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Stress, Anxiety Rise as Election Approaches



Sophie Mackin,
Copy Editor
Published Oct. 28, 2020

“Depending on how the election goes...” is a phrase I find myself saying very frequently. This year’s presidential election is the most consequential election our generation has lived through, and the outcome will in many ways determine the trajectory of our futures. As Democratic candidate Joe Biden says, we are truly in “a battle for the soul of our nation,” and the implications of this battle are on my mind constantly. The possibility of another four years with Donald Trump as president keeps me up at night, and when I think about how much is at stake, it is difficult for me to logically even make plans for what life might be like after Nov. 3 if Joe Biden does not win.

As we live through the heartbreaking loss and chaos of this pandemic as well as ongoing police brutality and public cries for institutional change, this election represents an assessment as to whether or not the American people are finally ready to start creating a government that will actually advocate for and protect everyone. We must recognize that the security of basic human rights, an adequate plan for reducing the spread of COVID-19, and the possibility of a last-ditch effort to respond to climate change are all currently on the ballot.

Your vote this year is a testament to your morals and whether or not you tolerate this country as it is under President Donald Trump: a crumbling democracy fueled by white supremacy, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, environmental injustice, corruption, and the antagonization of science. Electing Joe Biden certainly will not solve these systemic problems, but it is an essential step in order for change to be a prospect in the near future.

Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that stress and anxiety are spiking as the election approaches. About a year ago, more than half of the respondents in a “Stress in America” survey conducted by the American Psychological Association were already defining the 2020 election as a significant source of stress. Today, more than two-thirds of Americans report overwhelming stress about the election, the political climate, and the future of our country. In comparison to the 2016 election, rates of stress regarding this election are much higher, especially among Black adults and adults with chronic health conditions.

In The Bates Student’s recent election survey, Bates students, faculty, and staff were asked about the degree to which they feel heightened stress or anxiety due to the election. On a 5-point scale with 5 representing significant stress, 36.1% of respondents reported level 5 stress, 33.2% reported level 4, and 19.6% reported level 3. The majority of the Bates campus is clearly feeling the mental health impacts of the alarming political climate right now.

The recent Amy Coney Barrett confirmation hearings also intensify the existing pre-election stress. When faced with a conservative majority Supreme Court, having a Democrat in the Oval Office and more Democrats in the Senate becomes all the more urgent. The 2020 election will be a turning point in history, as this electoral cycle will decide whether conservatism will characterize all

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STUDENTS DEMAND COLLINS VOTES ‘NO’



Katherine Merisotis/The Bates Student

Students marched from Commons to Senator Susan Collins’ Lewiston office on Sept. 25 to demand she uphold her promise to vote against confirming a SCOTUS Justice. On Oct. 26, she was the only Republican to vote against confirming Justice Amy Coney Barrett. **Read About the Student March on Page 2**

‘We Will Get Destroyed... And We Will Deserve it’

Roy Mathews,
Managing Forum Editor
Published Oct. 28, 2020

What an embarrassment the United States of America has become during the last four years. The Hill reported on a poll released by Georgetown University that voters believe the U.S. is two-thirds of the way to the edge of civil war. While I certainly don’t think everyone will be hiding in their bunkers anytime soon, the days leading up to the election and afterward will certainly be the most toxic and partisan yet.

Domestically, the U.S. has faced the worst race relations since the 1970s, the resurgence of extremist organizations from the fringes of the political spectrum, and a plummeting confidence in government, as well as the ability to tolerate different beliefs from our own neighbors. Internationally, the U.S. has

gone from leader of the free world to a selfish laughingstock, chastising our allies and bludgeoning our treaties and alliances that have kept large scale war at bay since 1945.

At Bates, where do conservatives and libertarians go from here? Do we accept the new reality of Trump, break ranks and begrudgingly back Biden like the progressives, or turn our backs on both parties and vote third party? Maybe the best option is to not vote at all.

The title of this article comes from a quote by my home state’s senior Senator Lindsey Graham. When Lindsey Graham ran a short campaign for president, he remarked that Trump was “the most unelectable Republican I’ve seen in my lifetime” and even called his party “batshit crazy...how you make American great again is you tell Donald Trump to go to hell.”

Those Republican moderates

and conservatives like Maine’s Susan Collins, Arizona’s John McCain, Nebraska’s Ben Sasse, Massachusetts’ Charlie Baker, Alaska’s Lisa Murkowski, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Ben Shapiro, and yes, even the aforementioned Lindsey Graham, all did not back President Trump in 2016.

While it is true that President Trump presided over a roaring economy, helped Israel restore diplomatic ties in the Middle East, and treats the Chinese government like the threat they truly are, none of those accomplishments matter now. The economic gains made before COVID-19 have been completely reversed and the damage to the labor market, especially with unskilled workers, has resulted in a record low GDP growth; levels of economic growth

DESTROYED
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Sixty Years of Progress Down the Drain?

The Fate of Reproductive Rights



Elizabeth LaCroix,
Assistant News Editor
Published Oct. 28, 2020

On Sept. 18 of this year, Supreme Court Justice and active supporter of reproductive rights, Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG), died at her home in Washington D.C. after a final battle with pancreatic cancer. Shortly after the announcement of her death, a wave of fear and anxiety could be felt across the Bates campus and throughout the U.S. This fear stemmed from the chance that another conservative appointment, which creates a majority 6-3 conservative Supreme Court, would put the rights that many Americans currently enjoy in jeopardy.

The preservation of reproductive rights are of major concern with a majority conservative Supreme Court. There

is fear that the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court Case, Roe v. Wade, which affirms that it is a constitutional right to access legal and safe abortions, has the potential of being overturned.

According to a survey conducted by The Student, 80.6% of student, faculty and staff respondents reported that they think the outcome of the Nov. 3 election will impact reproductive rights. Female-identifying respondents in particular believe this; 88% said they believe reproductive rights will be affected.

Julia Raboy ‘22, a board member of the Bates Reproductive Justice Alliance (RJA), was beginning to celebrate the Jewish new year, Rosh Hashanah, when she heard about the death of RBG. As she was grieving her death, the

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Predicting 2020 Presidential Election



Miles Nabritt,
Managing Forum Editor
Published Oct. 28 2020

As Abraham Lincoln once said: “Elections belong to the people.” Ever since it became clear that Joe Biden would be taking on Donald Trump, there have been countless political analysts, news critics, and journalists trying to predict who will win the election. Personally, the way elections have been portrayed in the media has been unnerving to witness. From news stations like NBC to CNN to even Fox News, election predictions have become nonstop.

The truth is that 2020 has been such an unusual and unprecedented year; it has been hard to wrap my head around it all. From the unprofessionalism of the first presidential debate to the fly that stole the show in the vice-presidential debate, the 2020 election has been one long continu-

ation of divisiveness and disorder. However, just because the election has been difficult to follow, that doesn’t mean we can’t predict an outcome, at least that’s what American University professor and historian Allan Lichtman believes.

Professor Lichtman has made headlines all over the country for his intricate method of predicting the election. In 1981, Mr. Lichtman met famous Russian seismologist and geologist, Vladimir Keilis-Borok. Together, they developed a presidential prediction model, called “The Keys To The White House,” that contained a total of 120 years worth of U.S. election history.

Over the past four decades, Lichtman’s prediction model has worked wonders as he has correctly guessed each presidential election victor from

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Election Survey

The Student investigates Bates’ political beliefs **PAGE 4**



Why I’m Voting For Joe Biden

Najá Crockett explains his reluctant support **PAGE 5**



Undecided Voters

There are no undecided voters, Polkinghorn writes **PAGE 5**



Assumptions

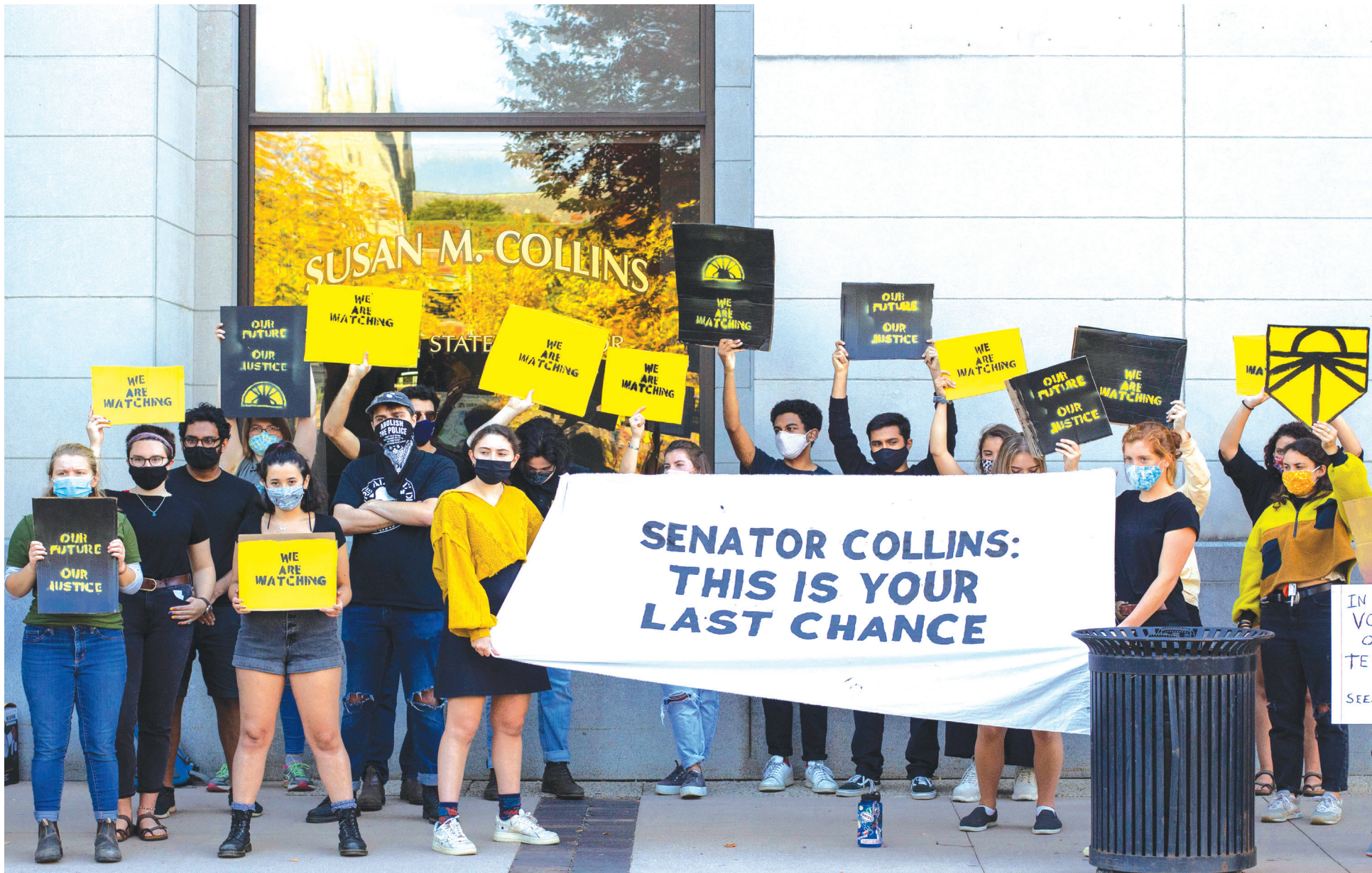
‘I am not sorry my identity doesn’t fit the mold’ **PAGE 7**



Sociological Perspectives

Professors discuss potential impacts of results **PAGE 8**

Sunrise March Demands Senator Collins Upholds Promise on SCOTUS Vote



Katherine Merisotis/The Bates Student

Fiona Cohen,
Assistant Features Editor
Published Sept 30, 2020

The Bates and Bowdoin chapters of the Sunrise Movement organized a march last Friday, Sept. 25, to Senator Susan Collins’ office to demand she upholds her promise to put off the vote on a Supreme Court nominee until after the next presidential inauguration. “Sunrise Movement is more often than not climate action and climate justice, but they also know that you need to take an intersectional approach to any sort of

justice,” said Ali Manning ’23, a member of the Bates Sunrise Movement chapter and the media representative for the march. Sunrise Movement is a national organization that aims to mitigate climate change and create new jobs across the United States. “Climate is obviously affected by race and class and age and gender,” Manning continued. This is why the Sunrise Movement chapters of Bates College and Bowdoin College led a march to Senator Collins’ office in downtown Lewiston last Friday, she said. The march was considered

