



**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Global Strategy Group

**Date:** January 2021

**Re:** New Survey Shows Persuadable Voters Want Urgent Action from Biden Administration and Congress on Gun Safety

In 2020, voters turned out in record numbers to elect Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, and a gun sense majority in the House and Senate. But this is only a first step. The Biden administration must now – as the President-elect so eloquently put it – find ways “not to divide but unify.”

A new survey of 2020 voters nationwide and 2020 House battleground voters shows that gun violence prevention presents an opportunity to unify: Voters from across the political spectrum intensely support a slew of gun safety policies, including background checks, and they are collectively demanding urgent action.

## Democrats cannot take 2020 victories for granted

**The House could go either way in 2022.** Democrats face an uphill battle in 2022 to hold onto the House and Senate majorities as voters in 45 U.S. House battleground districts report they are more likely to vote for a Republican House candidate in 2022 than a Democratic one (41% Democratic candidate/43% Republican). And with redistricting coming, the road ahead may be even tougher than expected. With the balance of power up for grabs in coming years, it is critical that the Biden administration and Democratic Party at large continue to appeal to ticket splitters: the 12 percent of 2020 voters nationwide who do not consistently vote for one party up and down the ballot.

President-elect Joe Biden is above water among these ticket splitters, (56% favorable/43% unfavorable), but his appeal narrows among House battleground voters (50% favorable/48% unfavorable). It is essential that the Biden administration and Congress work together to focus on the issues that appeal to persuadable voters across the country. Gun violence prevention does just that, unifying voters across party lines.

## Americans want immediate action to prevent gun violence

**Voters are united in supporting a range of gun violence prevention measures.** More than two-thirds of 2020 voters, including a majority of ticket splitters, support a range of gun safety policies from ideas that require congressional approval such as requiring background checks on all gun sales and enacting a federal extreme risk law, to executive actions such as regulating ghost guns.

More support these gun safety policies than a range of policy proposals aimed at other issues the Administration may be considering in the first 100 days, including passing another coronavirus relief bill. All of these priorities have majority support, but policies aimed at preventing gun violence are extremely popular: Ticket splitters are 13 points more likely to strongly support “requiring background checks on all gun sales” (79% strong support; 93% total support) and eight points more likely to strongly support the executive action of “requiring gun dealers to engage in best business practices” (74%) than they are to support “passing another coronavirus relief package” (66%). There is also broad support for legislative actions like passing the Violence Against Women Act (90% total support) and the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act (72% total support) that will help reduce gun violence across the country. President-elect Biden and Congress have an excellent opportunity to pass these popular proposals.

For each policy the next president and Congress could pursue, please indicate how much you support or oppose each.

