

American democracy on the eve of the 2020 election

Bright Line Watch (www.brightlinewatch.org)

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Threats to the 2020 election

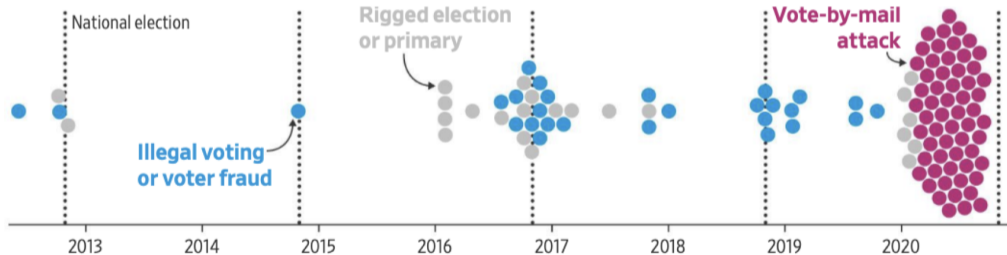
- ▶ Attacks on public confidence in the vote count
- ▶ False perceptions of widespread voter fraud
- ▶ Minority support for political harassment/violence
- ▶ Risk of nightmare scenarios during/after Election Day

Public confidence in the vote

Calling Foul

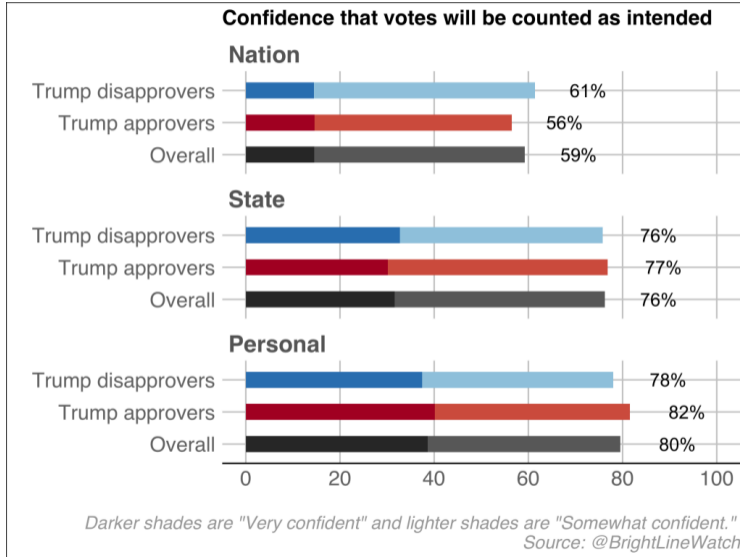
President Trump has alleged that illegal voting was widespread during previous elections. In 2020, he has shifted to questioning the legitimacy of vote by mail.

Selected tweets from @realDonaldTrump mentioning election fraud



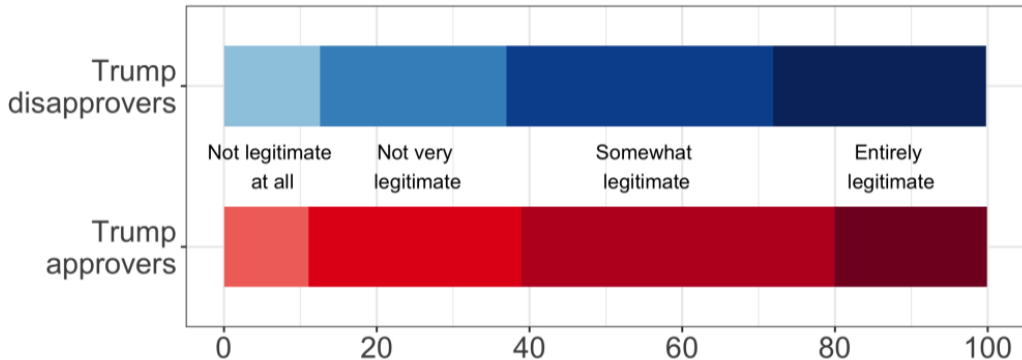
Source: WSJ analysis of Trump Twitter Archive
Katherine Riley/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Public confidence in the vote count



Legitimacy of change in vote count

Would you view the final electoral result as legitimate if the candidate who is ahead on election night loses?



Horizontal axis is percentage of respondents in each category.

Source: @BrightLineWatch

Public perceptions of voter fraud

National Counsel to Bush campaigns:

Republicans have insufficient evidence to call elections ‘rigged’ and ‘fraudulent’

Opinion by **Benjamin L. Ginsberg**

The lack of evidence renders these claims unsustainable. The truth is that after decades of looking for illegal voting, there's no proof of widespread fraud. At most, there are isolated incidents — by both Democrats and Republicans. Elections are not rigged. Absentee ballots use the same process as mail-in ballots — different states use different labels for the same process.