A crowd of Bates and Bowdoin students protesting against current Senator Susan Collins outside her state office in downtown Lewiston.

a success by the leaders of the Bates chapter. Manning noted that the march coordinators had predicted that 20 Bates students would show up. In reality, about 60 Bates students were in attendance. Students from Bowdoin College and Brunswick High School also participated. Sunrise only started planning three days before the event. Manning detailed the process: “Every night we got one step further to organizing this and getting it done...It was literally

the night before, and we were still figuring it out,” she continued, describing how vital organization was, considering the pandemic. Maintaining social distance and wearing masks was required of march participants. Abhi Agarwal ’23 spoke first outside of Senator Collins’ office in Lewiston. Agarwal spoke to the importance of holding Senator Collins accountable for the sake of all United States citizens. He spoke of the effects of climate change on the planet, US citizens’ ability to access affordable healthcare, the importance of LGBTQ+ rights, and more. Other speakers discussed similar topics. Jude, a student from Brunswick High school, also spoke. Jude spoke about their experience as a queer person, and the Supreme Court’s role in returning due rights to the LGBTQ+ community. Eric Fleischmann ’23 gave a speech that highlighted the values of democracy, declaring that “the Supreme Court is not as it is intended to be. It is not governed by the people. It is not beholden to the interest of the people.” Fleischmann called for the students and the general public to hold the supreme court accountable for their undemocratic practices. Last to speak was Lena Soares, ’23. Soares spoke about the abundance of protesters who frequently stand outside the

Planned Parenthood office in her hometown of Memphis, Tenn. She spoke about the general fear of Roe v. Wade being overturned if a new Supreme Court justice is appointed before the next presidential inauguration. Like Fleischmann, Soares pleaded that students take matters into their own hands. She said: “We control the narrative and this is our future to fight for. Power doesn’t belong to the politicians. Power comes from the people.” Manning acknowledged the value of young people to the movement: “Sunrise is very much a youth-led movement. The majority are young people, and I think it thrives off of colleges, high schools, and local organizers who do things in their area.” Besides listening to speakers, march participants also chanted and held signs. Oftentimes, they were cheered on by the cars passing by. By the end of the event, students were confident that they had communicated their message. This is only the beginning of the Sunrise Movement at Bates. Manning hopes that students will continue to voice their opinions, using the chapter as a resource. “I thought [the event] was really great,” she said. “Hopefully, it is a reflection on Bates students and our ability to get things done and to have people hear our voices in a safe and effective way.”



Katherine Merisotis/The Bates Student

Oliver Barrera ’22 and Margaret Flynn ’22 protesting outside of Bates dining hall in hopes of getting people to go vote.

The Bates Student

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PHOTOGRAPHY
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The Bates Student
65 Campus Avenue,
Lewiston, ME, 04240



thebatesstudent@bates.edu



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Political Clubs Rally Students



Eleanor Wolfe,
Assistant News Editor
Published Oct. 7, 2020

With just a few more days until the Nov. 3 election, political groups on campus have intensified their voices.

In addition to non-partisan voting efforts like Bates Votes, there are a number of different political groups that support different candidates and parties. Along with the Bates Republicans and Bates Democrats, there is an official Bates for Biden group.

Bates for Biden, which was formed last spring by sophomores Barratt Dewey and Daphne Valen, has been working around the clock to help elect former vice president Joe Biden.

Despite his enthusiasm for Biden, Dewey did not initially support his candidacy. During the primaries, he mainly worked for Maine Senate candidate Sara Gideon.

“I was a big supporter of [Senator] Cory Booker,” he said. “Once the Democratic nominee field dwindled down to a few candidates, I started supporting Biden.”

Dewey has admired Biden since he was tapped to be President Barack Obama’s 2008 running mate.

“I’ve always thought he’s a truly decent, compassionate, and intelligent person and politician,” he said. “I truly believe he is the right person to lead us out of the Trump presidency and into the future.”

The group has been organizing a wide range of different volunteer opportunities for students including phone and text banking, outdoor debate watch parties, and weekly Zoom meetings.

Valen often takes the lead in meetings, reminding volun-

teers about the importance of the election and delivering messages straight from Biden’s headquarters. Recently, she and Dewey were featured on the Maine Democratic Party’s Instagram and have worked closely with Biden groups from other colleges.

Dewey and Valen have also organized events alongside the Bates Republicans and Democrats, including a Q&A with politics Professor of Politics John Baughman and Stephen Engel on the importance of young people in politics.

“We had a lot of people with different ideologies coming together to discuss current events and learn more about our political system, which was great to see,” Dewey told The Student.

Quinn Troy ’22, president of Bates Republicans, hopes to continue hosting events in tandem with other political groups on campus.

“In the immediate future, the Republicans are looking to host election programming in conjunction with the Democrats and to host an election watch party,” he said.

Troy added that he hopes to host an in-person speaker event next semester if coronavirus regulations are loosened.

Though he always felt like a “conservative at heart,” Troy didn’t start identifying as a Republican until the 2016 election after seeing then-candidate Donald Trump speak at the UIC Pavilion in Chicago.

“At the time, I wasn’t even the biggest Trump guy,” he said. “I was just there for the spectacle.”

When Troy arrived however, he was shocked to see the number of protesters.

“There were about 3,000 protestors there yelling all sorts of obscenities at Trump sup-



Katherine Merisotis/The Bates Student

Bates Republicans hoted a debate watch party in the Little Room last week.

porters who were literally just standing in line for an event,” he remarked. “I distinctly remember one guy holding a sign that said, ‘Support Trump, get jumped.’ Even though I wasn’t the biggest Trump fan, seeing the hatefulness of those people really pushed me to becoming a partisan Republican.”

Because of what he describes as an “overwhelmingly left-leaning” student body, Troy believes that the College Republicans are a necessary club on campus.

“The overwhelming majority of Bates students, professors, faculty, and staff are of the political left,” he said. “As a result, any form of dissension from this brand of politics is socially hazardous and leads to self-censorship. This club provides an environment where you can safely challenge the narrative without base-

lessly being labeled as hateful.”

Troy also emphasized that the club doesn’t officially endorse any candidate.

“Endorsements are typically misread as an approval of everything a candidate has ever done and avoiding political endorsements is a good way to avoid defending bad policies [and] character traits,” he said, adding that not everyone in the club supports the same candidate.

For both club leaders, political participation is key in their messaging.

“I think many Bates students live in a bubble,” Troy said. “The policies that someone endorses their junior year of college will have a direct impact on their way of life after graduation.”

For his part, Dewey stressed the influence that college-age voters can have, especially in Maine, which is currently a swing

state with a tight Senate race.

“The people we elect to office are the ones who will influence our future the most, so it is up to us to decide what kind of future we want,” he said. “At a time with crises ranging from the pandemic to climate change to the widening wealth gap, it is imperative that we do everything in our power to elect someone who will address the issues that will define the rest of our lives.”

Dewey concluded that although seemingly dramatic, “young people being apolitical is not an option because this election is not about politics — it’s about ensuring a future for [our generation].”

You can find more resources about voting on the non-partisan Instagram @BatesVotes. You can also check out @BatesforBiden, @BatesCollegeRepublicans, and @Bates_Dems for information.

A Brief History of Voter Suppression at Bates



Jackson Elkins,
Managing Sports Editor
Published Sept 30, 2020

The ability of Bates students to vote in the state of Maine is a constitutional right, yet still a contentious issue when it comes to putting that right into practice.

Despite the clear and relatively simple requirements regarding voter eligibility in Maine, Bates students in the past have encountered numerous attempts at voter intimidation and suppression. This begins a slippery slope toward disenfranchisement as students have the right to vote in either Lewiston or their alternative residence. These attempts to suppress Bates students from voting are both legitimate and documented.

In November of 2016, a bright orange leaflet entitled “BATES ELECTION LEGAL ADVISORY” was disseminated around campus informing students who wished to vote in Lewiston they must:

- Change their driver’s license to a Maine license.
- Re-register their vehicle to Maine (along with a note stating that this often costs hundreds of dollars).

While these statements are not incorrect, they are not relevant when addressing voting in the state of Maine. Voters are not required to own a car by law, nor are they required to have a driver’s license to vote. In response to these leaflets, both federal and state officials, along with the Maine ACLU, published press releases regarding attempted voter suppression and disenfranchisement. U.S. Attorney for Maine Thomas E. Delahanty II commented in the release that “every citizen must be able to

vote without interference or discrimination and to have that vote counted without it being stolen because of fraud. The Department of Justice will act promptly and aggressively to protect the integrity of the election process.”

Bates President Clayton Spencer echoed the sentiment, telling the Sun Journal that many Bates students are eligible to vote in Lewiston, and that the leaflets represented a “deliberate” attempt to suppress voting among Bates students.

More recently, in 2018, former Lewiston Mayor Shane Bouchard sent a letter to 221 people, many of which included Bates students, and community members who had recently registered to vote in Maine. The letter explained that there were “certain duties” that were entailed with the right to vote in Maine. The letter stated that registering to vote in Maine is a declaration of residency, which then “has consequences for compliance with other Maine laws.” Bouchard touched on examples such as the necessity for new Maine residents to obtain a Maine driver’s license, clarifying that to not do so is “a crime under Maine law.”

When asked by The Bates Student as to whether or not the letter was targeted directly at Bates students, he refused to give a direct answer, instead replying with questions on how such a letter may be taken as intimidating, claiming, “how is a letter that went out to all newly registered voters across the city to be construed as aimed at students? How is an outline of what is legally required of new registrants at all intimidating?”

Many students took the former Mayor’s letter as a form of voter

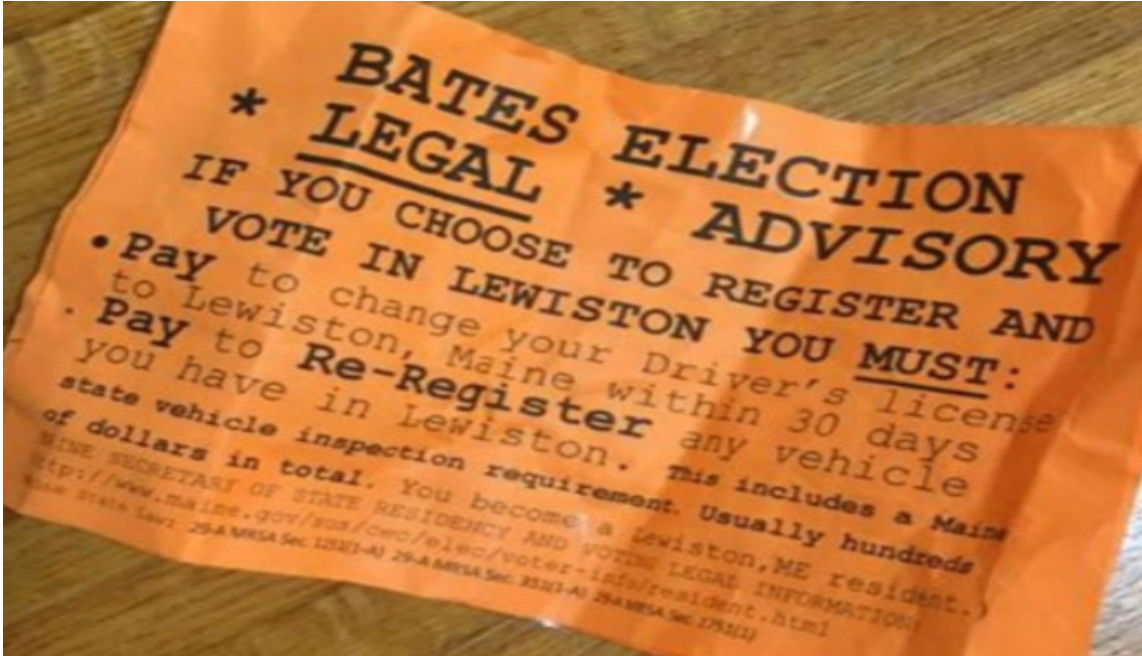
intimidation, and Maine Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap replied to the former mayor’s letter, stating, “[w]hile the letter’s contents are indeed factual, I must observe that the respective processes are not relational; constructing them as such leaves the right to vote as subordinate to bureaucratic checklists – which neither the constitution nor the statutes template – and further it does seem to be a rather awkward way to welcome new

feel about Bates students voting in Lewiston, the reality is that voting here is legal, and to deny anyone the right to vote within the state of Maine or anywhere for illegitimate reasons is illegal. All parties should oppose this given it is a constitutional right of US citizens to vote where eligible and registered.

