His pandering towards Jews on the matter of Israel came not from conviction but merely to gain votes and adulation.
- I was very torn. Trump has been good to Israel and against Iran. Biden will be less strong for Israel and he will want to negotiate with Iran again. Trump has hurt the US's image in other countries. He totally mismanaged COVID. He says terrible things. He is not a leader. Biden may kowtow to the far left who are just as antisemitic as the far right. I still want a strong police force and secure borders; yet I want the police and INS to respect human life and dignity.
- Donald Trump is totally unsuitable for President. Morally corrupt, liar, fraud, tax cheat, Putin buddy, horrible person, Trump Hotels, Mar-a-lago, Last night's speech, Wall, Tax cuts, ACA, Cavanaugh, Barrett, Q-Anon, bigot, how much more do you need?
- I find Trump to be a womanizing narcissistic corrupt person completely out for his own gain, regardless of the national or international consequences. I find Biden to be an "old school" politician who doesn't have any policies I particularly like, but also none I particularly hate.

## Sample Verbatim Responses: “Is there anything you’d like to add relating to your feelings regarding the election and its process?”

### Responses from Trump Voters:

- *I was disappointed in NJ that I couldn't vote in person. Only option was dropping it in a secure box.*
- *Even though we are in this Pandemic, too many written in ballots were available, plus the fact that certain states permitted votes to be counted AFTER the election. The mail in votes should have been restricted to those who are high risk.*
- *Media coverage is really skewed. Double standards and censorship*
- *Very concerned about retribution against Trump supporters led by former Obama insiders and AOC. I have never heard of such things in a free country only in totalitarian ones.*
- *Our election process is a joke. Does the popular vote really elect a President. Or, is it the electoral college whose members can vote in any way they like after the first 2 voting periods.*
- *I don't think that ANY state should be called one way or another for a presidential candidate until EVERY vote cast in the state by whatever legitimate means has been counted, even if it means not knowing for a week.*
- *I am disturbed by the growth in far left radicalism, economic ignorance and lack of commitment to our nation's founding principles. I am horrified that the media has turned into propaganda organs for the left.*
- *The media shoved down America's throat that Biden was going to win by a landslide. The media is way too liberal.*
- *I hope nobody takes our guns away*
- *As of tonight the results are still unclear. It appears that in some states there has been rule changing to appease the Democrats. I'm not entirely sure as I get conflicting viewpoints .*
- *I believe that the amount of fraud and corruption in the election will be exposed and I hope many people will go to prison.*
- *I am extremely concerned about the validity of some of the results. There appears to be foul play on the part of the Democrats.*
- *The electoral college makes the vote be unfair.*
- *I served as a poll ambassador securing dropped off mail in votes- a secure process. Great experience!*

### Responses from Biden Voters:

- *I appreciate the checks and balances as I (unfortunately) don't love the full platforms of either party.*
- *Isn't it a little early to be sending this out if you want my opinion on the presidential election result, as it hasn't been concluded yet on 11/4?*
- *I wish I could voted for Trump*
- *Since the results are not in I just pray we are on the road to recovery*
- *The attempt by the President to subvert the results of the election that began before and continues now after the election makes me feel like I live in a different country than the USA that has been my home for 75 years.*
- *I can't believe 70 million people voted for Donald Trump, very sad.*
- *The electoral college, and the "winner takes all" policies of most States, are very problematic and lead to results that necessarily reflect the wishes of the people. I understand it, but wish someone would come up with a creative, more fair system.*
- *Disappointed in the amount of support Trump is getting in general, and from Orthodox Jews in particular*
- *It is the biggest relief of my life that we pulled ourselves from the brink of autocracy/losing our democracy forever but I am fearful of the conspiracy theories, QAnon, and the hate that neither the GOP or my Jewish community seems to want to stop.*
- *I'm very concerned about actual and attempted voter suppression.*
- *I'm mostly worried about the potential for civil unrest*
- *I found voting from abroad (this was my first election since moving to Israel) to be very difficult.*
- *Unless we reform the elections by stopping voter suppression, dark money and gerrymandering we will fall. We have been warned by what we have seen and we must act to return to democracy before we lose it permanently. We must stop disinformation.*
- *It concerns me that nearly half of the country voted for Donald Trump. I know that I will not agree with everyone about everything, but I expected there to be more people in this country who felt that decency was important.*

## Appendix III – Survey Questionnaire

# Survey Questionnaire (Page 1 of 3)

## Nishma Research 2020 Post-Election Survey

### INTRODUCTION

Now that the elections have been held, we need to come together and move forward. We need to understand why people voted the way they did, appreciate, and promote our communal priorities, regardless of how people voted. We also need to understand and respect people's feelings about the election.