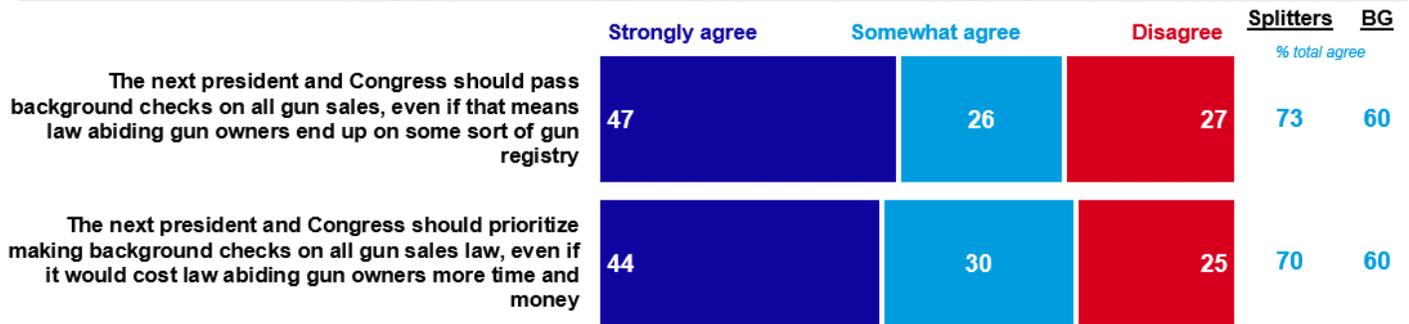
	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Oppose	Splitters % strongly support	BG
Creating new jobs	88		11	85	83
Requiring background checks on all gun sales	75	18	7	79	71
Requiring gun dealers to engage in best business practices	75	20	6	74	67
Passing another coronavirus relief package	71	22	7	66	61
Passing the Violence Against Women Act	67	23	9	57	63
Protecting Americans from gun violence	66	25	10	59	59
Requiring background checks & serial numbers for the kits, core parts and blueprints used to build untraceable guns	64	21	15	56	n/a
Providing a path to hold irresponsible gun dealers accountable in the court of law	57	28	14	51	53
Enacting a federal extreme risk law	53	29	17	42	49
Cutting taxes	53	34	13	48	48
Creating grants to help states implement extreme risk laws	52	30	18	44	44
Regulating the posting and sharing of the computer code that 3D prints untraceable firearms	51	28	21	37	n/a
Cracking down on private citizens carrying guns in public for the purpose of intimidating others	50	21	29	47	n/a
Increasing funding for violence intervention initiatives in cities most impacted by violence	45	38	17	38	46
Passing the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act	45	27	28	39	42
Rejoining the World Health Organization, also called the WHO	44	21	35	38	43
Establishing a federal interagency task force to coordinate federal agencies in addressing gun violence in all its forms	40	37	22	36	n/a
Re-instating the DREAMers program	40	28	32	37	43
Providing student loan forgiveness	40	24	37	33	31
Repealing the ban on transgender Americans serving in the military	39	24	37	33	37
Declaring gun violence a public health emergency	38	29	33	21	n/a
Rejoining the Paris climate accord	38	24	38	36	38
Repealing the travel ban from many Muslim countries	32	27	41	29	36

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<sup>1</sup> Questions marked "N/A" for battleground districts were not asked of the battleground district sample. Italicized policies are all executive actions.

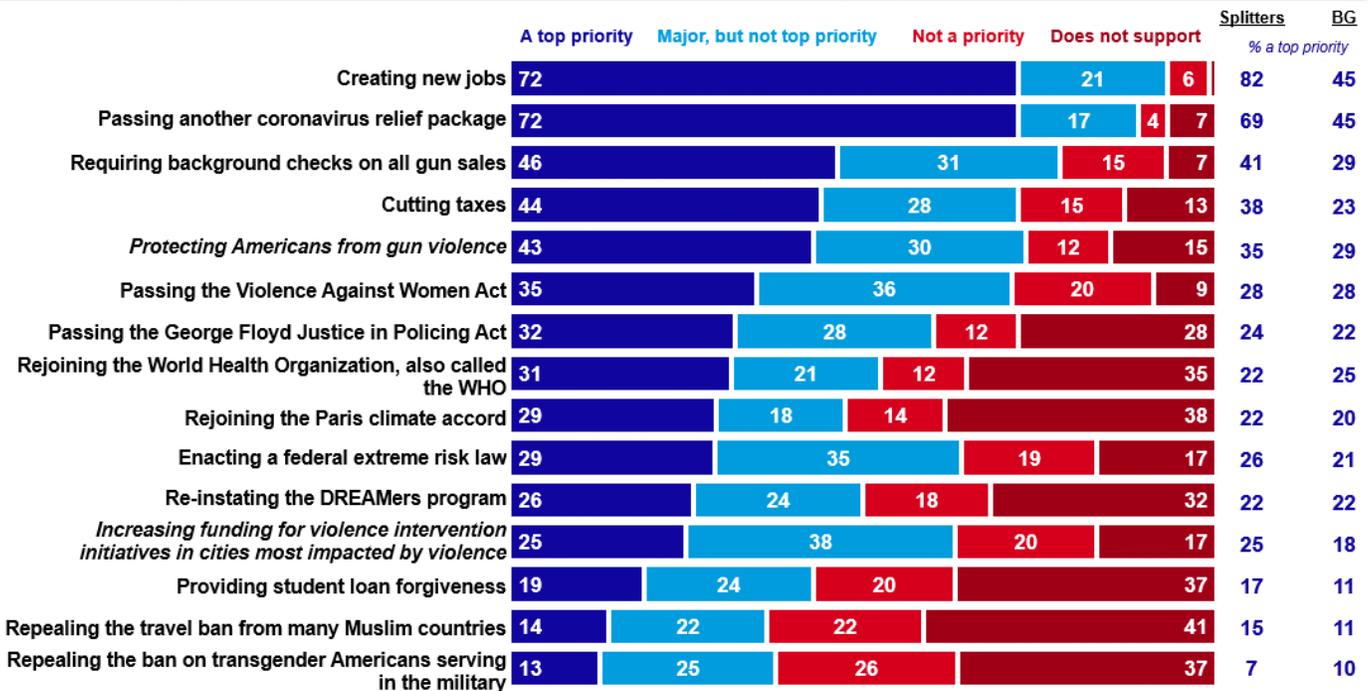
**Support for background checks is so strong that even in the face of opposing arguments, a majority remains supportive.** Often, voters support a proposal until they are told it could cost them something. Not the case here: Majorities of Democrats (86%), independents (74%), Republicans (64%), gun owners (67%), and ticket splitters (59%) all strongly support requiring background checks on all gun sales. And these voters agree the next president and Congress should pass background checks into law, even when they are exposed to common specious opposition arguments that doing so will burden law-abiding gun owners and create a gun registry (which, to be clear, requiring background checks on all gun sales will not).