There are valid arguments for and against voting in Maine, as opposed to voting where one is originally from. As affirmed, vot-

community during their 36 month stay, give or take a semester.

I personally chose to vote in my home state of Massachusetts, but in no way is it illegal for Bates students to register and vote in Lewiston. Regardless of how one feels about that, it is fact. According to Maine state law, in order to vote in Maine, one must be a US citizen, over the age of 18, and maintain a voting residence within the state of Maine, which for a



Christopher Petrella Twitter/Courtesy Photo

These flyers were dispersed around the Bates Campus before the 2016 general election.

residents into a community.”

He added in closing that, “while you cite the requirements in law accurately, what is not included is any information that ties these requirements to voting. U.S. citizens who have reached the age of majority have, in the State of Maine, an unquestionable right to vote.” These are just two recent examples, however there have been other, smaller-scale incidents.

Regardless of how people

ing in Maine is legal and a right for Bates students; Bates students are subject to local laws, contribute more to the Lewiston community than that of their origin, and spend more time here in their four years than in their place of origin. On the other hand, some may feel that out-of-state students are guests in Lewiston and the State of Maine, contribute next to nothing to the local economy and

Bates student is the address of your dorm or off-campus residence.

On the subject of registration, Maine allows for in-person voter registration up to and on Nov. 3, meaning that students have the ability to register and vote on the same day. Early voting in Maine ends Oct. 30. Regardless of your political affiliation, The Bates Student urges every eligible Bates student to vote.

4 ELECTION SURVEY RESULTS

The Bates Student
October 28, 2020

The Bates Student conducted a survey of current Bates students, staff, and faculty to investigate political views, affiliations, voting trends and other factors related to the 2020 election. The survey was distributed via Instagram and through class Facebook groups on Sunday. An email was sent to every student, staff and faculty on Monday morning. The survey was closed at 10 p.m. Monday.

Generally, female-identifying Batesians responded to the survey more than male-identifying community members (56% vs. 42%). Three respondents identified as nonbinary and nine people did not wish to disclose their gender identity.

Unsurprisingly, the Bates community is very liberal. Overall, 80% of the Bates community is registered as Democrats. Republic-

ans make up an estimated 6% and 12% identify as Independents. Staff tend to identify as Republicans and Independents at a higher rate than students and faculty. Of the 38 Republican respondents, 29% percent identified as female.

The Bates community is overwhelmingly voting for former vice president Joe Biden (Democrat). Ninty-four percent of students report that he is their presidential pick, while 5% of students are voting for President Donald Trump. Staff are the most likely to vote for Trump (7%). Faculty were the most likely to list a third-party candidate; 7% of faculty will rank Howie Hawkins (Green) as their first choice (Maine has ranked-choice voting).

Not a single registered Democrat respondent said they would vote for Trump. In comparison, 37% of

registered republicans will vote for Biden.

Most of the Bates community will be voting in Maine (79%). Twenty-one percent of students are voting in their home state, some who come from critical swing states such as Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Hampshire, Colarado, Florida and Wisconsin.

Climate change was ranked as the No. 1 key issue among students (31%). Racial justice (18%) and COVID-19 (were ranked second and third. Staff listed health care as their greatest concern (21%) and faculty ranked racial justice (17%) only slightly above COVID-19 (16%) and climate change (14%).

Some respondents expressed criticism for the question which asked people to rate their political views on a scale of 1-5. Some reported “very liberal” was not far

enough to the left to describe their political views, and one respondent noted correctly that political views are not two-dimensional.

Republican students particularly feel discriminated against on campus. One conservative student declined to note their home state for fears of being targeted.

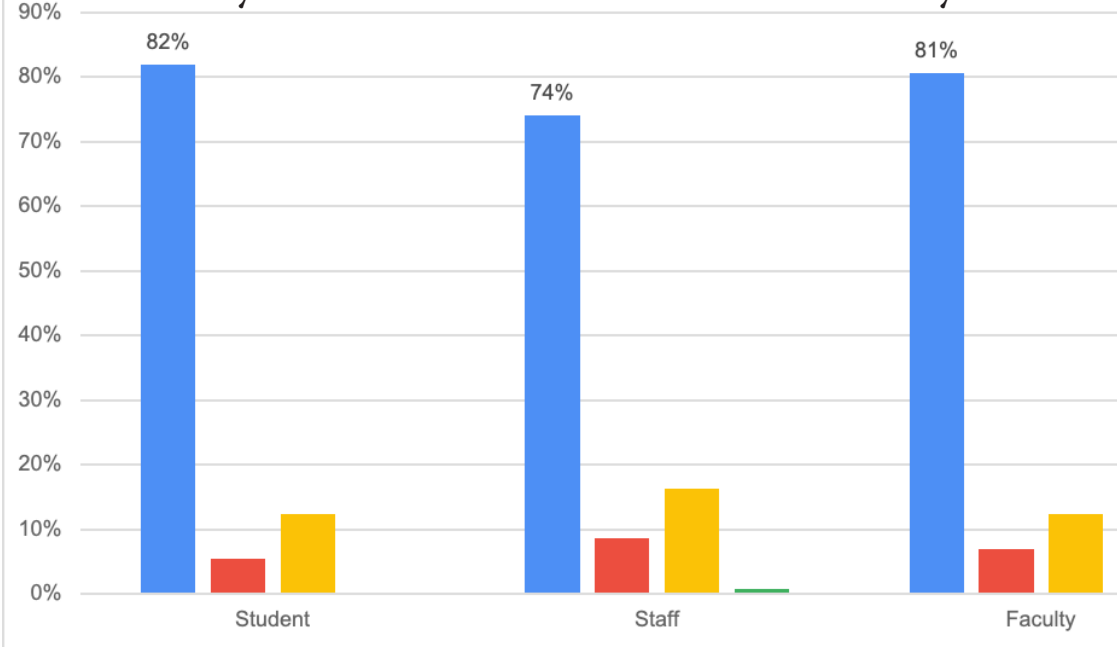
“Republicans tend to be mischaracterized and I think that Bates needs to work towards bridging gaps in the community as these students are just a much a part of Bates as liberal or left leaning students,” one student wrote. “I do not see fair representation of both political parties on campus. I do not feel Bates is inclusive to conservative view points, and at some points there is political discrimination of those conservative views,” wrote another.

Overall, the Bates community is extremely worried about the results of the election. Liberal respondents tended to be more stressed about the election than those who identified as conservative.

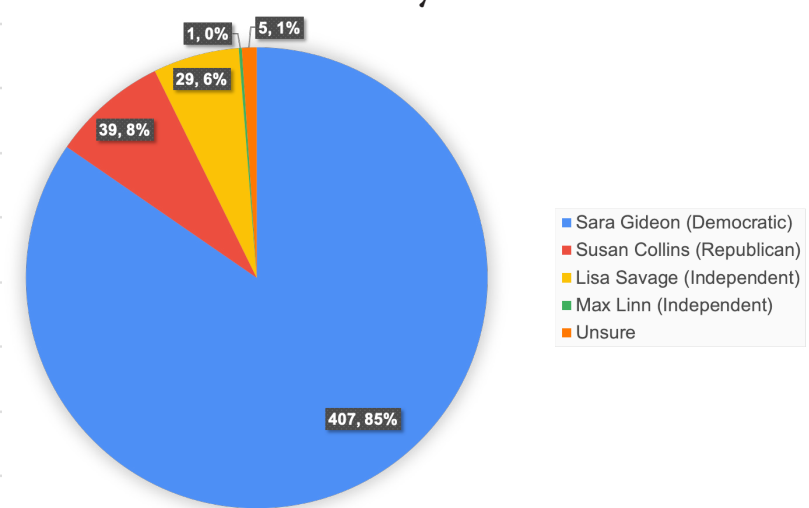
“I am extremely worried about the outcome of this election and the implications it holds for the rights of so many people in the U.S., but also the future of humanity on the whole, specifically with regard to the environment,” one student wrote. “These next four years could help or severely harm the future of the United States on many fronts.”

Bates Affiliation	Number of Respondents	App. Reporting %	Average Stress 1= No Stress, 5 = Significant Stress	Average Political Leaning 1 = Very Liberal, 5 = Very Conservative
Class of 2021	105	22%	3.90	1.83
Class of 2022	106	21%	3.67	1.66
Class of 2023	118	24%	3.74	1.83
Class of 2024	110	23%	3.72	1.81
Staff	117	30%	4.21	2.02
Faculty	58	27%	4.38	1.74
Overall	616	~ 24%	3.90	1.86

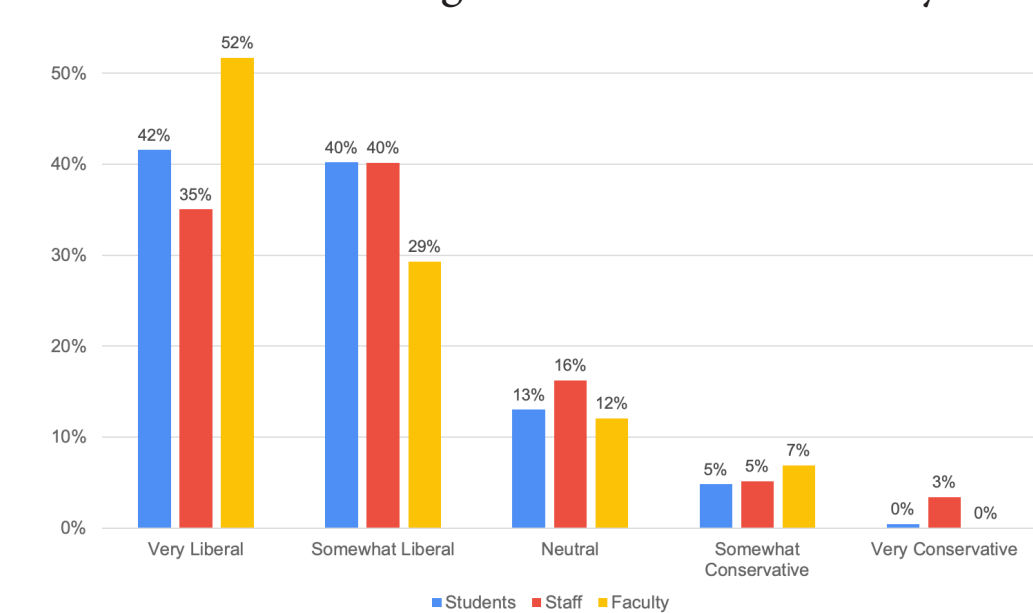
Party Affiliations of the Bates Community



