

# UNITEHERE!

## MEMO

Date: January 11, 2021

RE: Analysis of GA Runoff

Turnout in the January 2021 runoff election for U.S. Senate vastly exceeded expectations. Our union knocked on 1.5 million doors as part of a joint labor/America Votes partnership effort that knocked on a total of over 10 million doors. UNITE HERE had 350,000 conversations and spoke to 226,000 individual voters who pledged to vote for Warnock/Ossoff. The voters we identified actually voted early or by mail at a rate 13% higher (54% vs. 41%) than democratic leaning voters generally.<sup>1</sup> The scale of this effort undoubtedly contributed to record-high democratic turnout in the runoff election.

This level of turnout was essential for victory because of the makeup of Georgia's electorate. Although Georgia has more Democratic voters than Republican, the Republicans have a significant advantage in likely voters. If only likely voters vote, the Republicans win. As turnout increases (on both sides), the democratic gap narrows. Our modeling<sup>2</sup> shows:

All Registered Voters	Lean Rep (0-30)	Swing (30-70)	Lean Dem (70-100)
Unlikely Voters (0-30)	246,252	452,935	666,648
Mid-Propensity (30-70)	373,228	773,217	864,275
Likely Voters (70-100)	1,809,672	557,401	1,558,639

When only likely voters vote, Democrats lose 1.6M to 1.8M. But when mid-propensity voters also vote, Democrats have 2.42 million such voters, to Republicans 2.18 million. **Republicans can only win in Georgia when turnout is limited.** This is why prior runoffs have been less competitive:

	Total Voted	Rep (Total Votes)	Dem (Total Votes)	Rep % of Gen	Dem % of Gen	D vs R Compared
2021 (Senate/Warnock) Runoff	4,474,471	2,192,795	2,281,676	89.1%	92.2%	+3.2%
2020 (Trump/Biden) General	4,997,716	2,461,854	2,473,633			
2018 (SOS) Runoff	1,473,904	764,855	709,049	40.1%	37.5%	-2.6%
2018 (SOS) General	3,883,594	1,906,588	1,890,310			
2008 (Senate) Runoff	2,137,956	1,228,033	909,923	65.8%	51.8%	-14.0%
2008 (Senate) General	3,752,485	1,867,097	1,757,393			
2006 (PSC) Runoff	215,092	112,232	102,860	11.9%	10.3%	-1.6%
2006 (PSC) General	2,036,114	941,748	994,619			
1998 (PSC) Runoff	114,343	75,113	39,230	11.8%	7.2%	-4.5%
1998 (PSC) General	1,286,285	638,065	541,817			

When runoff turnout is 40-60% of general election turnout, the electorate is limited to likely voters, i.e. Republicans win. But the 2021 runoff saw turnout that was 90% of general election turnout. This means that the electorate included mid-propensity voters on both sides, giving Democrats the advantage.

<sup>1</sup> We will not know how many voted on Election Day until the full voter file is released, likely in February.

<sup>2</sup> Georgia does not have party registration. This uses VCI (Voter Choice Index) to measure likely partisan leanings.

Nevertheless, some continue to argue that Republican infighting led to ‘suppressed’ Republican turnout. It’s hard to imagine anyone considering 2.2 million Republican voters – 89% of the Trump vote, and 115% of the total vote for Gov. Kemp in the 2018 general election—as ‘suppressed’ Republican turnout.

But the numbers tell an even more interesting story: The vote total for Republicans (2,192,795) exceeds the total number of Republican likely and mid-propensity voters (2.18M). The vote total for Democrats (2,281,676) does not exceed the number of Democratic likely and mid-propensity voters (2.42M). Republican turnout was not ‘suppressed’. To the contrary, low-propensity Republicans turned out at a higher rate than low-propensity Democrats.

There just weren’t enough Republicans to win. They could not overcome the intensive campaign on the ground by both sides that boosted turnout across the board and allowed the true Democratic majority of Georgia’s electorate to decide who should represent them in the U.S. Senate.