For each statement, please indicate whether you agree or disagree.



**Further, voters say the Biden Administration and Congress should act on gun violence in the first 100 days.** More than three-quarters of ticket splitters and voters overall (78% of each) say requiring background checks on all gun sales should be a major priority for the next president and Congress to address in the first 100 days, including 41 percent of ticket splitters who say it is a “top priority” (46% of voters overall). Ticket splitters are more likely to prioritize protecting Americans from gun violence than providing student loan forgiveness, rejoining the Paris climate accord, or rejoining the World Health Organization.

Please indicate how much of a priority you think each should be for the next president and Congress to address in their first 100 days.



With such intense support for background checks, 86 percent of ticket splitters and 82 percent of voters overall agree that “90 percent of Americans support background checks on all gun sales. There is no excuse for the next president and Congress not to pass background checks into law on day one.”

## Candidates will be rewarded for championing gun violence prevention

**Supporting gun violence prevention doesn't hurt a Democrat's standing.** Gone are the days when Republicans would regularly hit Democrats for their gun safety stances. Why? Because it doesn't work: Trying to attack a Democrat for supporting background checks does not improve the effectiveness of the standard Republican attack lines that Democrats are likely to hear over and over in 2022 and 2024. Forty-three percent of voters say they are less likely to support the Democratic candidate for Congress when hearing a standard Republican attack on Democrats regardless of whether Republicans tie in the Democrat's support for gun violence prevention.<sup>2</sup>

% less likely to vote for a Democrat after hearing an attack...	National Overall		National Ticket Splitters		Battleground	
	with background checks	without background checks	with background checks	without background checks	with background checks	without background checks
% less likely to vote for Democrat after attack	43	43	46	45	44	43

**In fact, if future elections are decided on gun safety, Democrats who support stronger gun laws win decisively.** The vast majority of ticket splitters and voters nationwide (70% of each), as well as most battleground voters (61%), say they would never vote for a candidate who opposes background checks.

Moreover, the generic vote for Congress, both overall and among ticket splitters and Latinx voters, swings dramatically toward a Democrat who supports laws that will keep guns out of the wrong hands over a Republican who doesn't. The Republican's nine-point lead among ticket splitters in battleground districts becomes a 22-point lead for the Democrat.

