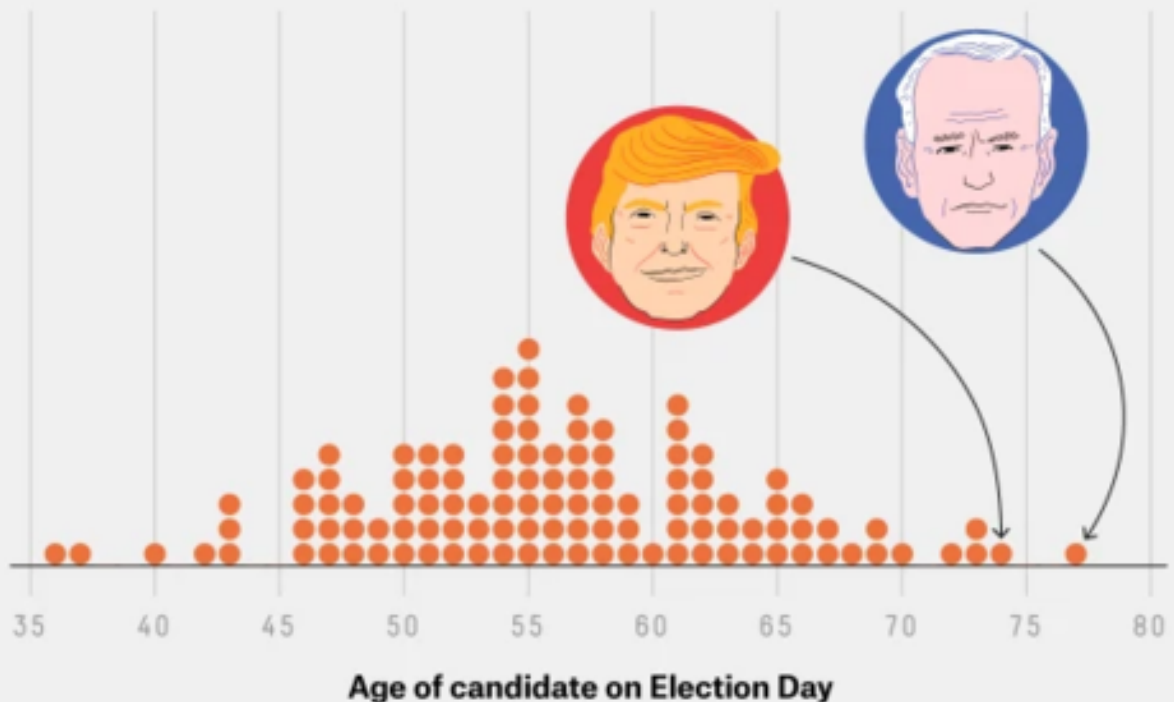


Biden and Trump will be the oldest presidential nominees

Number of major-party presidential nominees* by age, 1796-2020



* Only the top two vote-getters from the major parties are included. In cases where a party split its nominations (1824, 1836, 1860), those candidates have been omitted. In 1820, President James Monroe was the only candidate from that cycle, as he was unopposed.

FiveThirtyEight

SOURCES: BIOGRAPHICAL DIRECTORY OF THE U.S. CONGRESS, DAVE LEIP'S ATLAS OF U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA

Critical Analysis

1. Which U.S. presidential election featured the oldest presidential candidates ever?
2. Roughly, what is the median age of U.S. presidential candidates throughout U.S. history and what is the median age of U.S. presidential candidates in 2020?
3. What story does this chart tell?
4. Why do you think that in this time of crisis we have chosen such ancient candidates?
5. What is one consequence of having such decrepit presidential candidates?
6. If your grandparents are still living, how old are they and would you want them to be president of the United States?

7. It's interesting that most of the leadership of popular mass movement groups of all sorts, from those fighting for gun control, against climate change, and to the Black Lives Matter movement are young. Why do you think that is and what does it tell us about our political system?
8. The [median voter age in the 2016 presidential election](#) was 52. The median age of a presidential candidate in the 2020 election is 76. How do you think this discrepancy will impact voter turnout in 2020?
9. [Article II of the U.S. Constitution](#) sets a minimum age requirement for the presidency at 35 years. Explain whether you would advocate setting a maximum age for the presidency or at least for presidential candidacy.
10. In [Federalist No. 70](#), (yes, that could be on the AP exam in the argument essay FRQ!) Hamilton talks about the energy of the chief executive writing, "Energy in the Executive is a leading character in the definition of good government. It is essential to the protection of the community against foreign attacks; it is not less essential to the steady administration of the laws; to the protection of property against those irregular and high-handed combinations which sometimes interrupt the ordinary course of justice; to the security of liberty against the enterprises and assaults of ambition, of faction, and of anarchy." Hamilton then warns, on the other hand, that, "A feeble Executive implies a feeble execution of the government. A feeble execution is but another phrase for a bad execution; and a government ill executed, whatever it may be in theory, must be, in practice, a bad government." Do you think, that as a general rule, a septuagenarian (someone in the 70 year-old age range) president is more likely to be **energetic** or **feeble**?
11. In 2015, The life expectancy for any 77 year-old male American was 10 years. COVID-19 [is particularly dangerous](#) for those 65 and 8 out of 10 [COVID-19 deaths are attributed to people age 65+](#). This may sound morbid, but what happens if a [presidential candidate](#) dies before the election? And what happens if a [presidential candidate](#) dies after the election but before they are sworn in?
12. While the [25th Amendment](#) instructs us what to do regarding disability or death during the presidency, do you think there should be a [28th Amendment](#) to the U.S. Constitution dealing with the possibility of presidential and vice-presidential candidates and death?

Learning Extension

Read the Five Thirty Eight article, [What Happens if a Presidential Candidate Can no Longer Run for Office?](#)

Action Extension

Contact your [U.S. House Representative](#) and let them know what you think about a 28th Amendment regarding presidential-elect succession or about an age maximum for presidential candidates. Share their response in class or online.