



**To: Interested Parties**

**From: Lauren Goldstein, Change Research, & Dan Pfeiffer**

**Date: October 11, 2020**

**Re: Youth Voters Poll in Battleground States**

[Toplines](#)

## Key Findings

A poll from Change Research of 935 registered likely 2020 voters 18-40 in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin from October 3-7, 2020<sup>1</sup> shows:

- Younger voters (18-29) and voters of color report less motivation to vote than their older (30-40) and White counterparts.
- Dwayne Johnson, LeBron James, and both Obamas test very favorably with these voters and are likely to be effective messengers on the issues for those voters who are not quite as favorable towards Biden himself.
- The top issues for voters 18-40 in these states are a robust public health and economic response to the pandemic, affordable healthcare, combating racism, and climate change. Among Biden supporters specifically, the health components of the pandemic, as well as climate and fighting racism, outweigh economic recovery as bigger priorities to address.
- Pre-messaging, voters 30-40 express more hope, excitement, and relief when thinking about Biden and the policies he would enact as President than voters 18-40, and less anxiety, disappointment, or dissatisfaction than voters 18-29. Voters who rate their motivation to vote in the Presidential race somewhere between 1-7 (out of 10) report feeling roughly equal levels of hope, excitement, and relief as they do anxiety, dissatisfaction, and disappointment.
- Biden supporters express feeling much more excited to vote for him after reading several of his positions on the issues, most notably on coronavirus, climate change, and affordable college.
- Post-messaging, 18-29 year olds averaged 0.7 points higher in excitement on the 1-7 scale, and 0.7 points lower in disappointment, when re-rating how they felt about Joe Biden and the policies he would enact as President. Voters who were initially between 1-7 in motivation to vote averaged 0.7 points higher in hopefulness on the 1-7 scale.

## Motivation to Vote

We asked voters how motivated they felt, on a scale of 1-10, to vote in the Presidential race. Motivation is comparatively much higher among 30-40 year olds, among whom 80% rate themselves between 8-10 out of 10. By comparison, only 53% of 18-29s rate themselves between 8-10 out of 10. White voters are also reporting much higher motivation to vote than voters of color. Specifically, 78% of White voters rate themselves between 8-10, compared to 58% of Latinx voters and only 42% of Black voters who say the same. Importantly, lack of motivation appears related to lack of information about Biden and his stance on the issues. Among low motivation voters who are Democrats or Independents, 34% don't know his plan on

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<sup>1</sup> Using its Dynamic Online Sampling Engine to attain a sample reflective of the electorate, Change Research polled 935 people in Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin from October 3-7, 2020. The margin of error is 3.74%. Post-stratification weighting was performed on age, gender, race/ethnicity, and state. Weighting parameters were based on voter file data and election results were based on numbers released by the Secretaries of State.

criminal justice reform, 33% don't know his plan on affordable college or affordable healthcare, and 31% don't know his plan on climate change.

### Trusted Messengers

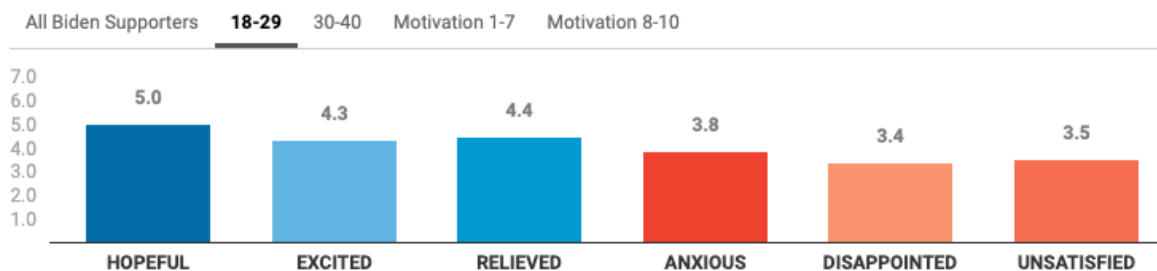
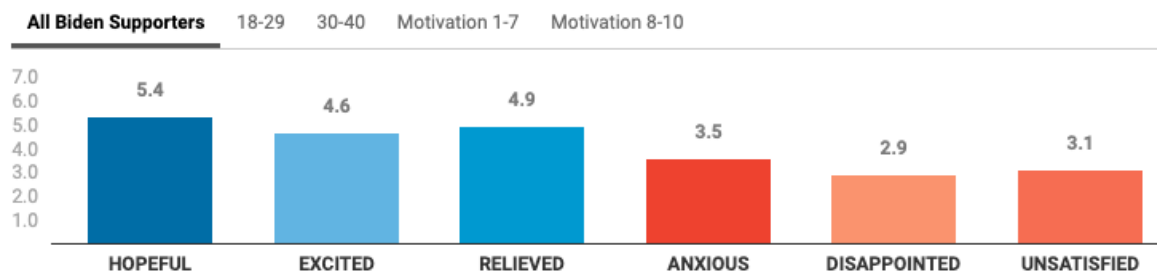
Biden has a net favorable rating of +24 in the overall sample, roughly on par with Bernie Sanders (net +27). His favorability is higher among 30-40 year olds (+28) relative to 18-29s (+18). Other highly favorable public figures we tested, who may serve well as trusted messengers to these voters, are:

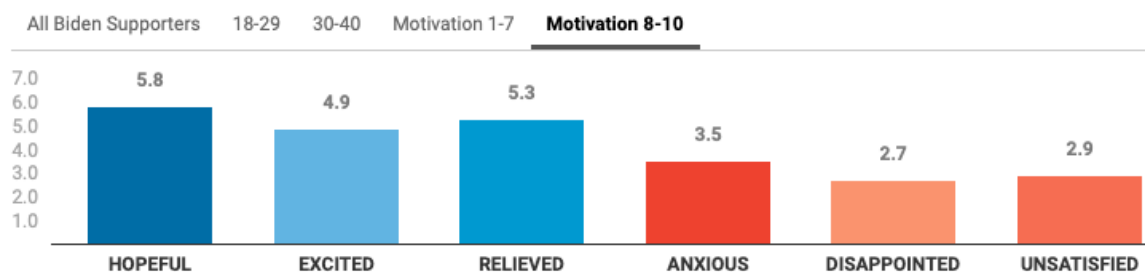
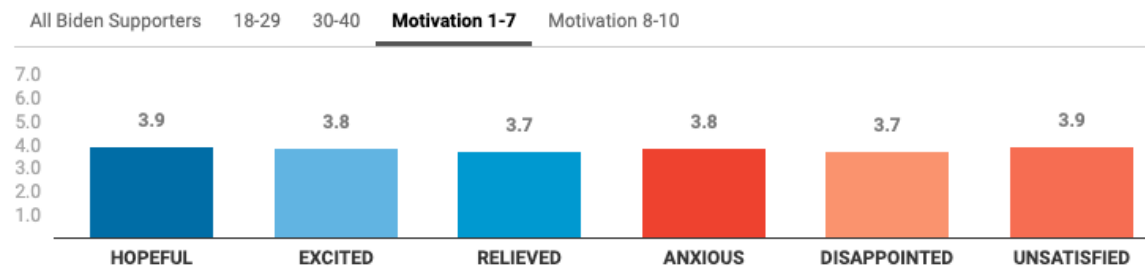
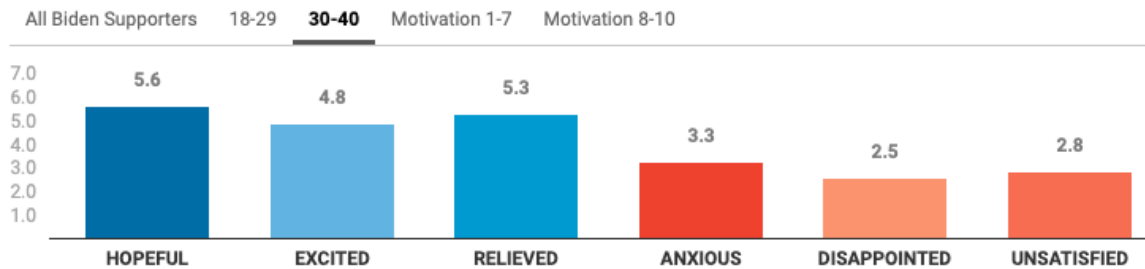
- Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson (+49), particularly among 30-40 year olds (+53) and White voters (+52).
- Both Obamas (Barack Obama +49, Michelle Obama +48), especially among 30-40 year olds (+51) and voters of color (+60 and +54, respectively).
- LeBron James, who is net +29 favorable, and particularly favorable among Black voters (+40), relative to White voters (+25).