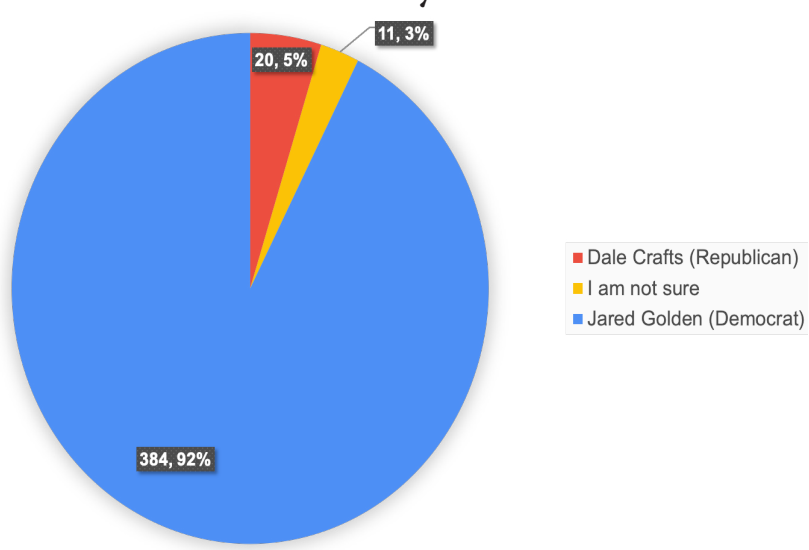
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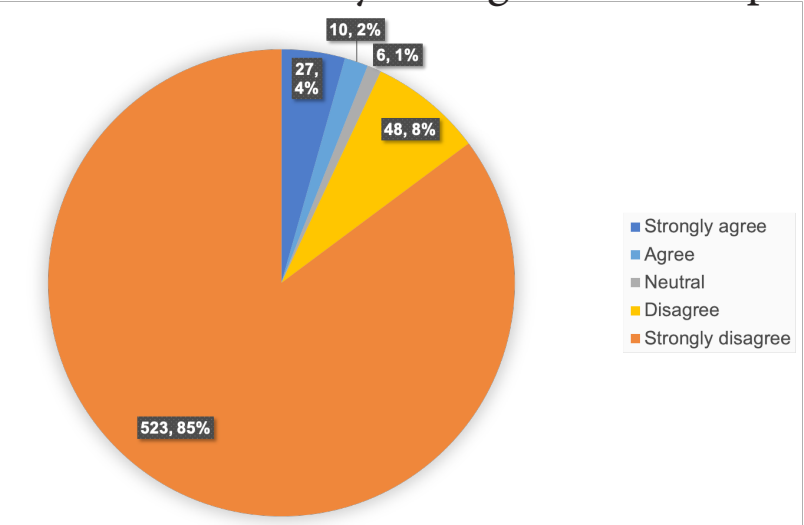
Political Leaning of the Bates Community



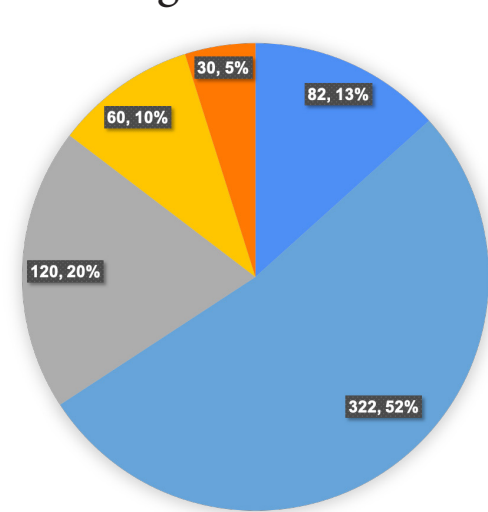
Bates Community House Votes



Bates Community Thoughts on Trump



Bates Community Thoughts on Biden



Voting for Biden

94% of students
90% of staff
90% of faculty

Voting for Trump

5% of students
7% of staff
3% of faculty

Why I’m Voting for Joe Biden

 Najá Crockett,
Managing Features Editor
Published Oct. 21, 2020

I often wrestle with the idea of whether or not participating in a system is, in some way, legitimizing it. I feel that we live in a totalized political climate, where those in power dictate that the only legitimate form of resistance or aggression is to vote out the folks we don’t want in office. These empty and honestly deprecating calls for people to simply vote out fascism and white supremacy sound like a joke. Donald Trump’s hateful rhetoric will forever stain this country, and this hate is not new or particularly unique. If anything, it’s emblematic of the violent racial segregation that has existed for most of this country’s existence, and in many ways continues today.

I’m of the belief that our fragile democracy and the white supremacy in government, upheld by both Republicans and Democrats alike, are to blame for Donald Trump’s rise to assume the most powerful seat in the country. These fundamental illnesses in our system pervade throughout all political action.

I’ll say what countless others have: I don’t think Joe Biden deserves to be President. His horrendous record as Senator and his sexual assault allegations disqualify him from being able to represent all of the United States. I don’t think that he truly exemplifies and embraces the social unrest and imperative need to uproot the foul systems in play and truly vouch for the safety and security of everyone.

His attempt to display racial harmony at the DNC was laughable. He had modern day civil rights leaders sit beside the Houston Chief of Police, exem-



Wikimedia

plifying an extremely tone-deaf display of compassion and bothsidesism. The Democratic Party also repeatedly demonstrated that they care about “good Republicans” that show the most basic form of humanity by not voting for a fascist, more than progressive voices that have been advocating for now-popular policies for several years.

Not to mention, the exhausting push from Democratic elites that simply voting out the fascists will fix all of our problems. I could go on

and on about my distaste for Joe Biden and his party, but unfortunately that doesn’t matter. Despite all of this, electing Joe Biden, along with progressive local representation, is our best bet if we want to have any semblance of safety and security in the foreseeable future.

These truths tell me that we, as a country, shouldn’t continue to entertain a broken two-party system that persistently and without fail looks out for those with power and money. But, after the disgraceful rush to nominate Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court, I can’t help but think that it’s of utmost importance to participate in the electoral system and elect someone that would return some integrity to the office of the presidency.

It should not be a surprise to anyone that the Republican Party is putting their goal to ensure that their politics survive in the Supreme Court over the fundamentally apolitical purpose of the court. Moments after the news of Ruth Bader Ginsburg’s passing broke, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said that he aimed to approve a Supreme Court nominee under Trump’s current term. If approved, the court will be 6-3 favoring conservative ideology with millions of people already casting their ballot for the presidency.

The Supreme Court itself is also a product of the white supremacy in our government, historically siding with segregationists and refusing to aid in the struggle for social progress until absolutely necessary. But, again, the totalization of these broken systems gives the Court unmistakable power to influence material conditions.

This is just one issue that necessitates electing Joe Biden. He could make some amendments that would not allow the Supreme Court to affect legislation around healthcare or reverse longstanding rulings around gender equality. Environmental regulation is also an extremely important issue that Donald Trump does not care about.

Policing, a hot but-

ton issue at the moment, has shown the frailties from both Joe Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris. Though there has been some inflation of Harris’ criminal justice record, both Biden and Harris have historically been on the wrong side of the issue of policing.

This, however, is not present in their goals for their presidency if they win, as it includes legislation to address many of the issues Black Lives Matter leaders have been pushing for since it was created. This shows that this ticket can shift, meanwhile Donald Trump has only doubled down on his “law and order” rhetoric by emboldening white supremacists and racist police.

It also pains me to recognize that a third-party option isn’t viable. This political system, through who is given a voice on the debate stage, who gets funding, and who is legitimized by polling, does not allow for outliers of the Republican and Democratic Parties. The Green Party candidate Howie Hawkins has many promising views and goals, though I’m not sure if this country is ready for a progressive in the White House at the current moment.

So much of the presidency is imperialist in its expectation to carry out global violence at risk of jeopardizing the exploitative economy. The expectation to shake hands with both fascists and liberals. The gridlocked nature, including an extremely conservative Supreme Court, of our republic disallows large-scale change in a four-year term. This, along with many other systemic barriers, dissuade me from thinking that someone who is truly progressive could get anything done in office. Not to mention, Trump supporters and the very racist nature of this country would delegitimize a progressive at every turn. It’s hard to imagine anyone in office that could appeal to both the far right and the spineless center other than Joe Biden.

There are many issues that the Biden ticket has shown it could shift on, and if elected I do not expect to stop pushing the federal government in every way possible. On the topic of shifting, I am also reminded of conversations I have had with my family.

In the midst of people learning what defunding the police means and watching the president show no empathy towards the most basic of demands,

many people came to realize how broken the system is. My family members told me about how they learned the issues around policing through social media and watching the news.

These issues are fairly new in the mainstream discourse, so expecting people to side with a cause to uproot the whole system in November of 2020 is a big ask. Not long ago did much of the population show a blind eye to President Barack Obama showing the least bit of care for the water quality in Flint, MI. Not long ago did the vast majority of Americans see the violent response to the protests in Ferguson and Baltimore in 2014.


These issues are, unfortunately, very new for much of the American population, even though the violence subjugated to Black bodies and communities has existed in the U.S. since its founding. Expecting the majority population, which is essentially white people and the system that it supports, to catch onto the systemic injustices in the American political system is a tall ask. Expecting large-scale change in one election cycle is a tall ask.

Revolution comes with years of preparation and education, along with many compromises and allies that could want different scales of change. Long story short, uprooting the disgusting systems that be is a long process.

Voting does not take that long and I disagree with the notion that voting for someone means supporting them. The 2020 general election ballot is a referendum: asking the American people if they want fascism and violence to rule, or a ticket that is open to change and will, at the very, very least, listen to demands.

This country is at a great turning point, and when it comes to who is in charge of the Federal Courts, military, national legislation, and national discourse, we need a president that would have more than themselves in mind. Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are not the perfect solution to solving this country’s systemic injustices, but they at least show that they have an interest in keeping the systems that could allow for the large-scale change that is necessary and inevitable. That is why I am voting for the Biden/Harris ticket in 2020.

There Are No Undecided Voters

 Madeline Polkinghorn,
Managing Editor
Published Oct. 28, 2020

The notion of the undecided voter has served as a defining archetype in the greater milieu of American electoral politics – and for good reason. The idea that citizens can be compelled to shift support from one candidate or party to another is what incentivizes politicians to listen to their electorate in the first place. That is, the reason politicians even attempt to appeal to us is because they are constantly encumbered by the truth that human ideology is not immutable: voters can choose, at any time for any reason, to shift their support away from or towards a particular candidate.

But what, in 2020, does it mean to be undecided? In this election we have constructed a sort of fable: that there exist millions of Americans who truly lack any partiality to either nominee, and straddle a mythical intermediate space of political allegiance amidst a wider context of unprecedented partisanship.

But the concept of true political impartiality in 2020 is a fiction we have invented – a farce that fashions a veil of innocence over a horror we would rather not accept. After four years, we have been provided with an irreducibly plain docket of evidence of who Donald Trump is. The separation of migrant children from their families, brazen and violent white supremacy, countless allegations of sexual miscon-

duct, and the flagitious bumbling of a plague – amongst countless other barbarities – simply cannot lead to the conclusion of indecision.

To be “undecided” is to make an indisputable decision that situates one squarely on the boundary of moral apathy. To be unswayed by evil is not a passive deed; rather, it is an active and conscious decision to be presented with an answer and contort it into the shape of a question.

Every American voter has the inalienable right to support Donald Trump and his doings if they so choose. But let us stop accommodating the pernicious lie that one can, in this moment, claim neutrality or ambivalence. To be “undecided” in 2020 is to decide that the status quo is either acceptable, or not unacceptable enough to be definitively opposed. An anti-decision is a decision to see the world as it is, and still believe one can earnestly vacillate between whether or not it is decent.

I write this not to contend that one must fervently adore Joe Biden to critique our national surroundings. Rather, I implore us all to be honest with ourselves: at this political juncture, every “non-decision” or illusion of neutrality we have fabricated is merely a poorly fashioned disguise for a refusal to reject what we already know.

Collins? Gideon? What Do Students Think?

Sacha Feldberg,
Staff Writer
Published Sept. 22, 2020

Ever since the day that you’ve come back to campus, you have probably had a variety of conversations. Perhaps you have already commented on the absolute perfection of the apple crisp and banana chocolate chip muffins from Commons. Or maybe you’ve talked about how smart that guy is from your first-year seminar.

Whatever it is — whatever you’ve been talking about — I’m sure one of those conversations had to do with politics. While the Presidential election has emotion across the country running high, Bates students have also been paying close attention to the contentious Maine Senate race.

Sara Gideon, who has been a Maine State Representative for District 48 since 2012, is running against 23-year Senate incumbent Susan Collins. While Collins was favored earlier in the year, recent polls show Gideon is ahead. The Boston Globe-Suffolk University poll shows that Gideon is leading by five points and the RealClear-Politics polling average says that Gideon is up by six points.

With just 40 days left until the election, time is ticking faster than ever, and now is as good a time as any to learn more about the race and to hear about what other Bates students are thinking.

Daphne Valen ’23, president of Bates for Biden, responded via email for an interview. Throughout these past few months, Valen has been phone-

banking for Sara Gideon and Joe Biden. In her email, Valen described one personal aspect that has motivated her: watching the “perceptions of the United States go from the world viewing us as a city upon a hill, to now, Trump’s American carnage.”

