

To: Easterseals
From: Pathfinder Opinion Research
Date: October 28, 2020
Re: Nationwide Survey of Adult Americans with Disabilities¹

The disability community represents a sizeable portion of the U.S. population, encompassing more than 38 million adults aged 18+. Survey results confirm that this vital subset of the general population is politically active, engaged, and enthusiastic about voting this year (in fact, a sizable portion has already voted). While most indicate they experience no barriers to voting based on their disability, a measurable portion say that local election officials provide inadequate accommodations for their disability. Further, many of these voters with disabilities say they may not vote this year due to concerns about being exposed to COVID-19.

Also noteworthy, in light of the approaching presidential election and upcoming oral arguments in front of the Supreme Court over the Affordable Care Act (ACA), is the strong, bipartisan support among these voters for maintaining the health care protections found in the ACA. There is also widespread support among this group for strengthening constitutional protections against discrimination. These voters are not satisfied with the current performance of elected officials representing them in Washington, DC and as result give them a negative performance rating when it comes to addressing issues specific to their community.

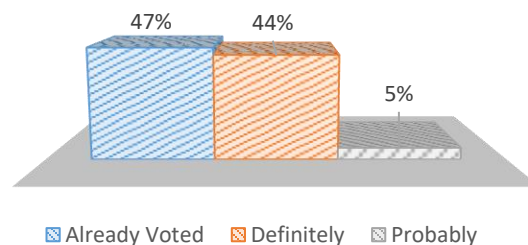
Key Findings

Americans with disabilities are politically active, engaged, and enthusiastic about voting this year.

Among adults with disabilities, nearly nine-in-ten indicate they are registered voters (89% registered / 11% not registered). Nearly half of these registered voters (47%) have already voted in the presidential election, and another 49% say they “definitely” or “probably” will vote.

Americans with disabilities are taking advantage of early vote opportunities, with 72% of likely voters either having

LIKELIHOOD OF VOTING (AMONG REGISTERED VOTERS N=713)

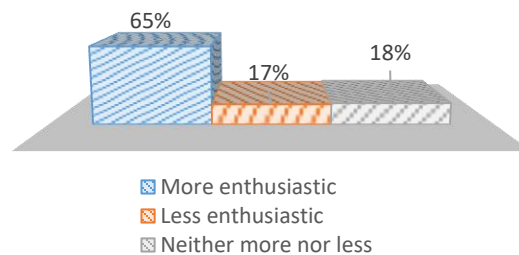


¹These findings represent the results of a survey conducted by Pathfinder Opinion Research from October 20-25, 2020 among n=800 adult Americans with disabilities. Interviews were conducted online utilizing a national research panel. Each respondent indicated having at least one of the disability types used by the Census to categorize disabled persons (hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living difficulties). Data were weighted by gender, age, race, education, and geographic region based on the American Community Survey’s population characteristics of Americans with disabilities. Within the full sample of adult Americans with disabilities is a subset of registered voters (n=713) and registered voters who are likely to vote in the upcoming Presidential election (n=683).

already voted or say they are planning to vote prior to Election Day. Specifically, they are taking advantage of vote by mail opportunities, with 51% of likely voters having already voted by mail or say they plan to vote by mail.

Voters with disabilities are not just casting ballots – they are doing so enthusiastically. Half of all likely voters say they are “extremely enthusiastic” about voting in the presidential election, and the mean score on a 10-point scale of voter enthusiasm is 8.0. Further, nearly two-thirds of likely voters say they are more enthusiastic about voting this year compared to previous elections (65% more enthusiastic / 17% less enthusiastic / 18% neither more nor less).

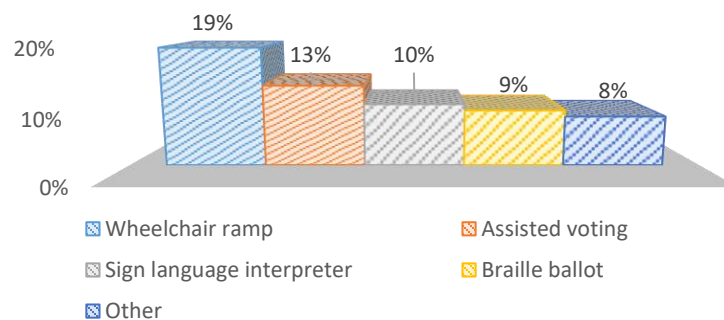
VOTING ENTHUSIASM COMPARED TO PREVIOUS ELECTIONS (AMONG LIKELY VOTERS N=683)



Despite this show of enthusiasm for voting, real barriers to casting ballots exist for a substantial portion of Americans with disabilities. Practical concerns about the health and safety risks associated with voting are top of mind for many of the 53% of registered voters who have yet to cast their ballot. When asked about factors that could prevent them from voting this year, more than one quarter (27%) state they may not participate due to concerns about being exposed to COVID-19.

