



**Muhlenberg College/*Morning Call***  
**Pennsylvania Presidential Election Survey**  
**AUGUST 2020**

**Key Findings:**

1. With election day 2020 a little over two months away, the latest Muhlenberg College/*Morning Call* poll finds former Vice President Joe Biden holding a narrow 4-point lead (49%-45%) over President Donald Trump among likely Pennsylvania voters.
2. The President's efforts to once again win the Keystone State's 20 electoral votes is hindered by the majority of Pennsylvania likely voters who disapprove of his handling of the presidency (51%), and who believe that President Trump does not deserve reelection (53%),
3. Despite his narrow lead over Trump in the poll, Biden also exhibits liabilities, with more likely voters in the Commonwealth viewing him unfavorably (46%) than favorably (39%).
4. In the midst of the economic struggles that have accompanied the COVID 19 pandemic, only 10% of likely voters in Pennsylvania said their financial situation is worse than it was before Trump took office, with 40% stating their financial situation is better now. These levels are largely unchanged since the last Muhlenberg/*Morning Call* poll in February.
5. Democrats hold a 7% lead among likely Pennsylvania voters in terms of congressional elections in the state, with 45% planning to vote for the Democrat candidate in their district, compared to 38% backing Republican candidates.
6. As debates about mail-in balloting in Pennsylvania continue, about 2 out of 3 likely voters (64%) report that they intend to vote in person this November, with about 1 in 4 intending to vote by mail (26%), and 1 in 10 unsure of the voting method they will choose.
7. About 1 in 4 likely voters in the Keystone State indicate that as of the day they were surveyed they did not feel safe voting in person.

8. Likely voters in the Commonwealth are highly divided on the threat of fraud associated with extensive mail-in voting this fall, with 47% agreeing that there is a greater chance of fraud if most Pennsylvanians vote by mail, and 46% disagreeing with this claim.
9. The President's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic receives very poor rating from Pennsylvania's likely voters, with only 17% indicating he has done an "excellent" job on this issue, compared to 51% who rated his performance on this matter as "poor."
10. In regards to the means of instruction in Pennsylvania schools, a plurality of likely voters (39%) prefer a mix of in-person and online instruction, with smaller percentages supporting entirely online instruction (28%), or in person instruction (22%).

### **Methodological Statement:**

The following report contains the results of a telephone survey of 416 likely voters in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania between August 11 and 17, 2020. Respondents were interviewed in English on both landlines (105) and cell phones (311). With a randomly selected sample of respondents the margin of error for the surveys is +/- 5.5% at a 95% level of confidence. Margins of error for questions with smaller sample size will be larger. In addition to sampling error, one should consider that question wording and other fielding issues can introduce error or bias into survey results. Interviewing was conducted by Communication Concepts of Easton, Pennsylvania under protocols established by the MCIPO. The data has been weighted to gender, age, region, party, race and educational attainment to reflect voter population parameters. The calculation of sampling error takes into account design effects due to the weighting identified above. In order to reach a representative sample of registered voters both land lines and cell phones were called up to 3 times. The response rate for this survey as calculated using the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) RR2 formula is approximately 11%. The sampling frame for the study is from the registered voters files of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. To determine likely voters, only voters who have voted in 1 or more of the last 4 general elections (2016-2019), or who is a new registrant since November of 2016 were included in the sampling frame. In addition, only survey respondents from this frame who indicated that they were "definitely" or "very likely" to vote in the November election were included in the sample. Due to rounding the totals provided in the frequency report may not total 100%. The survey instrument (presented in its entirety below) was designed by Dr. Christopher P. Borick of the MCIPO in conjunction with the staff of the *Morning Call*. The survey was funded exclusively by the *Morning Call* and the MCIPO. For more detailed information on the methods employed please contact the MCIPO at 484-664-3444 or email Dr. Borick at [cborick@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:cborick@muhlenberg.edu).