“This Senate race is bigger than Bates, and even the state of Maine,” Valen said. “It’s not about Republican versus Democrat anymore, it’s about our future as a country, which, yes, transitively affects us as students and soon-to-be graduates. We are quite literally in a battle for the soul of our nation right now.”

Valen spent a year and a half researching and writing a thesis about how President Trump is putting diplomacy in danger and affecting international perspectives of the United States. She likes Gideon because of her integrity, decency, and how she is “truly for the people of Maine and our country.”

In another email, Quinn Troy ’22, president of Bates College Republicans, explained why he’s rooting for Collins.

“I like Senator Collins because of all the work she does across the aisle,” Troy said. “She’s consistently ranked the most bipartisan Senator in the country and I think someone who’s willing to not let a party label define them is important to have in legislation.”

Collins is greatly respected for her work ethic and moderate views. Gideon is admired for her liberal viewpoint and her promise. Troy explained one key difference between their supporters.



Yuri Kim/The Bates Student

“For a variety of reasons,” Troy said. “Gideon has a lot of support amongst young people while Senator Collins has a lot of support with Maine’s seniors — the big question is: whose electoral base is going to show up on Election Day?”

This seems to be the question on everybody’s minds. Sarah King ’21, president of Bates College Democrats, emphasized that Maine is “very, very, very, very purple.” A swing state at its finest.

King expressed similar views to Valen. In a Zoom interview, King described some reasons why she aligns more with Gideon than Collins.

“I think Sara will hold large corporations accountable, closing tax loopholes, focusing on taxing those in

extremely high brackets more, distributing wealth, prioritizing having everyone comforted in some way, shape, or form with health care,” King said. “I think she’ll tackle wealth inequality, making Medicare more accessible, expanding upon the Affordable Care Act instead of trying to dismantle it. She addresses climate change much more substantially. She’ll make Maine a more equitable state than Collins ever would.”

Roy Mathews ’21, one of the previous leaders of Bates College Republicans, described his support for Collins, but also explained why he cares. Mathews is from South Carolina, but he’s been working for political candidates in Maine, including Collins, for the last five years, and has learned a lot about Maine and Lewiston through these experiences.

“Mainers are very like, if you’re not from Maine, you’re not really one of us,” Mathews said. “I’ve gotten that plenty of times from all of the Republican people that I’ve worked with. They’ll be like, ‘Roy, you are a good guy, but you’re not from Maine.’”

One plus for Collins is that she has years of experience in office, Mathews said. Gideon is from Rhode Island and moved to Maine within the past twenty years. Collins has been in office for 23 years and she’s lived in Maine her whole life, he noted.

“Just this week, she brought in about 250 million dollars in relief to the lobster industry,” Mathews said. “She’s worked to repeal some of the tariffs on Trump that she voted against. She passed the paycheck protection program. She has been the most consistent and Independent voice that Maine has had.”

Mathews also described why other people may lean towards Collins too — specifically Lewiston residents.

“The reason Trump won in 2016 is because he appealed to those blue-collar white people in places like Lewiston who have been told for years that they’re racist, that they’re evil, that climate change can make their jobs obsolete and that they should just go away,” Mathews said. “People in Lewiston want jobs, security, and just to be left alone. They want to be able to live their American dream, take care of their family, and die with dignity.”

Which Republican Senator Are You?

Samuel Poulos,
Assistant Features Editor
Published Oct. 21, 2020

Tally up your score and see which Senatorial member of the GOP you are.

What’s your idea of the perfect date?

- A. Defunding Planned Parenthood (1 point)
- B. Telling your significant other they look hot, and then making clear your belief that climate change is a natural part of the earth’s cycle and that raising taxes won’t do anything to help (2 points)
- C. A nice meal at an Italian restaurant, then going dutch on the check because the wage gap isn’t real (3 points)
- D. July 4th, 1776 baby (4 points)

What’s your favorite season?

- A. Winter because that’s when Jesus was born (1 point)
- B. Spring because that’s when Jesus rose from the dead (2 points)
- C. Fall, or “autumn”; whichever polls better with non-degree holding white men (3 points)
- D. Summer, because 4th of July baby (4 points)

What’s your favorite book?

- A. The Fountainhead by Ayn Rand (1 point)
- B. The Bible by Jesus (2 points)
- C. The Bible by Joseph Smith – lookin’ at you, Romney (3 points)
- D. Books? (4 points)

How would others describe your personality in one word?

- A. Sexy (1 point)
- B. White (2 points)
- C. Old (3 points)
- D. Very Sexy (4 points)

What’s your favorite TV show?

- A. Anything on the History Channel (1 point)
- B. Parks and Rec – for Ron Swanson, and Ron Swanson only (2 points)
- C. Anything but the news (3 points)
- D. The Bible (4 points)

You see a small child drowning in a river; what do you do?

- A. Tell him drowning is a hoax perpetrated by China (1 point)
- B. Gerrymander so he’s no longer in your district (2 points)
- C. Filibuster (3 points)
- D. Defund Planned Parenthood (4 points)

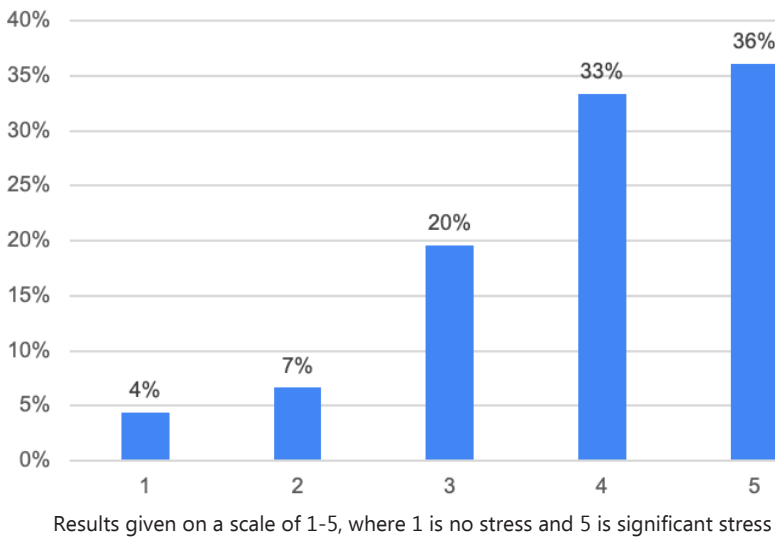
Finished? Alright, now tally your score on a piece of paper, and then throw away that piece of paper and go vote for Biden.

This article is a work of satire.

ELECTION ANXIETY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Community Stress From Election



cation and education.

And we’re clever too... I mean, using Tik Tok as a platform for coordinating a widespread scheme to buy tickets for Trump’s rally in Tulsa and then not show up was an impressive feat. Gen Z has shown that we can bounce

“ I try to reflect on this past summer and the unprecedented number of young people who rose up to demand racial justice. I try to remember that we all have a collective interest in taking climate action and working together to make sure our planet is still livable.

a collective interest in taking climate action and working together to make sure our planet is still livable. I try to think about how we are the most social media savvy generation and how we’ve been able to utilize new tools for communi-

back and continue to be resilient in the face of all the upheaval that this pandemic has created. We have been forced to alter our lives during some of our most developmentally important years and have shown real strength in doing so.

In addition to finding hope

in the energy of our generation, I think it is important to lean on your friends and family if possible during these stressful times. It can be super helpful to talk through your thoughts and concerns with others who can validate and support you. If these relationships don’t offer the types of feedback you need, you can always reach out to mental health counselors such as those at Bates Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS). It is not up to you to handle the weight of our nation’s problems on your own.

Lastly, try to avoid watching the news coverage or agonizing over different predictions, especially since the results of this election might not be final on Nov. 3 due to the increase in mail-in voting; these sources will only add to your stress. Try not to get drawn into the social media arguments, polling numbers, or frightening rhetoric from politicians. Obviously, this is all easier said than done, as we are constantly bombarded by real-time news and upsetting information every day. We will have to work together as a Bates community to be there for each other as we all grapple with our own emotions for this election.

Stop Assuming My Identity

Luis Orozco,
Contributing Writer
Published Oct. 28, 2020

I identify as Latino.
I identify as a man of color.
And I identify as a conservative Republican.

This is not a paradox, a glitch in the matrix. Too often I’m told I am brainwashed, whitewashed, that I hold internalized racism, that I am a colorist and a “traitor to my kind.” How disgusting. How disgusting it is that expressing my views means I lose the respect of those whom I thought were my friends.

I am not sorry my identity doesn’t fit the mold.

My identity is crafted by my thoughts, my experiences, my principals.
I know the space that I occupy, and I am respectful of it. I now demand that same respect back.

I thought when my professors said the classroom is a space where all views can be shared, that meant all views could be shared. I see now only the views that don’t make us uncomfortable because they are foreign, that don’t question the status quo, that don’t make us think, are the ones that are acceptable.

I thought this school’s mission is to engage with our differences and cultivate intellectual discourse.
This is simply not the case anymore, not when you don’t fit the mold.

When did academia fall into discord with diverse thought?
In my time here, my identity has been questioned, harassed, perverted, and mistaken.

I refuse to submit to the victimhood mentality that is constantly used to oppress the free thinkers. Victimhood is the tool they use to suppress my voice.

I refuse to remain unheard.

Let me make this clear: I am done coaching people through the non-linear path that leads to my identity. My integrity is not a connect-the-dots puzzle.

I am tired of having to justify who I am.
I am exhausted with my identity being silenced.
I am drained of having to leave essential parts of myself out when I introduce myself. When I express myself. When I present myself.

Every time I skip that part of myself, the more I fool myself into thinking:
This is how things are now. This is permissible.
This. is. okay.

I’m done.

varied wildly since the pandemic began. Attacking the scientists, local government officials, and health workers that are actually having to carry out government policy only compounds the chaos that the virus has caused.

Because of the massive layoffs and economic downturn, coupled with the deaths of several Black Americans at the hands of law enforcement, has led to massive protests across the country, with some turning violent. Through all this summer, I was wondering where my supposedly tough president was. Considering I voted for Senator Graham, I thought I’d see President Trump step up and lead the country out of the violence. What I got was a stunt that mocked my and millions of others’ Christian faith, reducing “the Bible to a prop, a church to a photo op, and God to a plaything,” according to Reverend James Martin.

To top it all off, we even have to worry about Nazis and Anarchists again. I can almost hear the old World War II veterans I met in Washington D.C. this past summer cackle with sarcastic amusement and a great deal of worry at the notion. Extremist groups continue to be on the rise, leading multiple communities to take precautions to deter potential post-election violence.

The lack of leadership from the White House, along with the now-plummeting trust in government and civil institutions has led many voters to take foreign vacations or move to rural areas. Overall, the perception that freedom of expression has shrunk has led many to become more intolerant of groups they dislike. Those that continue to express themselves dump politics into every facet of daily life, be it com-

DESTROYED

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mercials, social media posts, discussions, or otherwise. Being bombarded with politics every waking moment of your day would make even the most docile student a curmudgeon.

Internationally, we all have witnessed what four years of U.S. isolationism has wrought on the world: a still unending Syrian and Libyan war, skirmishes in the South Caucasus’ region of Nagorno-Karabakh, and dictators openly flouting international law to continue to violate other nations’ sovereignty in order to carry on their strategy of undermining democracy. Ask yourself, is the world in a better place than it was four years ago? The international institutions like the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, NATO, and others may seem to be hollowed out bodies that exercise no real authority, but they

we have bodies in which countries can settle their differences peacefully. Taking a sledgehammer to international institutions does not make the U.S. strong – it makes us weak. We cannot shut ourselves off from the world by building walls or putting America first, because the world’s problems will eventually become our problem. The pandemic itself is evidence of this.

Despite all these massive international and nationwide changes, all politics is local at the end of the day. So what will change at Bates? Will the Bates administration continue to bring us conservatives out every four years for their diversity photo-shoot, then go back to ignoring us the rest of the time? Most likely, yes. Will we still be spat on, harassed, and threatened whenever we voice an opinion like I was during the past four years?

