

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Hart Research Associates
DATE: October 1, 2020
RE: Findings from New Survey in Battleground States

Hart Research recently completed two waves of telephone surveys among likely voters in 10 states on behalf of the Human Rights Campaign. The first wave consisted of Arizona, Florida, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin; the second wave included Georgia, Iowa, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas.^{1*}

We learned three key things from voters in these key battleground states:

- 1) Joe Biden and pro-equality Democratic Senate candidates are in very strong positions heading into the campaign's final month.
- 2) Voters have clear and abiding support for LGBTQ equality across a host of issues.
- 3) Voters have no interest in seeing transgender people demonized or having basic rights for transgender people used as political footballs.

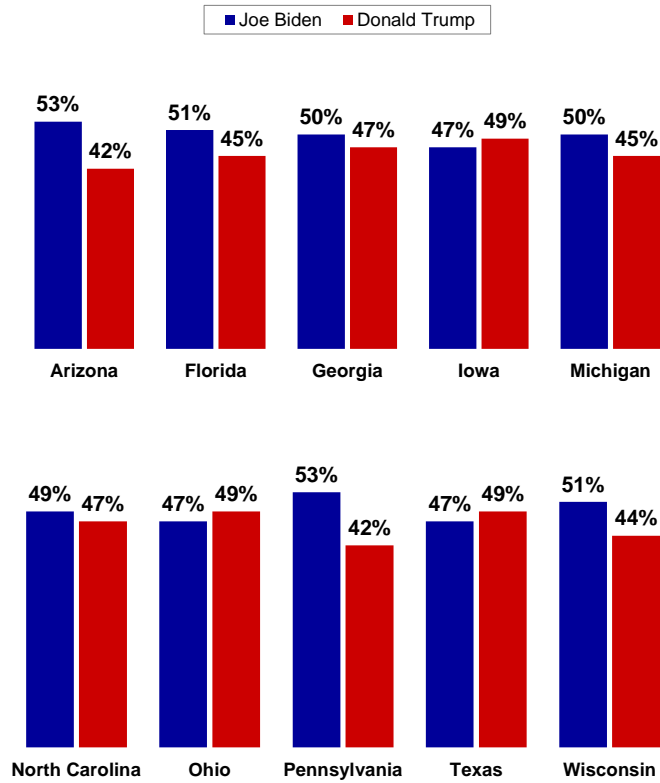
Details about each of these findings are outlined below.

^{1*} A total of 400 likely voters were interviewed in each state—the first wave from September 17 to 19 (with approximately 30% of interviews completed on September 19, the day after the passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg), and the second wave from September 24 to 27, 2020. The margin of error in each state is ± 4.9 percentage points for the full sample, with higher tolerances for subgroups in each state.

Pro-equality Democratic Candidates are Leading

In each of these presidential battleground states, Joe Biden either leads Donald Trump (in some cases by double digits) or is within striking distance.

Joe Biden Leads or is Competitive in Each State



In most of the states Biden’s lead is driven by two groups: self-identified independents and voters under age 40, with a couple of exceptions. Wisconsin is one—the race there is essentially tied among voters under 40, while Biden leads among those age 60 and older. North Carolina is another—Trump narrowly leads among independents, and the race is close among younger voters, but Biden is up 12 points among older voters.