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**FREQUENCY REPORT AND INSTRUMENT**

Q1: Thank you. Which of the following categories best describes your current voting status? Are you registered as a \_\_\_\_\_? (READ LIST)

- 1. Democrat..... 47%
- 2. Republican.....39%
- 3. Independent..... 12%
- 4. Other Party..... 2%
- 5. Not Registered to Vote in Pennsylvania (END SURVEY)

Q2: How likely are you to vote in the presidential election this November? Are you definitely going to vote, very likely to vote, not too likely to vote or definitely not voting in the November Election?

- 1. Definitely Going to Vote.....89%
- 2. Very Likely to Vote..... 11%
- 3. Not Too Likely to Vote (END SURVEY)
- 4. Definitely not voting (END SURVEY)
- 5. Not Sure (Volunteered) (END SURVEY)

Q3: Thinking about the upcoming presidential elections in November, would you say that you are very interested, somewhat interested or not interested at all in the 2020 election?

- 1. Very Interested.....83%
- 2. Somewhat Interested.....15%
- 3. Not Interested At All ..... 2%
- 98: Not Sure (Volunteered) (END SURVEY)

Q4: Next, do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

- 1. Approve.....43%
- 2. Disapprove..... 51%
- 98. Not Sure (Volunteered)..... 6%

TIME SERIES

	NOVEMBER 2019	FEBRUARY 2020	AUGUST 2020
Approve	40%	42%	<b>43%</b>
Disapprove	56%	50%	<b>51%</b>
Not Sure	4%	9%	<b>6%</b>

Q5: Next, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf?

- 1. Approve.....47%
- 2. Disapprove..... 36%
- 98. Not Sure (Volunteered).....17%

Q6: Now, I would like to ask your overall impression of a few political figures. For each name I read, please tell me if your impression of him is favorable or unfavorable.

First, Donald Trump

- 1. Favorable.....42%
- 2. Unfavorable.....51%
- 3. Neutral/Not Sure (Vol)..... 8%

Q7: Next, Joe Biden

- 1. Favorable.....39%
- 2. Unfavorable.....46%
- 3. Neutral/Not Sure (Vol).....15%

Q8: Do you think Donald Trump deserves to be re-elected as President, or not?

- 1. Deserves re-election.....44%
- 2. Does not deserve re-elected..... 53%
- 98. Not Sure (Volunteered)..... 3%

**TIME SERIES**

	NOVEMBER 2019	FEBRUARY 2020	AUGUST 2020
Deserves re-election	42%	42%	<b>44%</b>
Does not deserve re-elected	57%	54%	<b>53%</b>
Not Sure	2%	4%	<b>3%</b>

Q9: Now, if the 2020 presidential election was being held today and the race was between Donald Trump and Joe Biden, would you vote for? (OPTIONS ROTATED)

- 1. Trump .....44%
- 2. Biden.....48%
- 3. Neither/Other ..... 3%
- 98. Not Sure (Volunteered)..... 4%

**TIME SERIES**

	NOVEMBER 2019	FEBRUARY 2020	AUGUST 2020
Trump	43%	47%	<b>44%</b>
Biden	52%	47%	<b>48%</b>
Neither/Other	4%	2%	<b>3%</b>
Not Sure	2%	4%	<b>4%</b>

Q10: Are you leaning more toward voting for Donald Trump or Joe Biden? (OPTIONS ROTATED) (ASKED ONLY OF THOSE THAT SAID “NOT SURE” ON Q9: N =18)

- 1. Trump ..... 9%
- 2. Biden.....26%
- 98. Not Sure (Volunteered).....65%

**PRESIDENTIAL RACE INCLUDING LEANERS**

- Trump.....45%**
- Biden.....49%**
- Neither/Other.....3%**
- Not Sure..... 3%**

Q11: What is the most important issue for you in terms of deciding your vote in the 2020 presidential election? (Open Ended – BEING CODED INTO CATEGORIES)

ISSUE	%
Economy	20%
COVID-19	7%
Health Care	6%
Character	6%
Getting Rid of Trump	5%
Social Justice/Equality	5%
Law Enforcement	4%
Keeping Trump	4%
Environment	3%
Education	3%
Abortion	3%
Foreign Affairs	2%
Immigration	2%
Competency	2%
Guns	2%
Military/Security	2%
Stopping Democrats	2%
General Interest of Country	2%
Protecting Constitution	2%
Senior Citizen issues	1%
Taxes	1%
Protecting Democracy	1%
Uniting the Country	1%
Other	10%
Unsure/None	5%

Q12: If the election for U.S. House of Representatives was held today, would you vote for the Republican or the Democratic candidate in your Congressional district? (ROTATE OPTIONS)

1. Democrat .....45%
2. Republican.....38%
3. Other (Volunteered)..... 1%
- 98: Not Sure (Volunteered).....17%

Q13: Overall, would you say that your financial situation is better, worse or about the same since President Trump took office in 2017?