### Candidate Emotions

Overall, the emotion Biden supporters 18-40 in battleground states feel is “hopeful.” Voters express higher degrees of positive emotions--hopeful, excited, relieved--than negative emotions--anxious, disappointed, or unsatisfied. However, there are nuances by subgroups. Voters 30-40 express more hope, excitement, and relief than voters 18-29, and less anxiety, disappointment, or dissatisfaction than voters 18-29. Voters who rate their motivation to vote in the Presidential race somewhere between 1-7 (out of 10), as opposed to voters who rate themselves between 8-10, report, on average, feeling equal amounts of all six emotions; in other words, they are hovering at the midpoint of the 1-7 scale on each emotion, positive and negative.

***“When thinking about the candidate you are going to vote for and the policies they would enact as President, how much do you feel each of the following?”***





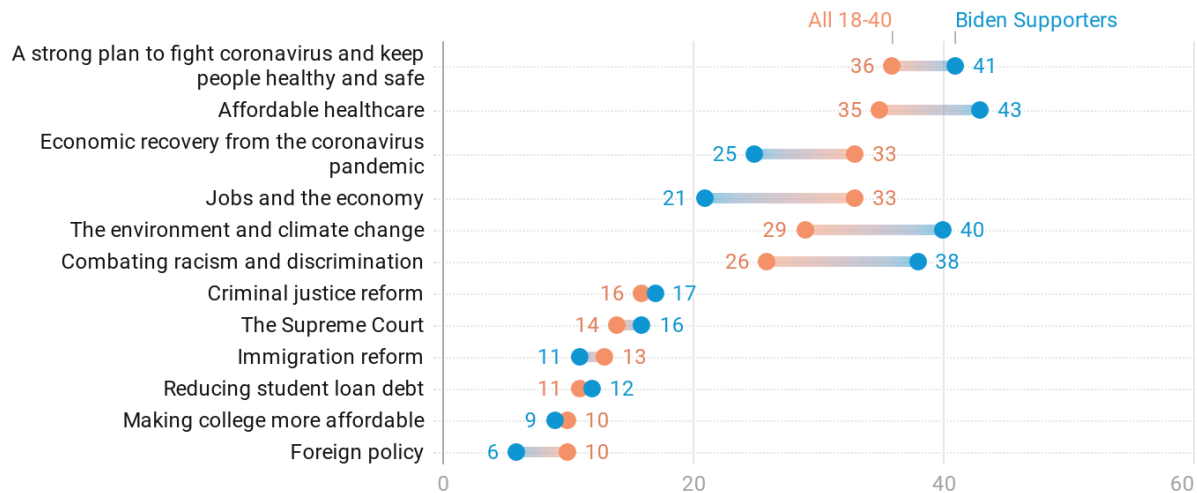
Graphs depict weighted average on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (completely).

### Issues Voters Prioritize

We asked these voters to choose what issues from a list are the most important to them personally, when thinking about what the next Presidential administration should prioritize. Overall, the top issues voters want prioritized are a robust response to the pandemic both in terms of public health and economic recovery, affordable healthcare, climate action, and fighting racism. Among Biden supporters, in particular, a public health response to the pandemic, healthcare, fighting racism, and climate change are the clear top priorities, and economic recovery from coronavirus, and jobs and the economy generally, are comparatively less important to them.

## Top Issues

"When thinking about what the next Presidential administration should prioritize, what are the most important issues to you personally?"



## Biden on the Issues

We presented voters who support Biden with various positions Biden has taken on the issues, and asked them to indicate whether it changed their level of excitement to vote for him.

### People Over Corporations

We showed voters the following description of Biden's approach on income inequality:

***"Joe Biden will enact higher taxes on the wealthiest 1% of Americans and big corporations, and cut taxes for the middle class."***

65% of Biden supporters said this statement made them much more excited to vote for Biden.