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Presidential Vote				
	<u>18 to 39</u>	<u>40 to 59</u>	<u>60 and older</u>	<u>Independents</u>
	%	%	%	%
Arizona	Trump: 37 Biden: 58	Trump: 35 Biden: 60	Trump: 51 Biden: 44	Trump: 27 Biden: 54
Florida	Trump: 35 Biden: 62	Trump: 50 Biden: 46	Trump: 48 Biden: 46	Trump: 28 Biden: 62
Georgia	Trump: 37 Biden: 58	Trump: 50 Biden: 49	Trump: 54 Biden: 42	Trump: 31 Biden: 53
Iowa	Trump: 40 Biden: 54	Trump: 57 Biden: 40	Trump: 49 Biden: 48	Trump: 40 Biden: 53
Michigan	Trump: 31 Biden: 61	Trump: 51 Biden: 45	Trump: 49 Biden: 47	Trump: 37 Biden: 49
North Carolina	Trump: 46 Biden: 52	Trump: 53 Biden: 41	Trump: 43 Biden: 55	Trump: 45 Biden: 41
Ohio	Trump: 32 Biden: 59	Trump: 50 Biden: 47	Trump: 61 Biden: 37	Trump: 43 Biden: 45
Pennsylvania	Trump: 33 Biden: 57	Trump: 39 Biden: 57	Trump: 51 Biden: 47	Trump: 29 Biden: 47
Wisconsin	Trump: 47 Biden: 46	Trump: 49 Biden: 47	Trump: 41 Biden: 56	Trump: 31 Biden: 53
Texas	Trump: 29 Biden: 68	Trump: 53 Biden: 43	Trump: 62 Biden: 35	Trump: 42 Biden: 47

Pro-equality Democratic Senate candidates in these states are also in excellent positions in the final stretches of their campaigns:

- In [Arizona](#), Mark Kelly is leading Martha McSally by 12 points—55% to 43%.
- [Iowa](#) freshman Senator Joni Ernst is tied with Democratic challenger Theresa Greenfield at 48% apiece.
- In [Michigan](#), incumbent Gary Peters is besting John James by eight points—50% to 42%.
- The [North Carolina](#) race finds Cal Cunningham ahead of Thom Tillis, 54% to 41%.

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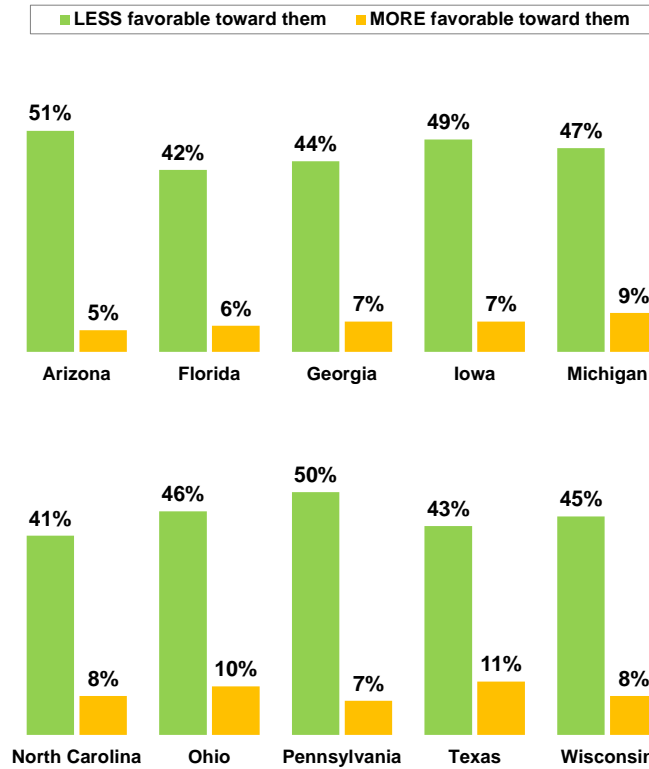
- Georgia Democrat Jon Ossoff is in a statistical dead heat with GOP incumbent David Perdue (46% to 49%).
- And in the Georgia senate special election, Democrat Raphael Warnock is tied with incumbent Republican Senator Kelly Loeffler at 28% each, with Republican Doug Collins several points back at 21%.

Like Biden, the pro-equality Democratic Senate candidates earn substantial support from voters under age 40, a notably pro-LGBTQ rights audience. Moreover, independents heavily favor the Democrats in each state.