That's our goal in doing this survey, and we thank you for sharing your thoughts. We will release our findings to the leadership of both major parties, the media, the public as a whole, and the Jewish community. Let us learn from each other and come together to achieve mutual goals.

This survey is open to all those age 18+, who reside in the U.S. or are U.S. citizens living elsewhere. The survey will close Sunday, November 15 at noon Eastern Time, and results should be available approximately November 23. We encourage you to share the link (it will be provided at the end of the survey) with others... family, friends, social media, etc.

The survey is being sponsored and conducted by Nishma Research, a non-profit research organization that focuses on the Jewish community and is located in West Hartford, Connecticut. If you have any questions, write to Mark Trencher, principal researcher, by clicking on this Email Link.

The survey takes about eight minutes to complete. Only some of the questions require a response, but we hope you will respond as fully as possible. The survey is completely anonymous.

You may take this survey on a computer, tablet or smartphone. Note that it may take a couple of minutes longer on a smartphone, due to the way questions are presented. You will have a chance at the end of the survey to enter your email in order to get the results when they are released. If you enter your email that information will not be attached to your responses.

#### \*Q1. What is your religion?

- Jewish
- Protestant
- Catholic
- Other – Please describe
- Nothing in particular, none

If Q1 = Jewish:

#### \*Q2. With which Jewish denomination do you identify, if any?

- Orthodox
- Conservative
- Reform
- Secular, Cultural, "Just Jewish"
- Other – Please describe
- None in particular

If Q2 = Orthodox:

#### \*Q3. Within Orthodoxy, how do you identify yourself?

- Modern or Centrist Orthodox
- Chasidic
- Yeshivish / Agudah
- Other – Please describe

#### Q4. Whom did you vote for in the 2016 presidential election?

- Donald Trump
- Hillary Clinton
- Other
- Didn't vote

#### \*Q5. Did you vote for president in this year's election?

- Yes
- No – I wasn't registered
- No – I couldn't decide or didn't like either candidate
- No – I didn't get around to it or other reason

If Q5 = Yes:

#### Q6. Whom did you vote for as president? (Please remember that all responses are anonymous.)

- Donald Trump
- Joe Biden
- Other

If Q5 = No:

#### Q7. Although you didn't vote for president, we want to hear your thoughts. Is there anything you want to tell us about what you found appealing or unappealing about either Donald Trump or Joe Biden, or their positions? [Open-Ended]

If Q5 = Yes:

#### Q8a. How important were each of the following issues in your voting decision?

- Abortion
- Advice from religious leaders
- Anti-Semitism
- Balance among the three branches of government
- Bringing the country together
- China
- Climate change
- Coronavirus pandemic
- Crime
- Education issues, college-related
- Education issues, grades K-12

(Continued)



# Survey Questionnaire (Page 2 of 3)

## Q8a. How important were each of the following issues in your voting decision? (continued)

- Experience and accomplishments
- Federal deficit
- Federal government's role
- Fighting for average Americans
- Gap between rich and poor
- Gun ownership
- Health care

### Response Scale:

- My Most Critical Factors
- Quite Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not So Important

## Q8b. (Continued) How important were each of the following issues in your voting decision?

- How decisions at the top are made
- How the U.S. is viewed in the world
- Immigration
- Iran
- Israel
- Jobs and unemployment
- My liking the candidate as a person
- National security
- Our nation's future
- Racial inequality and race relations
- Religious freedom
- Stock market
- Strong federal leadership
- Supreme Court appointments
- Taxes
- Terrorism
- Trade agreements

### Response Scale:

- My Most Critical Factors
- Quite Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not So Important

If Q6 = Trump:

## Q9a. Would you say you voted more for Trump or more because you were against Biden?

- My vote was totally for Trump
- My vote was mostly for Trump
- My vote was both for Trump and against Biden
- My vote was mostly against Biden
- My vote was totally against Biden

If Q6 = Biden:

## Q9b. Would you say you voted more for Biden or more because you were against Trump?

- My vote was totally for Biden
- My vote was mostly for Biden
- My vote was both for Biden and against Trump
- My vote was mostly against Trump
- My vote was totally against Trump

If Q5 = Yes:

## Q10. Is there anything else you want to tell us about what you found appealing or unappealing about either Donald Trump or Joe Biden; or how you made your voting decision? [Open-Ended]

## Q11. What are your overall feelings relating to ...

- The presidential election result
- The election voting process
- The election's fairness
- The overall election results (including congress and states)
- Our nation's future