### Climate Change

61% of Biden supporters believe he shares their view on climate change, while 18% think he's too conservative on the issue, and 13% don't know his position. Among Biden supporters and undecided voters who chose climate change as a top priority, 26% think he is too conservative on this issue. We showed voters the following description of Biden's climate plan:

***"Joe Biden plans to make a historic investment to fight climate change and secure environmental justice by investing \$2 trillion in clean energy infrastructure and jobs, paid for by rolling back the Trump tax cuts."***

After reading this statement, 65% of Biden supporters say it makes them much more excited to vote for him. Among those for whom climate change is a top three issue, 72% are much more excited to vote for him after reading this statement. Among Biden supporters and undecideds who are low in motivation (1-7 out of 10), this is the message that performed best, with 41% of those voters saying this position made them much more excited to vote for Biden.

### **Criminal Justice**

We showed voters the following description of Biden's criminal justice plan:

***“Joe Biden has committed to ending the federal government’s use of for-profit prisons, restoring voting rights for former felons, decriminalizing marijuana, expanding mental health and substance abuse treatment, and creating a \$20 billion grant program to support criminal justice reform at the state and local level.”***

After reading this statement, 64% of Biden supporters say it makes them much more excited to vote for him. Among Biden supporters and undecided voters for whom criminal justice reform is a top three issue, 68% are much more excited to vote for him after reading this statement.

### **Coronavirus**

We showed voters the following descriptions of Biden's coronavirus plan:

***“Joe Biden will ensure that every person, whether insured or uninsured, will not have to pay a dollar out-of-pocket for visits related to COVID-19 testing, treatment, preventative services, and any eventual vaccine.”***

After reading this statement, 62% of Biden supporters say it makes them much more excited to vote for him. Among Biden supporters and undecided voters for whom coronavirus is a top three issue, 65% are much more excited to vote for him after reading this statement.

***“As part of his coronavirus plan, Joe Biden will guarantee paid sick leave for workers, people caring for family members or loved ones, people who can’t work because they are high-risk for COVID-19, parents and guardians of children whose schools are not open, gig economy workers, and independent contractors.”***

After reading this statement, 57% of Biden supporters say it makes them much more excited to vote for him. Among Biden supporters and undecided voters for whom coronavirus is a top three issue, 63% are much more excited to vote for him after reading this statement.

### **Affordable College**

We showed voters the following description of Biden's plan to make college more affordable:

***“Joe Biden will provide free college for families making less than \$125,000 per year.”***

After reading this statement, 59% of Biden supporters say it makes them much more excited to vote for him. Among Biden supporters and undecided voters for whom affordable college is a top three issue, 62% are much more excited to vote for him after reading this statement. Among Biden supporters and undecided voters for whom student loan debt is a top three issue, 69% are much more excited to vote for him after reading this statement.

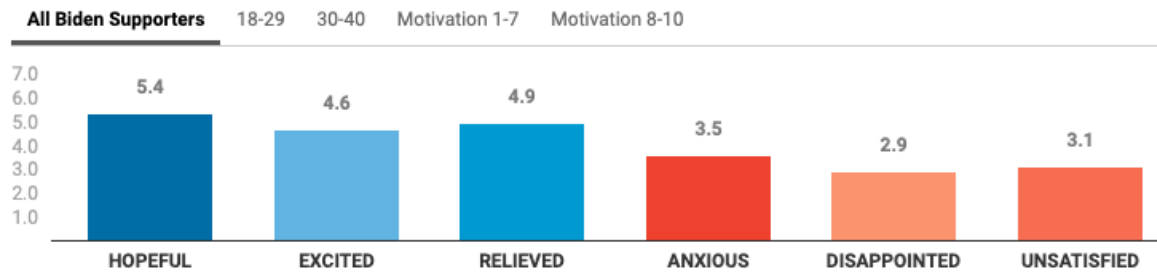
## **Candidate Emotions After Messaging**

Finally, we asked voters to re-rate their emotions about voting for Biden after having read his positions on the issues. Overall, the messaging produced a 0.6 point increase in excitement on the 1-7 scale, a 0.4 point decrease in anxiety, 0.4 point decrease in disappointment, and 0.4 point decrease in dissatisfaction. These shifts are particularly pronounced among groups that initially expressed comparatively lower levels of positive emotions and higher levels of negative emotions. Specifically:

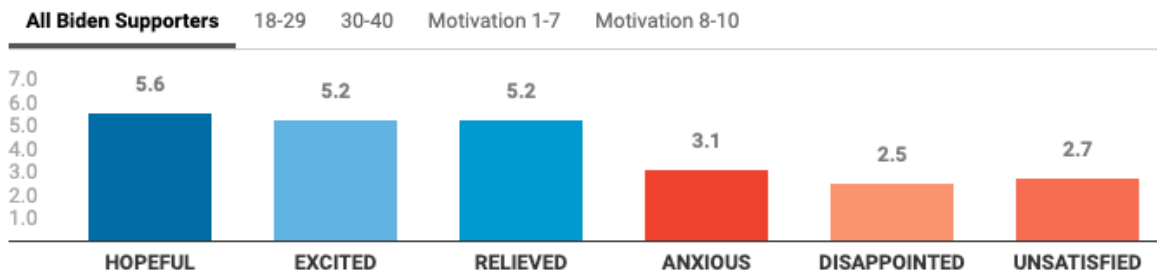
- On average, 18-29s went from 4.3 to a 5.0 out of 7 in excitement
- On average, 18-29s went from a 3.4 to a 2.7 out of 7 in disappointment

- On average, low motivation voters went from a 3.9 to a 4.6 out of 7 in hopefulness