Senate Vote				
	<u>18 to 39</u>	<u>40 to 59</u>	<u>60 and older</u>	<u>Independents</u>
	%	%	%	%
Arizona	McSally: 41	McSally: 38	McSally: 47	McSally: 31
	Kelly: 57	Kelly: 60	Kelly: 50	Kelly: 62
Georgia	Perdue: 39	Perdue: 51	Perdue: 56	Perdue: 33
	Ossoff: 48	Ossoff: 46	Ossoff: 44	Ossoff: 55
Iowa	Ernst: 37	Ernst: 58	Ernst: 48	Ernst: 35
	Greenfield: 55	Greenfield: 38	Greenfield: 49	Greenfield: 55
Michigan	Peters: 65	Peters: 44	Peters: 43	Peters: 51
	James: 26	James: 50	James: 49	James: 36
North Carolina	Tillis: 38	Tillis: 49	Tillis: 36	Tillis: 41
	Cunningham: 55	Cunningham: 49	Cunningham: 58	Cunningham: 52

Moreover, voters in these states take a dim view of anti-LGBTQ positions in elected leaders. Pluralities, and in some cases majorities, of voters say that they would feel less favorable toward candidates who oppose LGBTQ equality.

**If I knew an elected official
OPPOSED LGBTQ equality,
this would make me:**



In each state, large majorities of Democrats say that they would feel less favorable toward an anti-LGBTQ rights candidate. In most cases, a majority or plurality of independents say the same (in Ohio and North Carolina pluralities of independents say it makes no difference to them, though 43% say they would feel less favorable). Most Republicans say that it does not matter to them either way, but, among those Republicans who do register an opinion, far more say less favorable than more favorable. In other words, there is essentially ***no political upside to a candidate adopting anti-LGBTQ stances.***

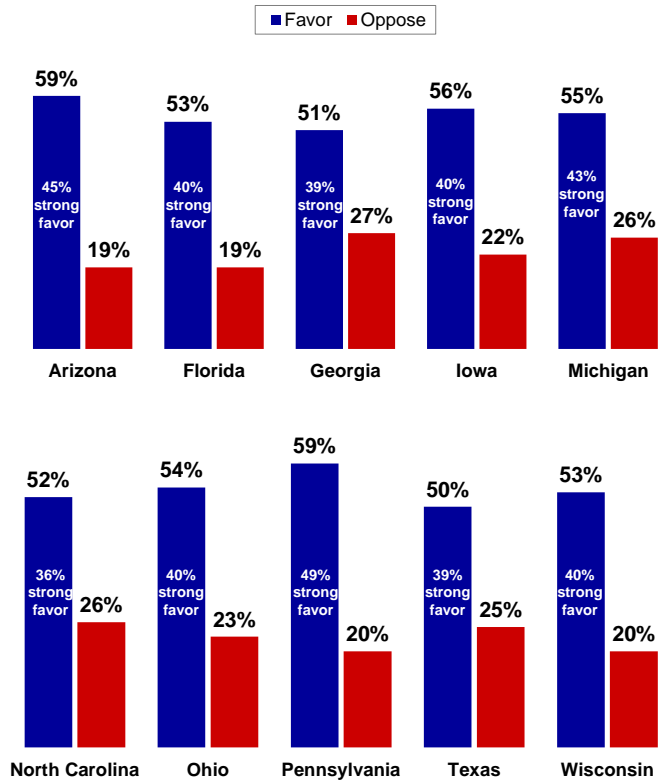
Republicans' Views of an Anti-LGBTQ Rights Candidate

	Feel More Favorable %	Feel Less Favorable %	Makes No Difference %	Net Favorability +/-
Republicans in Arizona	6	32	60	-26
Republicans in Florida	8	22	66	-14
Republicans in Georgia	9	25	63	-16
Republicans in Iowa	12	27	57	-15
Republicans in Michigan	13	25	60	-12
Republicans in North Carolina	14	21	55	-7
Republicans in Ohio	13	24	59	-11
Republicans in Pennsylvania	8	31	60	-23
Republicans in Wisconsin	7	27	62	-20
Republicans in Texas	16	20	60	-4