- 1. Better..... 40%
- 2. Worse.....10%
- 3. About the Same..... 47%
- 98. Not Sure (Vol)..... 2%

**TIME SERIES**

	FEBRUARY 2020	AUGUST 2020
Better	40%	<b>40%</b>
Worse	11%	<b>10%</b>
About the Same	48%	<b>47%</b>
Not Sure	1%	<b>2%</b>

Q14: Now thinking ahead to the November election, do you plan to vote in person at a polling station, or vote by mail?

- 1. Vote in Person.....64%
- 2. Vote by Mail.....26%
- 98. Not sure (VOL) .....10%

Q15 Now thinking about the presidential election in November, do you think that Pennsylvania is very prepared, prepared, not very prepared or not prepared at all to keep this November’s elections safe and secure?

- 1. Very Prepared..... 8%
- 2. Prepared.....47%
- 3. Not Very Prepared.....14%
- 4. Not Prepared at All..... 6%
- 98. Not Sure.....25%

**TIME SERIES**

	FEBRUARY 2020	AUGUST 2020
Very Prepared	11%	<b>8%</b>
Prepared	43%	<b>47%</b>
Not Very Prepared	15%	<b>14%</b>
Not Prepared at All	3%	<b>6%</b>
Not Sure	28%	<b>25%</b>

Q16. Which of the following do you consider to be the biggest threat to Pennsylvania having a safe, secure and accurate election in November? (ROTATE OPTIONS)

- 1. Foreign interference in the election.....14%
- 2. Voting machines malfunctioning..... 7%
- 3. Voter fraud.....39%
- 4. Suppression of individuals from voting.....30%
- 5. Other factor (Volunteered)..... 4%
- 98. Not Sure..... 7%

**TIME SERIES**

	FEBRUARY 2020	AUGUST 2020
Foreign interference in the election	17%	<b>14%</b>
Voting machines malfunctioning	22%	<b>7%</b>
Voter fraud	25%	<b>39%</b>
Suppression of individuals from voting	21%	<b>30%</b>
Other Factor (Vol)	15%	<b>4%</b>
Not Sure	1%	<b>7%</b>

Next I'm going to read you a few statements. For each statement I read tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement: First:

**TIME SERIES**

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
Q17: There is a greater chance of election fraud if most Pennsylvanians vote by mail this year,	31%	16%	18%	28%	7%
Q18: As of today, I don't feel safe voting in person.	5%	18%	31%	42%	3%
Q19: It's important to me that the candidates I support in state house and senate elections think about issues and problems in the same ways as the candidate I support for president.	31%	43%	13%	2%	10%



Q20: Next I have a few questions about the coronavirus and the government response to the pandemic. First, would you say that President Trump has done an excellent, good, fair or poor job handling the coronavirus outbreak?

- 1. Excellent.....17%
- 2. Good.....21%
- 3. Fair..... 9%
- 4. Poor.....51%
- 98: Not Sure (Vol)..... 3%

Q21: Next, would you say that Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf has done an excellent, good, fair or poor job handling the coronavirus outbreak?

- 1. Excellent.....10%
- 2. Good.....32%
- 3. Fair.....25%
- 4. Poor.....31%
- 98: Not Sure (Vol)..... 3%

Q22: How much, if at all, do you wear a face mask around other people when you're outside of your home? Do you do this all the time without exception, most of the time but not always, a good amount of the time, some of the time, or never.

- 1. All the time.....55%
- 2. Most of the time.....29%
- 3. A Good Amount of the time..... 6%
- 4. Some of the time..... 6%
- 5. Never..... 4%

Q23: When the school year begins do you think schools should open for in-person instruction as usual, provide a mix of in-person and online instruction, or provide entirely online instruction?