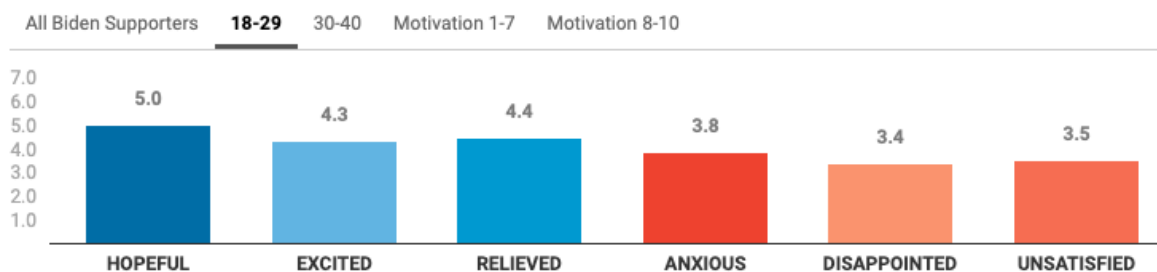
### Pre-Messaging: All Biden Supporters



### Post-Messaging: All Biden Supporters



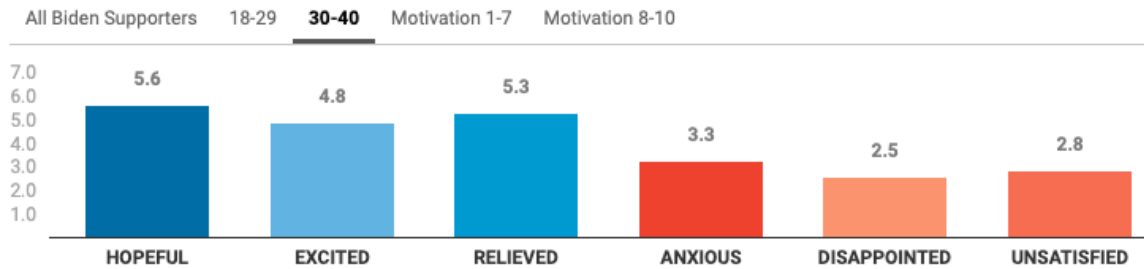
### Pre-Messaging: 18-29s



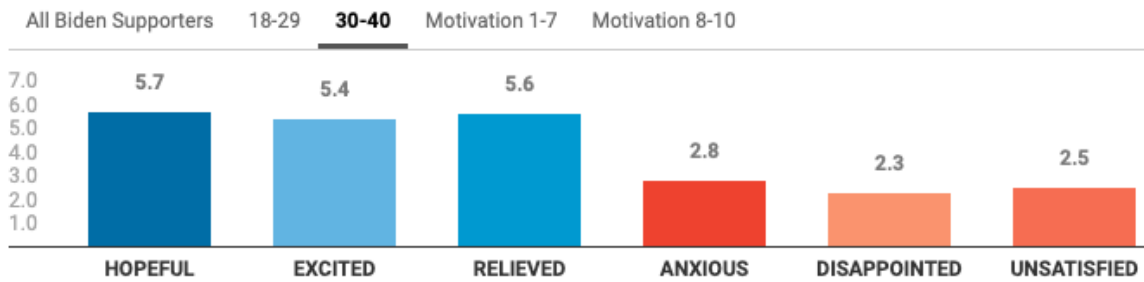
### Post-Messaging: 18-29s



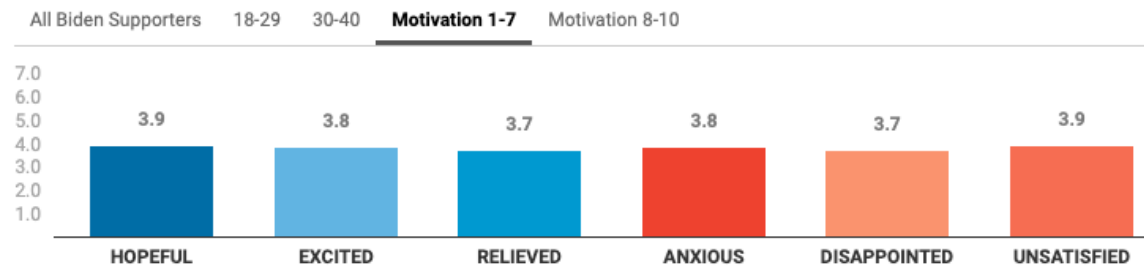
*Pre-Messaging: 30-40s*



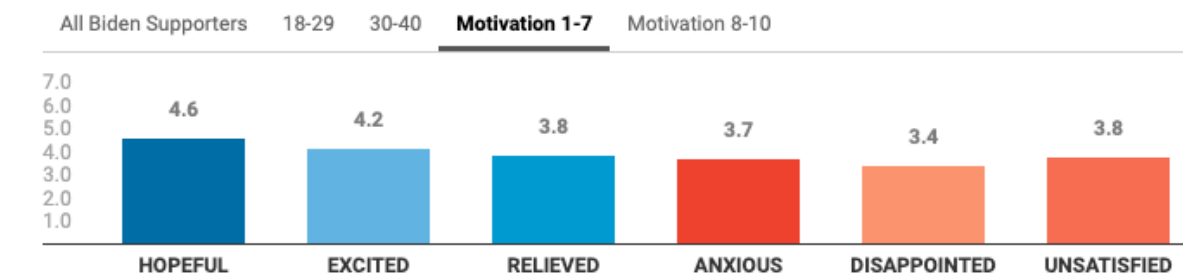
*Post-Messaging: 30-40s*



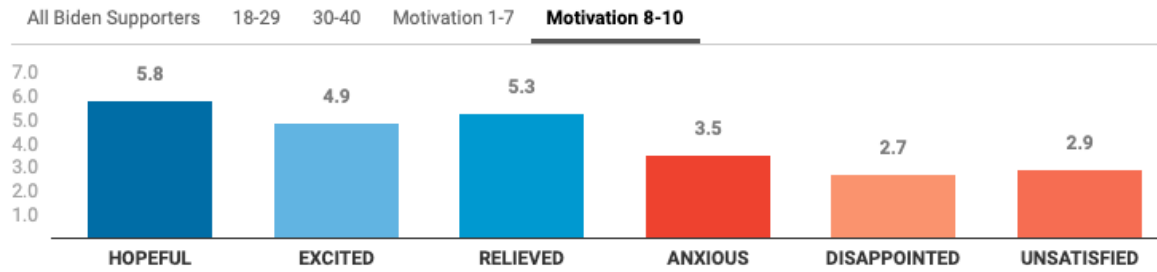
*Pre-Messaging: Low Motivation*



*Post-Messaging: Low Motivation*



*Pre-Messaging: High Motivation*



*Post-Messaging: High Motivation*