Separately, respondents point to physical barriers preventing many with disabilities from voting. Thirty-one percent (31%) of this population say they require at least one type of accommodation to vote (wheelchair ramp, assisted voting, sign language interpreter, braille ballot, or other accommodation). Most who require accommodations to vote say their needs are met adequately by local election officials. However, nearly one-in five say their local election agency does an inadequate job providing the accommodations they need to vote (83%

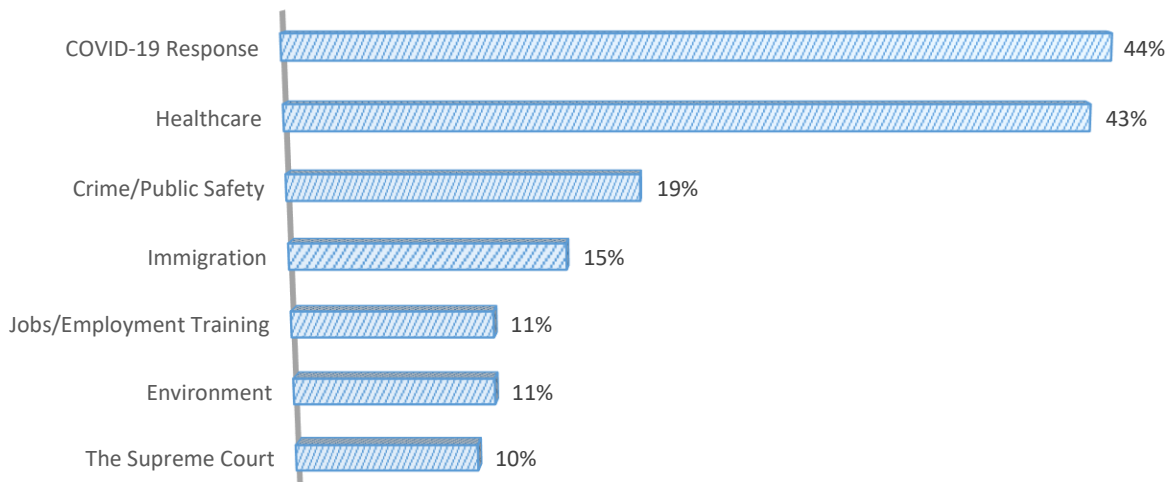
ACCOMMODATIONS REQUIRED TO VOTE (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)



adequate / 17% not adequate). These numbers hint at potentially millions of Americans with disabilities being unable to vote in a historically competitive election because of lack of voting accommodations.

“Healthcare” and “COVID-19 Response” are the dominate issues on which disabled voters are basing their vote. When asked to select two choices, no other issue nears in importance among likely voters.

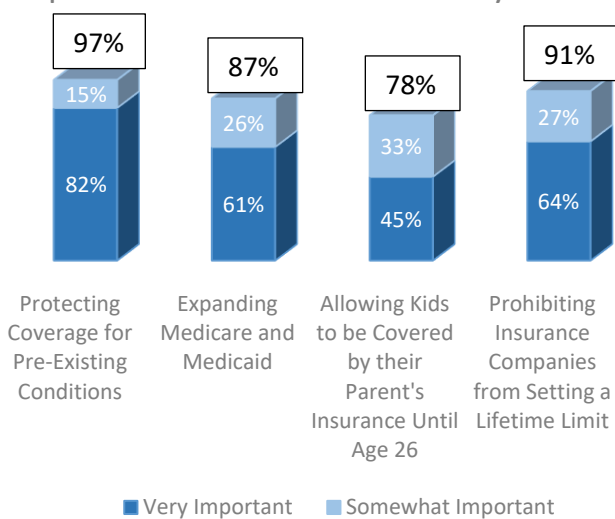
MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES WHEN DECIDING HOW TO VOTE.* (SELECT UP TO TWO)



*Chart excludes some lower testing issues

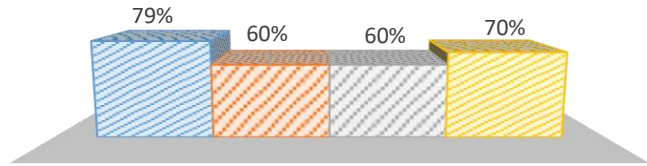
Healthcare policy uniquely impacts this community, making their support for components of the Affordable Care Act noteworthy. Across the board, there is strong support among adults with disabilities for protecting coverage for preexisting conditions, expanding Medicare and Medicaid, allowing kids to be covered by their parent’s insurance until age 26, and prohibiting companies from setting a lifetime limit.

Importance of Healthcare Policy Priorities



Americans with disabilities strongly favor amending the constitution to provide protections for people with disabilities and for other vulnerable classes, including gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex. Constitutional protections against discrimination is another major issue significantly impacting people with disabilities, and one that has major implications in the current political climate. Ten percent (10%) of the survey sample identify as LGBTQ+.

% WHO FAVOR AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION TO PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION BASED ON....



■ Disability Status ■ Gender Identity ■ Sexual Orientation ■ Sex

Despite these relevant issue concerns, adults with disabilities rate the elected officials who represent them in Washington DC negatively on addressing these concerns. Nearly two-thirds rate the performance of elected officials working in DC as negative when it comes to on addressing issues specific to Americans with disabilities.

Rating of Elected Officials in Washington DC on Addressing Issues Specific to Americans with Disabilities