Voters Express Wide Support for LGBTQ Rights and Protections

In 2019, the House of Representatives passed the **Equality Act**, which enshrines in law a number of basic rights and protections of LGBTQ people; the Act has not been taken up by the Senate. Given the arc of public opinion, the GOP Senate's failure to act on this legislation would seem to be a mistake, as large majorities of voters across the diverse group of states express support for it. Indeed, support outweighs opposition by more than two to one (in some cases three to one) in each state.

Wide Support for the Federal Equality Act



Trump voters in nearly every one of the 10 states are more apt to favor the Equality Act than oppose it. In a few cases (Arizona, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin), Trump voters who support the Equality Act outnumber those who oppose it by about 10 percentage points or more. In Michigan support and opposition are each at 36% among this group, and in Georgia Trump voters' opposition exceeds support, 37% to 27%.

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Voters' support extends to rights and protections for LGBTQ people in several different areas, including adoption and marriage.

% Who SUPPORT Specific LGBTQ Rights and Protections

	AZ	FL	GA	IA	MI	NC	OH	PA	WI	TX
Allowing LGBTQ people to legally adopt children	63%	59%	55%	61%	62%	52%	58%	67%	62%	55%
Allowing same-sex couples to get legally married	61%	59%	52%	61%	59%	50%	54%	67%	59%	52%

In each state, opposition to the policies above is in the 20s with the exception of North Carolina where opposition to marriage equality is at 31%.

Similarly, in nearly all cases majorities of voters **expressly oppose proposals to deny rights to LGBTQ people** on two fronts: receiving services from private businesses and transgender people's service in the U.S. military.

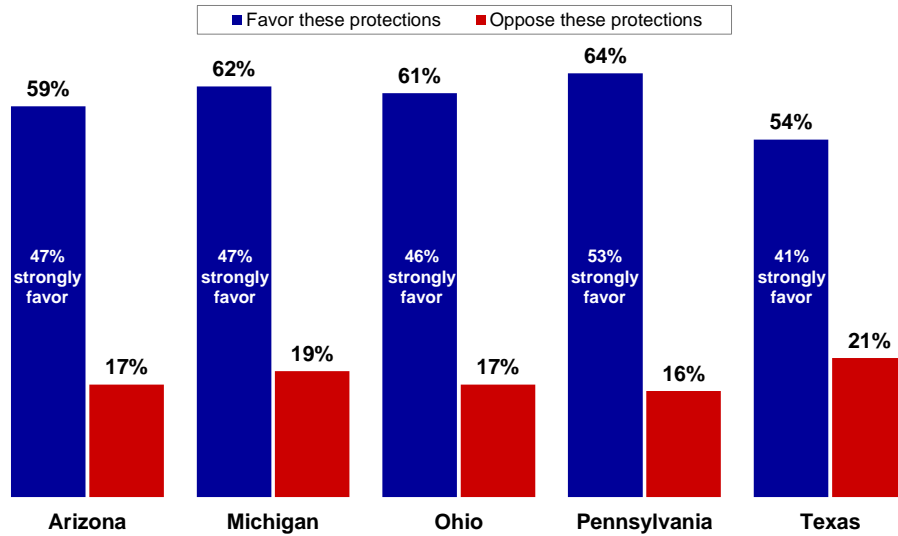
% Who OPPOSE Specific Attacks on LGBTQ Rights

	AZ	FL	GA	IA	MI	NC	OH	PA	WI	TX
Banning transgender people from serving in the U.S. armed forces	62%	56%	58%	46%	57%	57%	55%	61%	59%	53%
Allowing business owners to deny services to LGBTQ people if they say doing so would violate their religious beliefs	54%	54%	53%	58%	53%	50%	57%	57%	58%	49%

Support for these two proposals is at or below 30% in each state.