“ We cannot shut ourselves off from the world by building walls or putting America first, because the world’s problems will eventually become our problem.

play a fundamental role in preventing countries from clashing.

Look at the last five hundred years of human history. Even going past the last five hundred years, can we honestly say that the trend of humanity is towards peace? The international structures that were forged out of the destruction of World War II have prevented massive conflicts between modern nations with modern weapons that have the ability to wipe out thousands of lives. Over the previous hundreds of years, empires have expanded, clashed, and fallen, while countries used to annex huge swathes of territory, with diplomacy and negotiation taking a back seat to expansionism.

The United States, along with its crucial partners, has managed to prevent this return to chaos since the end of World War II, specifically because

Of course, after all we came to Bates so “we were asking for it,” in the words of one student.

So, why bother voting blue again like I did in 2016? I’m certain that Bates’ culture of illiberalism and the treatment of people like me won’t change, regardless if I were to vote blue for a second time. It’s very amusing to see the endless lampooning of conservatives by Bates students and then to still be treated like garbage if we vote blue anyway. The last four years have been anathema to conservatives, yet Bates’ left wing fanaticism and intolerance of other views shows that they’re closer to MAGA hatters than they think they are. This year I’ll be voting third party. As for the GOP, I didn’t leave the party, the party left me. So go vote, but cast a vote for your candidate, not whatever candidate your friends are all voting for.

#BobcatsAllIn Promotes Voter Registration

Miles Nabritt,
Managing Forum Editor
Published Oct. 28, 2020

As the 2020 election draws near, Bates students have been actively attempting to increase awareness regarding voter registration and participation. Student-athletes have been particularly involved in voting initiatives around campus, partnering with Bates Votes and the Harvard Center, to create the initiative #BobcatsAllIn to inspire student-athletes to vote.

#BobcatsAllIn has slowly become recognized across campus as the election initiative has picked up steam. With the election just seven days away, Bates Athletics and the Harvard Center are determined to use the time we have left to make one final push to get as many Bates community members to vote as possible.

Still, we must not forget Bates’ previous struggles with getting out to vote. Over the past several months, I have been interested in learning more about how Bates has ranked in comparison to the other NESCACs in terms of voter registration and voting rates. After each election, the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) gives each NESCAC school a report based on how they did in terms of voter registration, voting rate, and voter turnout in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity.

What was most shocking about the numbers is how far behind Bates is in terms of voter

turnout. According to the NSLVE report, Bates suffered a small decline in voter registration from the 2012 to the 2016 election, from 71.3% to 71.0%. Furthermore, voter turnout at Bates in 2016 was considerably lower in comparison to other NESCAC institutions. Bates ranked 9th in the NESCAC for the 2016 general election with a turnout rate of only 43.5%.

Now, what has been the response this year and what has the Bates community done to help spread the word to vote? Starting in the summer, several Bates student-athletes partnered with Bates Votes and the Harvard Center to improve the overall voter turnout on campus.

This year has been unprecedented in terms of support and advocacy for voting participation initiatives. Specifically, through the work of organizations such as the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), some athletic teams have successfully reached 100% voter registration. Teams such as Women’s Cross Country, Mens’ Soccer, Mens’ Lacrosse, and Women’s Rowing have been at the forefront of voting participation on campus. Additionally, both SAAC and the athletic department are coming up with several election program initiatives for this upcoming week to motivate as many student-athletes as possible to vote.

Speaking to Peggy Rotundo, Harvard Center Director of Strategic and Policy Initiatives, gave me insight about her desire

for Bates to improve its voter turnout rate. “I am super excited about the support that Bates Athletics has provided in helping to get all eligible students out to vote. Team captains have really stepped up to the plate to engage their teammates,” she said. “If we keep up this effort, we will beat Colby and Bowdoin in the official NESCAC Votes Challenge!”

Additionally, I spoke with Assistant A.D. for student-athlete Services & Internal Operations, Jessica Duff, as she has played a pivotal role in organizing this election initiative. Duff told me about her observations of other student-athletes around the country participating in the same voting initiatives as Bates. She emphasized how she hopes that the initiative will be the beginning of more awareness on the issues that impact the Bates campus and communities.

“Student-athletes across the country have expressed a desire to increase their civil engagement at local and national levels, and the athletes at Bates are no exception,” she shared. “I have been incredibly inspired by our team voting captains and other students across campus who are not only making it their mission to get as many people registered to vote as possible, but are also identifying creative ways to be civically engaged, especially during a time when voter suppression is a concern across our country.

“I hope the #BobcatsAllIn initiative is only the beginning of



Kahryn Cullenburg/Courtesy Photo

Jen Coseno '24 and Kahryn Cullenburg '24, members of the women’s XC team, celebrate voting in their first presidential election.

a collective effort to make a difference in our communities and to educate ourselves and one another about the issues that will affect us for years to come,” she continued.

Finally, I spoke with Mary Corcoran '22, who has been a major source of information for student-athletes about voting registration and has been part of the effort to track progress with how many have voted.

“Coming together with administrators in the athletics department, as well as team voting captains in collaboration with BatesVotes has been really great. Voting plans are really essential to hold students accountable to cast their ballot and the most

likely person a student will listen to is not a stranger on social media, but their own friends and teammates,” Corcoran explained.

“By using the super strong networks already established within teams, I hope that Bates athletes will hold each other accountable and all go out and vote this election if they haven’t already.”

It has been powerful to see student-athletes from all sports teams come together to support #BatesAllIn and watch the momentum grow. But, the work is not over yet. Please follow @bates_saac, @gobatesbobcats, @batesvotes to find out more information on how you can support election initiatives on campus. Go vote!

Sociological Consequences of 2020 Election Outcomes

Noah Dumont,
Contributing Writer
Published Oct. 28, 2020

For many sociologists, the election between President Donald Trump and former vice-president Joe Biden is the most socially relevant in American history. To further unpack what this means, I interviewed four professors from the Sociology Department at Bates. Each professor has a different research speciality that shapes how they view the current election.

Michael Rocque,
Ass. Professor of Sociology
Research Specialty:
Criminology

Professor Rocque focuses on the issues that impact the criminal justice system and is interested in understanding why people commit crimes. The president impacts the criminal justice system by signing bills into law that influence how crime is managed. There has been concern about Biden’s support for the 1994 crime bill and the role the bill had in the disproportionate incarceration rate of racial minorities. Rocque believes that not all the flaws within the criminal justice system can be traced back to this single bill and that the problems predate 1994. Biden is running on a campaign that details how racial disparities and other social problems will be addressed within the criminal justice system.

On the other hand, Trump has called for “law and order” in his campaign speeches. To Rocque, this has a double meaning that suggests the president is trying to reduce crime, but also criminalizing the behavior of protesters. This approach to reducing crime may further exacerbate the racial injustices seen in the criminal justice system.

Education is linked with crime and justice, and Rocque believes that electing a candidate who values the role of education would be beneficial for the criminal justice system. He fears that electing the wrong candidate could result in the rise of extremist groups. Also, if a transition of power occurs, and if it is not done peacefully and amicably, there could be an increase in violence after the election.

Francesco Duina,
Professor of Sociology
Research Specialty:
Economic and Political
Sociology

Professor Duina focuses on national identity, international political economy, and international organizations like the European Union in his re-

search. He believes that the result of the election will have a direct impact on his research.

Duina believes that over the past four years, the Trump administration has continuously tried to push a protectionist and nationalistic agenda that has weakenend ties with allies, given power to our enemies, given voice to far-right nationalistic parties across the world, and has gone against the unwritten rules that much of the world follows. In a Biden presidency, Duina foresees a movement towards a more traditional approach in dealing with foreign affairs, allowing our country to regain the allies it has lost. If Trump wins, he believes the trajectory our country has been on for the past four years will continue.

To conclude, he lists inequality, racial matters, health, education, domestic tensions, and a vision for a better America and the world as issues both important to him, but also sociologists in general. These issues are all at the center of this election. He contends that the president of the U.S. is still the most powerful person in the world and that almost everything is impacted by this election, because the president has the ability to shape the country’s future. The results of this election might decide if the U.S. ends up on the right or the wrong side of history.

Emily Kane,
Professor of Sociology
Research Specialty:
Intersectionality, Poverty, and
Family and Policy

Professor Kane often studies the intersection of race, class, and gender, and as a result, is particularly concerned with how this election affects women. Resulting from Kane’s intersectional view of sociology, she identifies the way “suburban women” are being portrayed in the election, the nomination of Justice Amy Coney Barrett, and Trump’s focus on law and order, as important issues.

For Kane, studying marginalized populations in our country helps her to see the social implications of this election. Systemic racism is something that has long been studied by sociologists, but is much more recently been talked about by politicians. Systemic racism is at the forefront of many issues discussed in this election cycle. Housing, healthcare, education, employment, and wealth are just some of the areas where racial inequities continue to persist. Contrasting views on how much of a role systemic racism plays in creating inequalities in the U.S. are also coming to light this election.

Moving away from social issues, Kane expressed her interest in polling. She teaches sociology research methods at Bates. In particular, she pays close attention to sample bias and social desirability bias. These were two factors that helped to explain why an unexpected Trump victory took place in 2016 after Hillary Clinton had been leading in the polls. With the coronavirus pandemic, studying the new challenges with polling this year interests sociologists like Kane.

Ben Moodie,
V. Ass. Professor of Sociology
Research Specialty:
Comparative Sociology and
Cultures

Professor Moodie’s research is centered around the comparison of cultures. In thinking about the election, he made connections to the teachings of Michèle Lamont, Professor of Sociology and African American Studies at Harvard University. Lamont’s research indicates that American men are more likely than French men to view money as a sign of individual achievement. Moodie says that this caricature is often what Europeans, and the French specifically, fear the most about America. Trump, who had never been a politician, ran for president and was elected largely because having money made him influential and valued in American society.

In explaining how we have gotten to where we are at the time of the 2020 Presidential Election, Moodie took a look back to the 1970s. During that time, professionals often identified as Republican more than other workers. However, over time, professionals have moved more toward the Democratic Party. He explained social liberalism among professionals as a likely cause, but also the fact that conservatives have become much more likely to offer criticism of those who are widely considered to be knowledgeable. This is evident with the coronavirus and Trump’s unwillingness to trust medical experts and scientists. Moodie believes that the coronavirus has shown Americans that it takes more than just one person to guide the country through times of crisis.

I would like to thank Professor Rocque, Professor Duina, Professor Kane, and Professor Moodie for allowing me to interview them for this story. Their perspectives are just four examples of the way sociologists view the election. However, these perspectives help to show why this election has become socially relevant.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

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prominent Jewish thinker, Ruth Franklin, tweeted: “According to Jewish tradition, a person who dies on Rosh Hashanah... is a tzaddik, a person of great righteousness.” Raboy has been clinging to this quote throughout the recent Senate hearings for RBG’s conservative Supreme Court replacement, Amy Coney Barrett.

“I’d like to believe all that RBG has worked toward in securing not only reproductive rights but reproductive justice, can’t be so easily undone. But I guess only time will tell,” Raboy said.

Politics Professor Steven Engel, an expert in constitutional law, believes that access to abortion “will likely be curbed by the Supreme Court.” Engel is unsure if there will be an explicit overturning of Roe v. Wade in the near future, but it is much more likely that restrictions on access to abortion through state legislatures will increase.

The 1992 Supreme Court decision in Planned Parenthood v. Casey ruled that it is a constitutional right to seek an abortion without undue burden prior to the viability of the fetus (viability refers to the point within gestation that the fetus can survive outside of the womb). Despite this ruling, states have found means of passing legislation that restricts abortion access.

Politics major Elise Grossfeld ‘21, told The Student that “since state legislatures do not get as much media attention as Congress, it is easy for these bills to fly under the radar.” Some of these restrictions include prohibiting abortions after a specific point and requiring parental consent or partner consent, regardless of family situation.

The “heartbeat” bills are one state-level techniques used to limit abortion. This legislature prohibits abortions after a heartbeat can be detected, which can be early as six weeks — long before many women are aware that they are pregnant. This clearly violates the Planned Parenthood v. Casey viability doctrine as the fetus is not yet able to survive outside of the womb. For this reason, many heartbeat bills have either died or stalled, pending further action. However, several states, including Georgia, Kentucky, Ohio, and Mississippi, have managed to pass these bills into law.