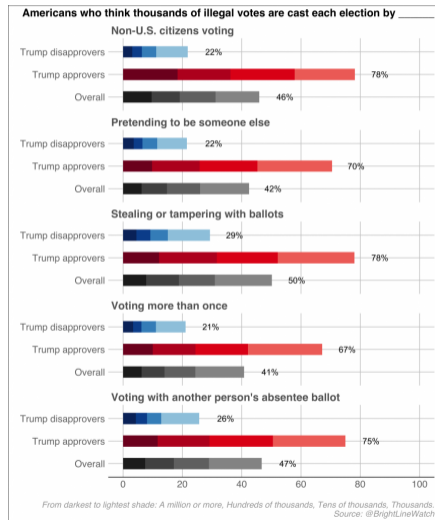
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Support for political harassment and violence

When Armed Vigilantes Are Summoned With a Few Keystrokes

Kevin Mathewson, who quickly organized the Kenosha Guard on Facebook, said the Wisconsin city's police were outnumbered during protests. The streets turned deadly after his call to arms.

[NATION](#)

Reports: Michael Reinoehl, suspect in fatal shooting of 'Patriot Prayer' backer in Oregon, killed by federal task force

Michael Balsimo and Ted Warren | Associated Press

Published 12:25 a.m. ET Sep. 4, 2020 | Updated 12:54 p.m. ET Sep. 4, 2020

The Washington Post

Trump's attacks on political adversaries
are often followed by threats to their
safety

By **Greg Miller** and **Isaac Stanley-Becker**

Oct. 28, 2020 at 7:00 a.m. EDT

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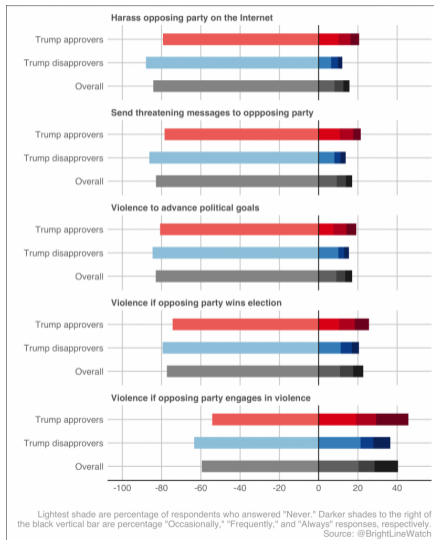
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Concern about destabilizing events on Election Day/after



The Atlantic

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The Election That Could Break America

If the vote is close, Donald Trump could easily throw the election into chaos and subvert the result. Who will stop him?

JURISPRUDENCE

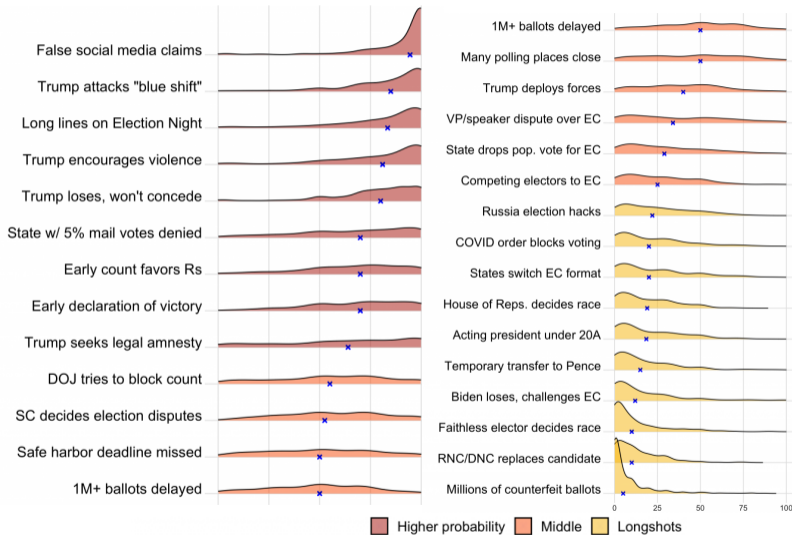
The 10 Scariest Election Scenarios, Ranked

We asked 10 experts for their worst election nightmares—and how to prevent them from happening.

By JEREMY STAHL

AUG 14, 2020 · 1:58 PM

Nightmare scenarios: Expert forecasts



Blue crosses denote medians. Densities normalized to fall within range of data.
 Source: @BrightLineWatch

The risk to the peaceful transfer of power

BBC

US & Canada

Donald Trump suggests delay to 2020 US presidential election

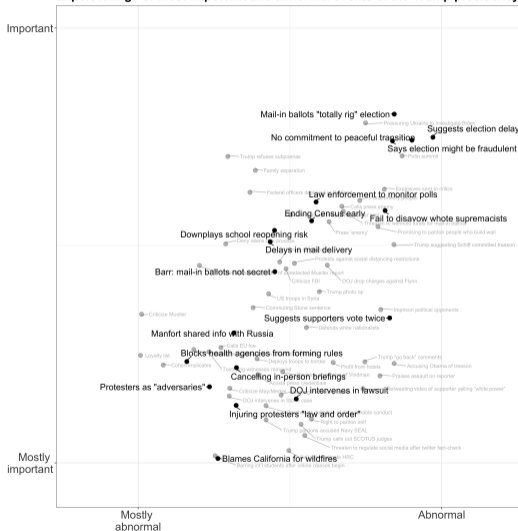
🕒 30 July

President Trump declines to commit to peaceful transfer of power if he loses

By **Aamer Madhani and Kevin Freking** The Associated Press, Updated September 23, 2020, 7:33 p.m.

The risk to the peaceful transfer of power

Expert ratings of most important and abnormal events of the Trump presidency



Each point is the mean rating of an event from experts surveyed by Bright Line Watch from Aug. 2018 to October 2020. Source: @BrightLineWatch