- 1. In-person instruction.....22%
- 2. A mix of in-person and online instruction.....39%
- 3. Entirely online instruction .....28%
- 98. Not Sure (Vol).....11%

Q24: Finally, I have a few questions about yourself. Which of the following categories best describes your racial identity? Are you (READ LIST)?

1. White/Caucasian..... 80%
2. African-American.....10%
3. Hispanic/Latino..... 4%
4. Asian..... 2%
5. Native American.....<1%
6. Mixed race..... 3%
7. or other..... 2%

Q25: Which of the following categories best describes your religious affiliation? Are you (READ LIST)?

1. Catholic..... 32%
2. Protestant..... 32%
3. Jewish..... 4%
4. Muslim..... 2%
5. Hindu..... <1%
6. Other Religion (Including agnostic).... 22%
7. or Atheist..... 4%
98. Not Sure (Volunteered)..... 4%

Q26: What is your highest level of education? (READ LIST)

1. Less than High School..... 3%
2. High School Graduate.....31%
3. Some college or technical school.....27%
4. College graduate (4 yr only)..... 26%
5. Graduate or professional degree..... 14%

Q27: Which of the following categories best describes your family income? Is it (READ LIST)?

1. Under \$20,000..... 9%
2. \$20,000-\$40,000.....17%
3. \$40,000-\$60,000.....17%
4. \$60,000-\$80,000.....16%
5. \$80,000-\$100,000.....11%
6. Over \$100,000.....24%
98. Not Sure (Volunteered)..... 6%

Q28: In which of the following age categories does your current age fall. READ LIST \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. 18-29.....19%
- 2. 30-49.....27%
- 3. 50-65.....31%
- 4. or Over 65.....23%

Q29: Finally to which gender identity do you most identify? (READ LIST)

- 1. Male.....49%
- 2. Female.....51%
- 3. Or another category besides Male or Female..... <1%

## SELECTED CROSSTABS

### President Trump Approval Ratings

	Approve	Disapprove	Not Sure
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>6%</b>
Male (49%)	51%	44%	5%
Female (51%)	36%	58%	7%
Democrat (47%)	9%	86%	5%
Republican (39%)	87%	11%	3%
Independent/Other Party (14%)	38%	46%	16%
College Degree (40%)	38%	55%	7%
No College Degree (60%)	47%	48%	6%
White (80%)	49%	46%	5%
Non-White (20%)	19%	68%	13%
Philadelphia (13%)	19%	79%	2%
Philadelphia Suburbs (22%)	39%	57%	4%
Alleghany County (11%)	36%	53%	11%
Northeast PA (14%)	63%	33%	4%
Remainder of State (41%)	49%	44%	6%
18-29 (19%)	31%	58%	12%
30-49 (27%)	45%	51%	5%
50-64 (31%)	47%	50%	3%
65 and Over (23%)	46%	48%	6%
Catholic (32%)	54%	42%	4%
Protestant (32%)	52%	42%	7%
Other/Agnostic (20%)	28%	65%	8%

## Trump vs. Biden

	Trump	Biden	Neither/Other/Not Sure
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>6%</b>
Male (49%)	52%	40%	8%
Female (51%)	38%	58%	4%
Democrat (47%)	8%	87%	5%
Republican (39%)	92%	8%	<1%
Independent/Other Party (14%)	39%	39%	23%
College Degree (40%)	54%	41%	5%
No College Degree (60%)	48%	45%	7%
White (80%)	51%	44%	6%
Non-White (20%)	25%	67%	7%
Philadelphia (13%)	19%	72%	10%
Philadelphia Suburbs (22%)	45%	52%	3%
Alleghany County (11%)	39%	52%	9%
Northeast PA (14%)	61%	28%	11%
Remainder of State (41%)	49%	47%	5%
18-29 (19%)	35%	58%	8%
30-49 (27%)	45%	47%	8%
50-64 (31%)	49%	44%	7%
65 and Over (23%)	47%	52%	1%
Catholic (32%)	54%	45%	1%
Protestant (32%)	56%	40%	4%