### Response Scale:

- Very Positive
- Somewhat Positive
- Neither Positive nor Negative
- Somewhat Negative
- Very Negative
- Don't Know

## Q12. Is there anything you'd like to add relating to your feelings regarding the election and its process? [Open-Ended]

## Q13. How do you identify politically?

- Liberal, Progressive or Left-Leaning Democrat
- Moderate Democrat
- Moderate Republican
- Conservative or Right-Leaning Republican
- Libertarian
- Independent
- None of the above
- Not sure

## \*Q14. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-conforming, other

# Survey Questionnaire (Page 3 of 3)

## Q15. What is your marital/relationship status

- Married
- Single
- Divorced or Separated
- Widowed
- Living with a partner or in a long-term relationship
- Other

## Q16. What is your age?

- 18 to 29
- 30 to 44
- 45 to 59
- 60 to 74
- 75+
- Would rather not say

## Q17. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?

- Less than high school graduate
- High school graduate
- Some college, no degree
- Two-year associate degree
- Four-year Bachelor's degree
- Some postgraduate or professional schooling, no degree
- Postgrad. or professional degree (master's, doctorate, medical, law, etc.)

## Q18. Which of the following best describes your employment status?

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Student
- Working or volunteering - non-paid
- Self-employed full-time
- Self-employed part-time
- Retired
- Homemaker
- Disabled/handicapped
- Not employed

## Q19. What is your total annual household income?

- Under \$50,000
- \$50,000 to \$79,999
- \$80,000 to \$124,999
- \$125,000 to \$199,999
- \$200,000 to \$299,999
- \$300,000 or more
- Would rather not say

If Q1 = Jewish:

**Q20. The Views of Minorities Within Judaism – We view the voices of all Jews as important, especially among groups that are in a minority. Please check the box(es) below if you are a member of any of these groups. [Multiple Responses]**

- Blacks / Jews of Color
- LGBTQ
- Other minority group – Please describe

**Q21. If you live in the U.S., what are the first three digits of your primary residential zip code? \_ \_ \_ \_ \_**

If Q3 = Modern or Centrist Orthodox:

**Q22. Where do you see yourself within the range of Modern or Centrist Orthodoxy?**

- "To the left" ... Liberal Modern Orthodox
- "In the center" ... Centrist Modern Orthodox
- "To the right" ... More stringent (machmir) Centrist Orthodox

**Q17. What is your total annual household income?**

- Under \$50,000
- \$50,000 to \$74,999
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to \$149,999
- \$150,000 or more
- Would rather not say

**Thank you very much for sharing your thoughts. Your response is very important to us.**

**Q23. Please check the box(es) below ...**

- [If Q1 = Jewish]: Check here if you are willing to receive email invitations to future occasional surveys of the Jewish community.
- Check here if you would like to get a free report of this survey's results emailed to you.

If either box in Q23 is checked:

**Please let us know your email address, so that we can contact you as appropriate. Your email will be totally confidential. It will not be used for any other purposes and will not be attached to your survey responses. [Open-Ended for Email Address]**

**We encourage you to share this survey with family, friends, colleagues, social media, etc. This survey will close Sunday, November 15 at noon Eastern Time. The Survey Link is: <http://bit.ly/Come-Together-2020>**

**You may now close this browser window or tab to exit the survey. Thank you!**

## About Nishma Research

- Nishma Research was founded in 2015, with the purpose of informing the Jewish community through communal and organizational studies. “Nishma” means “we listen” – and our mission involves conducting research on topics that will promote greater listening among the diverse strands of the Jewish people.
- Nishma is a full-service research firm that supports synagogues, schools, community organizations, and other researchers. We conduct custom research, data collection, analysis, and presentation employing quantitative and qualitative research approaches.
- This is Nishma’s seventh broad Jewish communal study. Prior studies are: (1) a 2016 survey of people who have left Orthodoxy (“off the *derech*”), across all segments of Modern Orthodox and Haredi Jewry; (2) a 2017 broad demographic and attitudinal profile of American Modern Orthodoxy; (3) a 2019 study of the future of Modern Orthodoxy as it confronts challenges and opportunities emanating from its interaction with secular society; (4) a 2019 study that explored the motivations, challenges and religious journeys of *Baalei Teshuvah*; (5) an early 2020 study of the political views of Orthodox Jews, including differences between Modern Orthodox and Haredi; and (6) a mid-2020 study of the health, emotional, financial and religious impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.
- All Nishma Research reports are available free to the public and downloadable at <http://nishmaresearch.com>. We appreciate the opportunity to share our findings, which, to date, have been discussed at 38 venues.