Grossfeld’s senior thesis examines the factors that allow the heartbeat bill to pass within the state legislature. “I am looking at how factors such as the presence of Republican female legislators, anti-abortion interest groups, and the partisan composition of the state... affects whether or not the bill is introduced and passed,” Grossfeld said.

The confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett as the new Supreme Court Justice, solidifying a Republican majority, may allow for more legislature like the heartbeat bills to slip by the viability doctrine and become easily passed.

“I think people are so anxious about a Justice Barrett in part because she has expressed views that are not only hostile to Roe [v. Wade], but hostile to the foundation of Roe, namely privacy,” Engel said.

The interpretation of privacy as a fundamental right in the constitution not only allows for abortion access but also access to other forms of reproductive healthcare (i.e. contraception, PAP smears, and STD testing), and the decriminalization of same-sex intimacy and marriage. Since Barrett’s interpretation of the constitution does not include the right to privacy, all of these rights are put at stake with Barret’s confirmation.

Reproductive rights are protected by a second mechanism besides the right to privacy: the Affordable Care Act (ACA), whose constitutionality is once again before the Supreme Court. Since Barrett has long been an advocate for the conservative legal movement, she is most likely hostile towards the ACA and would vote the law as unconstitutional. The loss of the ACA would disproportionately affect minority communities who have relied on these health care services. In light of the pandemic, it would also be devastating for those seeking care for COVID-19.

Raboy is most worried about the equitable access to reproductive healthcare for minoritized populations. “It is already so difficult for the majority of Americans to access adequate reproductive care, even now while procedures like abortion are legal. If there is a repeal on some of the most fundamental reproductive rights... it will be members of the most marginalized communities who will be hit first and hardest,” Raboy said.

In the event that Roe v. Wade is overturned, abortion rights will be left to states and more bills that prohibit access to abortion will be passed. “This is because abortion is a fully-partisan issue,” Engel said. The Republican party has been known to be actively opposed to Roe v. Wade, while the Democratic party acts as the “political home” for those who support the matter.

However, there is still some hope in the protection of reproductive rights. Engel largely believes that the confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett will only limit, rather than explicitly overturn, Roe v. Wade. Only in the event that President Trump is re-elected and is able to replace Justice Stephen Breyer will the ruling be completely overturned.

Although the Supreme Court in the past has often ruled against popularly supported policies, over 70 percent of Americans support access to abortion. “The court has often ultimately relented, in part, I believe because the Constitution belongs to the people and not to just judges. I have faith that will remain true,” Engel remarked.

Engel recommends in the case that “the Supreme Court does overturn the ACA or Roe, learn what the consequences of that are and engage with your representatives in Congress and at the state level to promote the range of policy and institutional responses.” As much as it may feel out of our hands, collectively using our voices to protect and promote the rights which uphold equality holds more power than we think.

PREDICTION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Reagan to Trump. Specifically, Lichtman and Keilis-Borok framed their logic around the theory that “stability” meant that there would be no party change and “earthquake” meant that the incumbent party would fall apart and a new one would emerge victorious. This past August, Professor Lichtman organized a video montage with the New York Times where he explains how he came up with his method of predicting presidential elec-

tions. Specifically, what fascinates me about Lichtman’s presidential prediction model is that it has thirteen different conditions, or “keys,” that each presidential nominee is assessed by. In the video, Lichtman explains that an answer of “true” to more than half of the keys means that the political party in control of the Oval Office remains the same. However, an answer of “false” means that there is evidence towards a possible political earthquake. These thirteen keys range from “Strong

Short Term Economy” to “Major Policy Change” to even “No Social Unrest.” After going through each key, Lichtman’s presidential model predicted that Biden would win the presidential election after accumulating 7 keys to Trump’s 6.


What hurt Trump the most are the keys relating to the economy, scandals, and social unrest. However, Professor Lichtman was careful not to get too emotional about his prediction. As he said, “I’m a Democrat and the toughest thing about being a forecast is to keep your own

politics out of it.” So will Professor Lichtman be right again or will his model suffer a shocking defeat?

After researching Professor Lichtman’s model, I believe that it is fundamentally sound but does have a few parts that are debatable. One problem I have with this model is that there are keys that are subjective. The last two of Lichtman’s key’s “Charismatic Incumbent” and “Uncharismatic Challenger” can be argued depending on what your political opinion is. In some cases having to judge a person’s character and

demeanor may be difficult. As we head into the final stretch before Nov. 3, it is important to remind ourselves the importance of voting in this election. With so much at stake from civil rights to the environment to even our sanity, we need to ask ourselves: “What is the society that we want to live in for the future?” While Professor Allan Lichtman believes that Biden will win the 2020 election, the power still remains in our hands to help make that outcome a reality.

Political Signs are More Than Decorations

 Fiona Cohen,
Assistant Features Editor
Published Oct. 7, 2020

I have my routine down pat: first, I run past 280, then through the intersection of College St. and Russell St., beyond Pettingill Park, and it’s then that I enter the flat suburban stretches of Lewiston. To the casual observer, this generic suburb is no different than any other. There are neat rows of houses with basketball hoops in the driveways and Halloween-themed wreaths on the front doors. However, in my mind, there is underlying tension here. This tension comes from the opposing red, white, and blue signs that adorn people’s lawns. These signs bear the names and slogans of presidential candidates: former Vice President Joe Biden and President Donald Trump.

In my experience, political lawn signs are nothing new. They appear before every election on my local highways and the front lawns of my opinionated neighbors. Before this election, I discarded them as innocuous, but, in 2020, these signs are bold, polarizing statements. It is alarming to see a red brick house with a pretty front door that has an “All Lives Matter” sign posted in the grass.

As I run through the back roads of Lewiston, I remember the elections of my childhood. Voting was a private matter. The adults around me would gossip about their neighbors’ political leanings. Now, these leanings are openly displayed for the whole world to see. My neighbors announce that they align with a candidate who is complicit in the perpetuation of racism, homophobia, and more — before we even walk onto their properties. These signs almost serve as “welcome or not welcome” indicators.

The thought of my Lewiston neighbors aligning themselves with a president who so blatantly lacks competence and empathy is disconcerting enough. Something even more troublesome enters my mind. Perhaps the most frightening part of all of this is that there seems to be an even number of signs that endorse Biden and Trump here in Lewiston.

In recent decades, my home state of New Jersey has voted blue in the presidential election. When these signs appear every four years, I can safely say that most will endorse the blue candidate. Here in Maine, that is not the case. Just by looking at the signs in Lewiston, it is not clear who has the advantage. As early voting begins, I am not confident that Joe Biden will be



Yuri Kim/The Bates Student

the winner of the 2020 presidential election. I am troubled by the thought of what could become of four more years of Donald Trump.

As I end my run, I cross back into the primarily blue bubble that is the Bates Campus. Over the past few years, I’ve been routinely reminded of how important it is to vote. This is not a problem that we

are far removed from. This political split exists mere feet from our dorms and classrooms. It is a place where Bates students can make a difference.

I know that this is not the first time you have been asked to register to vote in Maine. I hope that this will be the last time that you have to be asked to register to

vote. As insignificant as they may seem, the political signs that cover the lawns in suburban Lewiston are not merely decorations. Next time you run, walk, or drive through the outskirts of Lewiston, take notice of these signs. They tell the story of just how divided our country is at the moment.

Vote by Mail Increases Turnout During Pandemic

 Miles Nabritt,
Managing Forum Editor
Published Oct. 28, 2020

As we progress from October into November, the 2020 election is reaching its endgame. With the last presidential debate featuring the dynamic personalities of Donald Trump and Joe Biden having come to a close, one issue hasn’t been talked about as much as it should: voting by mail. Because of COVID-19, voting this year has been completely different from past years. Whether it be focusing on youth voters, Hispanic voters, or female voters, both Trump and Biden have been adamant about getting their supporters to vote this year. However, for this article I want to focus on two main factors:

1. How voting has changed in recent years
2. How voting by mail is going to impact election 2020

The Bates Student contributors have written several articles so far about the 2020 election, analyzing the debates, discussing voting suppression, and even trying to comprehend the political climate of this election. Following this election has been overwhelming, to say the least. However, as we approach Nov. 3, it’s important to look at the voting statistics to see how many people have already voted and for which candidate. For starters, during the

2016 election, a total of approximately 138 million Americans voted, according to Penn State University. Over the past decade or so, a noticeable trend has been the decline in the voting turnout of recent elections. Specifically, in the past three elections, there has been a steady decline in the voter turnout rate in U.S. elections.

During 2008, the voter turnout rate was 61.6%, then in 2012 it was 58.6%, and finally it was 58.1% in 2016. What does this decline in voting turnout suggest? There are a number of explanations from lack of interest to voter suppression, but in the uncommon year that 2020 has turned out to be, there have been uncommon levels in voter turnout. One of the many aspects of the 2020 election that has made this whole event so unique is that a lot of people have already voted. That’s right, already voted. Even though we are all anticipating election results on Nov. 3, the election is happening as we speak. Just two weeks ago, there was an estimated 26 million votes that have already been cast for the 2020 election; though, as I was writing this article, that number was bound to change.

Michael McDonald, who is a professor and political scientist from the University of Florida, is in charge of a newly founded election tracking program called the US Election Project. Within this program, Professor McDonald tracks the number of people who have voted and how they voted by

the end of each week. Just recently, after the end of the day on Oct. 25, there have been a total of 47.2 million votes casted. Specifically, Professor McDonald has collected data from 17 states with the most active voter turnout, all who have been primarily using mail-in ballots, ranging from places such as California, Florida, Iowa, and even Maine. During the week of October 25th, 10,989,134 people have voted for Joe Biden and a total of 5,146,889 have voted for Donald Trump from these 17 states. Granted, these mail-in ballots have been returned and officially accounted for. Additionally, the votes that have been cast so far have resembled a rapidly increasing portion of votes cast compared to the 2016 election (43.7%), but that isn’t even the most important part of this data collection so far.

The main focus of this article is how voting has changed in this election cycle. Looking at the data from Professor McDonald’s U.S. Election Project, there has been a drastic difference between the number of people who have voted in-person and those who have mailed in their ballots. In states such as Colorado, Kentucky, and North Carolina, McDonald’s data has shown that more Republicans have mailed in their ballots than Democrats during the week of October 25th – 2,334,250 to 2,176,802. For mail-in ballots, there has been 40,231,976 who have already casted their votes. Due to COVID-19, there has been

an incredibly dramatic discrepancy between those who have already voted in person in comparison to those who have voted by mail.

What the US Election Project has shown is that Democrats are showing up by the millions, but through mail-in ballots. What is the significance of these turns of events? The truth is that we all need to realize that on Nov. 3 there is the large possibility of us not having a clear picture of who is going to win the election. I want to address that one of the main factors of this discrepancy in votes is due to the so-called “Blue Shift”. The “Blue Shift” is the theory stating that Democratic candidates are making large electoral gains during and after the official election dates. Especially when it comes to provisional ballots, or ballots investigated by local election officials, there was an example of a “Blue Shift” during Arizona’s Senate race in 2018. With such a large number of Democrats voting for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris by mail, it will take a long time to count each vote. There is also the possibility that Donald Trump and Mike Pence will receive a larger proportion of in-person votes, which will be counted faster than mail-in votes. Now if the “Blue Shift” were to occur on November 3, we could see Trump having more votes on election night, but then see Biden pull ahead in the weeks ahead afterward. Especially, if the election is close, there is the possibility of not knowing the

winner for a while. Additionally, mail-in ballots are already encountering major problems. One of the many harsh realities of voting is that states have different procedures from each other. According to the Pew Research Center, early in August, around 61% of registered voters who live in states such as Colorado, Hawaii, and Utah that have declared mandatory voting by mail claim that voting is going to be easy. However, in Washington D.C. and other states, voting is going to a more difficult process. Specifically, data shows that 53% of voters who live in places such as Washington D.C., who are not conducting their elections entirely by mail, are now mailing in ballots. More importantly, there has been considerable resistance to mail-in voting. Trump has publicly vocalized that mail-in voting is going to result in “the most corrupt election in our nation’s history”.

