

Messaging for Potential Scenarios Post-Election Day November 2020

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Please feel free to use this document as a guide for conversations / speaking engagements in the immediate post-election period. We have divided the document into messages for potential scenarios that could emerge in the days following November 3.

If you also engage your audiences through social media, check out our [Rise Up Hub press kit of “Election Week” messages and images](#). These are easy, click-to-post templates for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter based on our research and the below messaging.

TOPLINE MESSAGES

All votes must be counted to make sure democracy works. The vote belongs to us and we all deserve a government that works for us.

We are all Americans going through so much this year, though the pain is especially concentrated in Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities. Something we all share, despite differences, is a right to have equal say. This right has been under attack for too long.

Counting each and every vote, no matter how long it takes, is a step towards building a stronger democracy than we started with. This is about more than the presidency. Democracy is about everyone participating and being heard.

It’s time to move forward from this and build a stronger society where we all belong.

Our country is deeply fractured and American democracy continues to be a work in progress. Organizers, community advocates, and voters are building our democracy to be stronger. Communities in mourning from police violence and losses of loved ones from COVID led the fights this summer. We all must continue the struggle.

Despite historic and current barriers to voting freely and fairly, we’ve had historic voter turnout. A once-in-a-century pandemic didn’t stop millions of voters from showing up to the polls, volunteering as [poll workers](#), bringing [joy to the polls](#). The failures of leadership called people to turn out. These failures - old and new - are particular to our political and electoral systems, and tied to a broader lack of belonging born of structural injustice. It’s time to break out of these structures and continue the work of bridging divides, rebuilding trust, and distributing power.

ALL KEY MESSAGES

1. If the results are still undecided

- a. Due to historic [voter turnout](#), and an unprecedented number of people choosing to vote by mail, we will have to wait days, or perhaps even weeks, to know the complete results. This is because it takes longer for mail ballots to be opened, verified, and counted, and many states do not even begin until Election Day..
 - b. This is not a surprise--[the vote has never been fully counted on election night](#). We anticipated not knowing the results on November 4th due to the unprecedented [number of mail in ballots](#) and how long it takes to open, verify, and count those votes. Counting every vote is more important than speedy results.
- 2. If protests form during the ballot counting process, counting is stopped, there are attempts to stop the count, or there are attempts to stage a coup**
 - a. Protesting is part of the fabric of our country and a constitutionally protected form of dissent. To dismantle a system that devalues Black and brown lives and make the rules that govern our lives fair, we are going to use every tool at our disposal.
 - b. We showed up at the ballot box. And we'll continue to show up in the streets until our voices and power are felt. Together, we can defend our votes and build a government that belongs to us all.
- 3. If violence breaks out**
 - a. Hate groups and armed militias are choosing violence out of fear. Fear of losing a white majority-nation to our new, multi-racial plurality.
 - b. Right-wing actors, including the president, have [instigated violence and intimidation](#) at peaceful protests and at the polls. We condemn violence and white nationalists and prioritize [keeping protesters safe](#).
- 4. If Biden wins, and Trump calls fraud and refuses to concede.**
 - a. The candidates had their time to speak. Now it's the voters' turn. Our historic turnout, even in the face of barriers and adversity, must be heard. The vote belongs to us.
- 5. After Biden wins and results are accepted.**
 - a. Voters have chosen a brighter future. It's time to heal and bridge the divides, address systemic racism and other failures of leadership
 - b. Our new leaders have a lot to tackle and we're going to hold them accountable. The coronavirus pandemic continues to spread, hitting hardest the same communities that made this win happen despite all odds. It's time to protect the tenants struggling to pay rent; the essential workers who've been made vulnerable to provide the services that keep many of us safe; the students struggling without classrooms or stable internet.

- c. We've seen voters stand in line for 8 hours to cast their vote. It's time to secure long overdue voting rights and voter protections so that all are included in the project of American democracy.

6. If Trump wins

- a. We will continue to mobilize against injustices.
- b. We have the right to hold elected officials accountable for their actions. We also have the ability to advocate for change at a state and local level.