Vote	National			Battleground	
	Overall	Ticket Splitters	Latinx	Overall	Ticket Splitters
	<i>Net Democrat advantage (Dem – GOP)</i>				
<b>Generic ballot</b> (Democrat v. Republican)	+2	-11	+35	-2	-9
<b>Gun-infused generic ballot</b> (Democrat who supports laws that will keep guns out of wrong hands vs. Republican who opposes new gun laws)	+20	+29	+45	+11	+22

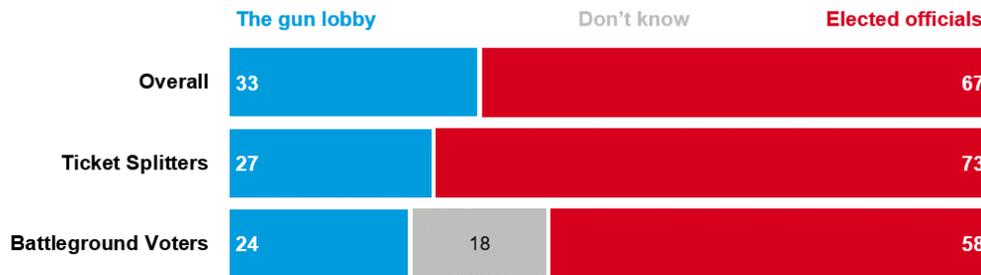
## Voters will hold those in office responsible for inaction

**Americans overwhelmingly say the president must act.** Eighty-three percent of voters nationwide, including 84 percent of ticket splitters, agree with the following statement: "The next president has a responsibility to keep Americans safe. He must take action to protect Americans from gun violence." And two-thirds of ticket splitters (67% of ticket splitters, 69% of voters overall) want to see the president take executive action, agreeing that "Congress is too divided to get things done. It's up to the next president to protect Americans from gun violence."

<sup>2</sup> See appendix for full text.

**They are prepared to hold elected officials who don't seize this opportunity accountable.** The gun lobby has undeniably played a major role in blocking progress on gun violence prevention, working with Senate Republicans to defeat the Bipartisan Background Checks Act, also known as H.R. 8. But even as voters dislike the gun lobby, they are far more likely to blame elected officials as a whole for the lack of progress on gun violence prevention than special interests. With Democrats controlling the presidency and legislative branch, they have an opportunity to pass background checks, and avoid being held responsible yet again.

**Who is more to blame for the lack of progress on gun violence prevention: the gun lobby or elected officials?**



**ABOUT THE POLL**

Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey of 1,400 2020 voters nationwide and a telephone survey of 1,000 2020 House battleground voters from 45 congressional battleground districts (AZ-01, AZ-06, FL-26, FL-27, GA-06, GA-07, IA-01, IA-02, IA-03, IL-13, IL-17, ME-02, MI-08, MI-11, MN-02, NC-08, NC-09, NE-02, NH-01, NJ-02, NJ-07, NM-02, NV-03, NV-04, NY-19, NY-22, OH-01, OK-05, OR-04, PA-07, PA-08, PA-10, PA-17, SC-01, TX-07, TX-21, TX-23, TX-24, TX-32, UT-04, VA-02, VA-05, VA-07, WA-08, WI-03) between December 2 and December 7, 2020. The survey for the nationwide voters had a confidence interval of +/- 2.6% and the battleground survey had a margin of error of +/-3.1%. Nationwide interviews were conducted via web-based panel, and battleground interviews were conducted via phone. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of the populations of likely voters are properly represented, and the data was weighted to the actual 2020 results nationally and across congressional districts.

**Appendix: Statements attacking Democratic candidates**

**Standard attack on Democrat with background check component:** The Democratic candidate will be a rubber stamp for Nancy Pelosi and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's liberal agenda. They support wasteful government programs that increase taxes on hardworking families, creating a socialist, government-run health care system, and defunding police departments in our community. And to make matters worse, the Democratic candidate supports ineffective, burdensome regulations on gun owners that create a government gun registry and criminalize law-abiding citizens for simply owning a firearm.

**Standard attack on Democrat without background check component:** The Democratic candidate will be a rubber stamp for Nancy Pelosi and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's liberal agenda. They support wasteful government programs that increase taxes on hardworking families, creating a socialist, government-run health care system, and defunding police departments in our community.