Many votes during past elections have been counted after election night and that is going to happen this time around. All states have until December 8th, exactly five weeks after election day, to account for any conflicts, contested votes, and to make a report confirming to the Electoral College that the results are valid. Just to be clear this is going to be an unprecedented election in unprecedented times. So hold on everyone. We are in for a long ride.

Don’t Discount Donny: Remembering the 1948 Election

Gabriel Coffey,
Staff Writer
Published Oct. 28, 2020

In 1948, on the morning of the presidential election, the Chicago Daily Tribune purported in bold lettering, “Dewey Defeats Truman.” Harry S. Truman had turned in early on election night, NBC having reported that Dewey would win, and slept until four when he was woken by a secret service agent. He had won. Having gone to bed in shambles, he woke up the winner of the 1948 presidential election. 2020 could prove to be a reiteration of that infamous night.

Currently, former vice president Joe Biden leads in the polls. The Economist currently predicts

that Biden has a 92% chance of victory. Yet, this leaves 8% of cases where President Donald Trump wins. And one must remember, Trump was in a similar spot two weeks before the 2016 election. That outcome speaks for itself.

If Trump is to win he will have to carry his home state of Florida, and states he won in 2016, including Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, North Carolina, and Texas. He will then have to win Pennsylvania and either Michigan or Wisconsin. The only way this will happen is if undecided voters, much like in 2016, decide to side with Trump.

This is unlikely, given that in 2016 “undecided” voters made up 14% of voters, compared with 6% today. Thus, what will matter is

whether or not Trump’s base turns out, and whether or not Republican’s mass registration effort pans out for them. And if Trump’s base does turn out as their record registration suggests, they will do so in person.

Thus, on election night, watch with a critical eye. When Florida’s results inevitably come out before those of Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, remember that said result represents both mail in and in-person voting, as Florida has early vote counting. In that sense, Florida will be one of the few results that actually “matter” on election night. With Trump adopting Florida as his home, look for a tight race that will rely on Democrats mobilizing the Cuban vote in and around Mi-

ami. Yet, it is unlikely that Biden will win their support, as Trump has consistently garnered Cuban support, painting Biden as a Castro type socialist. If this assumption proves correct, then the entirety of the election will rely on mail in ballots in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. That proves worrisome.

Trump has not explicitly said he will accept the results of the election. Thus, if he appears to be winning in the critical states mentioned above, then he might prematurely declare himself the victor. This could lead to a Supreme Court battle, which appears independent from Trump’s guise, but in the event that it happens, could threaten the institution of the electoral college for years to come.

With Trump urging supporters to vote in person on the grounds that mail-in voting is fraudulent, expect to see an early lead in the states he needs desperately to win (Wisconsin and Pennsylvania). The reason being that in these states ballots can’t be counted until election day. Yet, the Supreme Court ruled that ballots in Pennsylvania can be counted if received up to three days after the election. Nonetheless, they can’t be counted before the election. This makes it likely that Trump will lead on election day, and flounder in the tizzy that will be the following days in the key states of Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Much like Truman, Biden could go to bed vanquished, and wake up the victor.

Bates Votes Strives to Increase Turnout

Only 45% of eligible Batesies voted in the 2016 general election



Amelia Keleher,
Managing News Editor
Published Oct. 7, 2020

With the Nov. 3 presidential election a mere month away, multiple groups on campus are working hard to help people register and develop a voting plan.

In the 2016 election, 71% of all eligible Bates students were registered to vote, yet the number of eligible students who actually cast a ballot in the last presidential election was only 45%. These numbers were “very disappointing” for many members of the Bates community, including Peggy Rotundo. Rotundo served as an elected official for 23 years, both as a Democratic member of the Maine House of Representatives and as a representative for Lewiston in the Maine Senate. She currently works as the Director of Strategic and Policy Initiatives at the Harvard Center.

Bates Votes, a non-partisan campus initiative, was started last year to address students’ confusion about how to register, where to vote, and how to cast an informed ballot; much of the work also aims to convey to Bates students why their votes matter. Bates Votes is overseen by the Harvard Center but run by students.

Amalia Herren-Lage and Ashka Jhaveri, both juniors, are the student leaders of Bates Votes this year. So far, they have prioritized helping students register to vote. Part of this initiative has included enlisting and training other students to be “Bates Votes Captains,” who are then tasked with ensuring that all of their eligible teammates, residents, peers, and/or club members get registered.

Both Herren-Lage and Jhaveri emphasized their commitment to a non-partisan approach in order to build trust with students. According to Herren-Lage, her role as a coordinator is to make students aware of their right to vote, how to access that right, and that Bates Votes is there to

support students. “This year specifically, based on your identity and how it is supported and defined in the government, you may not feel comfortable voting,” Jhaveri said. Her intention to change this inspired her to work with Bates Votes.

Herren-Lage’s motivation to join Bates Votes came from a desire to work with people whose political opinions or backgrounds may not necessarily align with her own, but who agree that voting should be made as accessible and inexpensive as possible for Bates students.

“This year, we’re really working with the language of a voting plan versus a voting pledge,” Herren-Lage said. She explained that some students believe they can just register and then show up to the polls to vote on Nov. 3. Having a “voting plan” is especially important this year because of added complications and potential delays caused by COVID-19 and funding cuts to the US Postal Service.

For example, the CDC has imposed maximum occupancy guidelines at polling locations. At the Lewiston Armory, a maximum of 50 people will be allowed inside at any given time. As a result, Bates Votes is anticipating long lines and lengthy wait times on election day. One way to avoid this is to request an absentee ballot. Another is to vote early.

Both Herren-Lage and Jhaveri are working hard to make students aware of these opportunities, from making classroom visits to meeting with first-year seminars to compiling resources that break down the impact of student votes.

Rotundo is a firm believer in connecting classroom learning to civic engagement; she believes it’s important for faculty to explain the relevance of what they are teaching in regards to issues being discussed on both the national and local level.

“When students see that connection, they’re much more interested in making change in the larger



Katherine Merisotis/The Bates Student

Amalia Herren-Lage ’22 and Ashka Jhaveri ’22, coordinators of Bates Votes.

world,” Rotundo said.

Jhaveri is also hosting a Commons Quickbites series, where she talks to people about why they do or don’t vote. “Regardless of party, people feel frustrated, and it’s not helpful to shame people for feeling discouraged,” Herren-Lage said. “People have valid reasons for not wanting to vote; we want to make room for all opinions.”

Local politics and community engagement

Another goal that Herren-Lage and Jhaveri have is to encourage students to learn more about local elections, especially if they plan to vote in Maine. “We’re residents of Lewiston; we’re not just Bates College students,” Jhaveri said. “We need to engage in [Lewiston’s] politics, and [local] issues should be our issues. We’re voting as members of the community,” she added.

Herren-Lage shared a similar sentiment: “You have to understand [your vote] as a responsibility. What we do impacts the city.” She gave the specific example that “if you’re volunteering at a local school, you have to be aware that your vote shapes the school board.”

Herren-Lage and Jhaveri shared that the Lewiston city clerk and other parties strongly believe that the votes of Bates students matter. “The city clerk works so hard to make life easier for us,” Herren-Lage said. She attributed this to Peggy Rotundo’s long-term dedication

to building this relationship and her involvement in local politics.

“Help, I’m confused!”

For students who feel frustrated or confused by the whole voting process, Herren-Lage said: “Please get in touch with us. Don’t let the confusion and frustration be the thing that stops you [from voting].”

Jhaveri added that there are many groups on campus that are committed to helping students. While Bates Votes is the only non-partisan group associated with the college, Jhaveri said “there are lots of people like us who have been trained who can help you navigate the logistics of voting.”

Because the process of registering to vote and requesting an absentee ballot differs across states, Bates Votes plays an important role in helping students navigate the process.

Rotundo’s biggest concern is that students get sent home and don’t receive their absentee ballots in time, leaving them disenfranchised as a result. “It keeps me up at night,” she said. However, she has been working with Post & Print to develop a plan of action if this were to happen.

The Power in Voting

Drawing on her experience as an elected official, Rotundo is determined to convey to students why their vote is so important. “If students really got out there and orga-

nized, it would push this country in a different direction. It’s your future, you have that power, that opportunity, and I just want everyone to take advantage of it,” she said.

“I don’t want anyone to give up this power that they have, or have their voices go unheard,” Rotundo concluded.

International Students and Civic Engagement

While international students at Bates are not eligible to vote in the presidential or local election(s), they can still become voting captains. “Voting isn’t the only way to be involved,” Jhaveri said.

Jhaveri emphasized that U.S. politics still dictates the lives of international students, citing the ICE legislation that was passed and then rescinded earlier this year as an example. “So [international students] have a stake in this election, too,” she said.

Herren-Lage believes that “Bates should [also] be supporting civic engagement outside the US.” She pointed out that some students have to travel to consulates in Boston or New York in order to vote in their home countries, which poses an added challenge to casting their vote. Herren-Lage wonders whether the Office of Global Education may have resources to help support international students in accessing their right to vote.

Senator Elizabeth Warren Holds Lewiston Rally

Christina Leonard,
Digital Editor
Published Oct. 14, 2020

U.S. Senator and former 2020 presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren visited Lewiston, Maine for a small, socially-distanced outdoor rally hosted by Biden for Maine on Saturday. Bates students, alums and locals were in attendance to hear from Warren and from Biden for Maine who spoke about the importance of voting and volunteering in anticipation of the upcoming election.

As one of the most populous center in Maine’s 2nd congressional district, which Trump won in the 2016 election, Warren and Biden for Maine purposefully held their event in Lewiston to reinforce the significance of getting civically engaged in this district in hopes that the Biden/Harris campaign can secure all four of Maine’s electoral votes.

Although the rally was mainly to promote the Biden/Harris campaign, Warren, alongside the rest of the speakers, made clear that they fully endorse Sara Gideon who is running against Susan Collins for the Maine seat in the U.S. Senate.

Before Warren took the stage, however, recent Bates grad Julia Panepinto ’20, former volunteer on Warren’s campaign and current field orga-

nizer for the Maine Democrats, stressed the importance of early voting. “I know it may seem that the election is 24 days away and that voting will happen then, but the reality is people are voting in Maine now, people are voting in Maine every single day. This election could be decided before Nov. 3,” Panepinto said.

Panepinto concluded by reminding the audience about “the importance of fighting for what you believe you deserve,” to make clear that “we need to fight for Joe Biden and for Sara Gideon because we deserve their leadership.”

Warren, introduced by Panepinto, spoke to the necessity of being politically active right now in order to hold President Donald Trump and his administration accountable. In particular, she pointed to the Trump administration’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and their attempts to repeal Obamacare, which would leave millions of Americans without healthcare including children under their parents’ coverage. “This election is life [or] death,” Warren said.

In her closing remarks, Warren mentioned how her “heart is filled with hope” for a brighter future thanks to the Biden/Harris campaign, “because when we start with a man in the White House with basic human empathy, who believes in the confi-



Daphne Valen/Courtesy Photo

Senator Elizabeth Warren speaks at a rally hosted by Biden for Maine in Lewiston, Maine.

dence of government and who doesn’t always put himself first, but, instead, puts other people first, the American people first, then I know we have a chance,” she said.

Many Bates students were in attendance, including Barratt Dewey ’23 and Daphne Valen ’23, co-Presidents and founders of Bates for Biden. Dewey and Valen thought the event was a huge success.

“Being there was almost surreal,” Valen said “Hearing from the Maine campaign, stu-

dents, union members, and, of course, Elizabeth Warren herself was extremely powerful and gave me a lot of hope for Maine in this election.”

Echoing Valen, Dewey also thought the event was really inspiring and hearing Warren speak in Lewiston further “highlighted the fact that while Maine is a small state and often overlooked in the chaos of campaign season, our votes here really do matter.”

Bates for Biden, which is directly affiliated with the

Biden/Harris Campaign, has been hosting virtual and socially-distanced events on campus such as phone and text banks since August with the goal of engaging students in civil discourse.

Valen believes that getting students politically informed and engaged is crucial right now.

“We all want to wake up on Nov. 4, no matter the outcome, and know that we did everything we could to fight for the soul of our nation.”