Additionally, in five of the states, there are proposals for state legislation that would provide protections—in the form of banning discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodation, and adoption and banning conversion therapy—to LGBTQ people in those states. Support for these state protections is similarly broad and deep across the board.

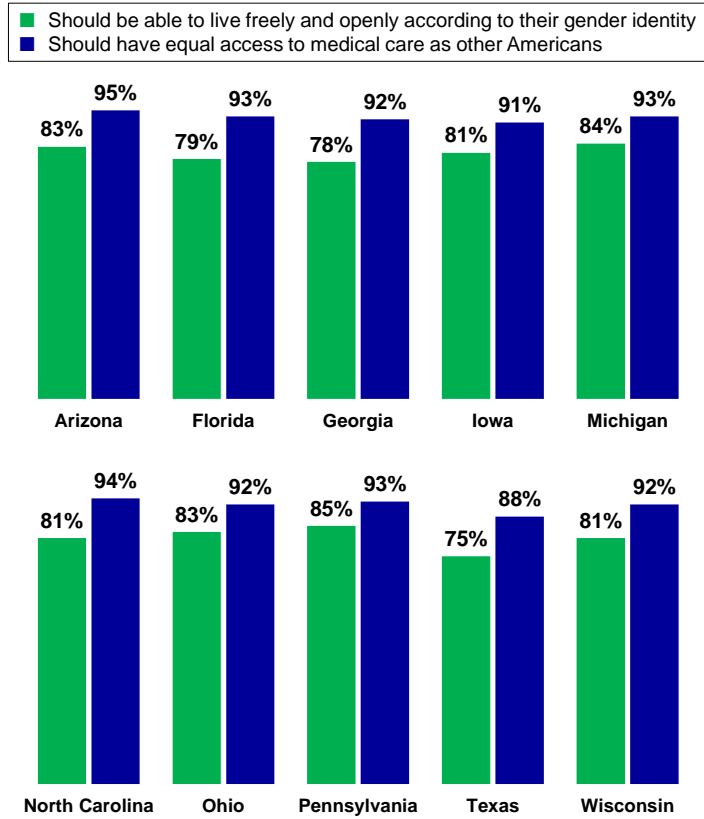
Strong Support for State Protections for LGBTQ People



Overwhelming Support for Transgender Equality

In a year during which voters on the left and right can find almost nothing to agree on, these polls find bipartisan support for the rights of transgender people. In particular, voters' belief that transgender people should have equal access to medical care as other Americans is nearly unanimous.

Overwhelming Endorsement of Rights for Transgender People



In each state, 60% or more of Trump voters say transgender people should be able to live freely and openly, and 87% or more say transgender people should have equal access to medical care.

Their support for transgender people aside, voters in 2020 are not obsessing over transgender issues as they cast their votes the way some anti-LGBTQ forces would have us believe they are. Early in the survey we read several issues to respondents and asked which two would be most important to them in deciding their vote in November. Transgender people participating in sports came in dead last, with between 1% and 3% in most states saying this would be a top issue for them (it is the highest, 6% in Texas, and still dead last). By comparison, the top two issues are generally jobs and the economy (ranging from 36% to 47%) and healthcare (22% to 34%), with COVID-19 tying healthcare in a couple of states.

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Finally, it is worth noting that in the second wave of surveys we included questions about the Supreme Court. We included “Supreme Court appointments” in the list of top voting issues noted above and found that between 17% and 21% of voters in Georgia, Iowa, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas named this as one of their top two voting issues. Moreover, voters in each state say, by margins of either two to one or three to one, that the next Supreme Court justice should be someone “who has a record of protecting and advancing legal rights for LGBTQ people.”

Should Next Justice be Pro-LGBTQ Rights?					
	GA	IA	NC	OH	TX
Should	57%	60%	58%	54%	48%
Should not	26%	20%	21%	26%	27%