

December 22, 2020

**To: Fix Our Senate**

**From: HIT Strategies – Roshni Nedungadi & Martina Smith, Pollsters**

## **Exploring the Standing of Voters in the 2021 GA Senate Runoff Elections**

---

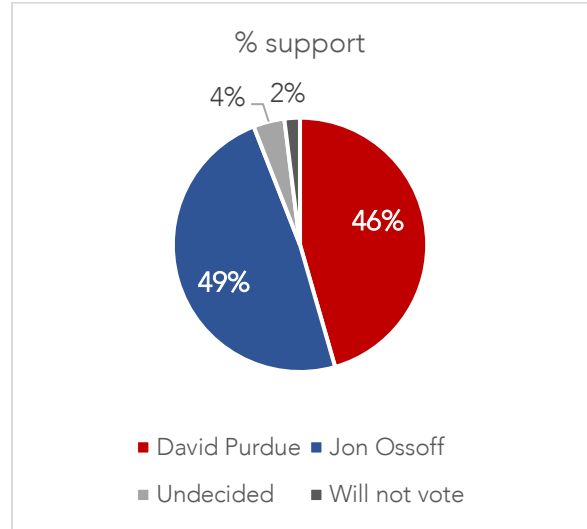
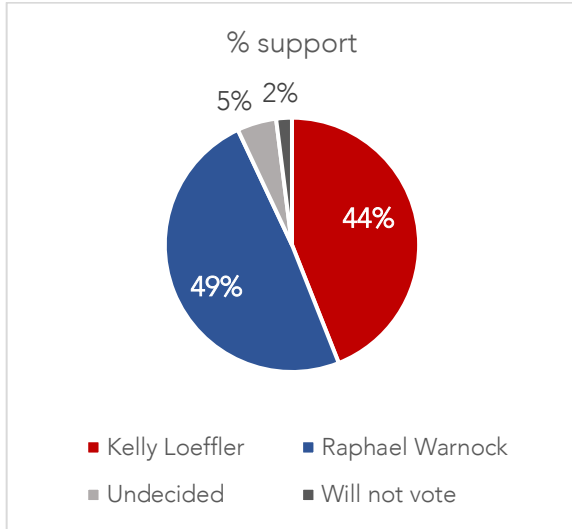
This memo outlines the key findings from the survey conducted on December 11-19, 2020 of 1,000 likely voters in the GA Senate Runoff elections with 100-interview oversample of Black likely voters, 100-interview oversample of Latinx likely voters, and 50-interview oversample of AAPI likely voters. The survey was conducted 40% online, 60% phone with a voter file match sample for the phone portion. The margin of error at a 95% confidence interval is +/- 3.1% for the base population and is higher for subgroups.

HIT Strategies also conducted two focus groups on behalf of Fix Our Senate on December 8, 2020. One group was made up of Black voters who voted in 2020 but not in 2016, mixed gender and age. The second group was voters of color under age 39 who had voted in 2020 but not in 2016.

*“They’ve [Perdue and Loeffler] just got to go...it’s not just them. It’s all the people, but Mitch McConnell is the head honcho. He got to go for sure.” – Young Black Surge Voter*

### **Summary**

The Senate runoff elections in Georgia are extremely close – within the margin of error in the case of Ossoff vs. Purdue, and while many Georgians rate themselves as extremely likely to vote, there are some clear messaging themes that emerged in this poll that will help drive support for Democratic Candidates Ossoff and Warnock, when contrasting them with Republicans Loeffler and Purdue and McConnell’s control of the United States Senate.



Mitch McConnell is widely known among likely voters in Georgia, and widely disliked by Democrats and our key target groups (Black voters, People of color, women, young voters). Connecting Mitch McConnell to the graveyard of bills that he’s piled up while economic and social conditions have deteriorated in the country, and linking those bills with issues that voters care about the most, is a major motivating factor in the upcoming runoff election. Further, making this link between McConnell and dead legislation, and the issues that voters care about most is a huge motivating factor for self-identified independents, as well as voters who say they are less likely to vote in the runoffs. It makes the runoff elections matter for their day-to-day lives, and empowers voters to make an impact on the country.

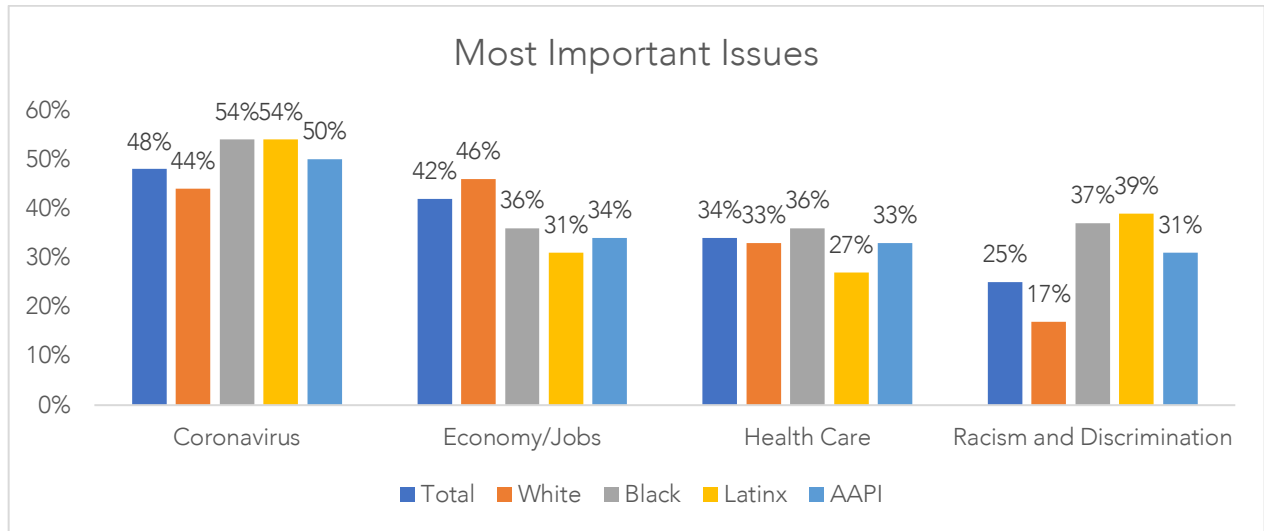
### Political Climate

In the focus groups we conducted among likely voters of color, there was consensus on the plan to vote for both Warnock and Ossoff, the importance of sending them both to the Senate, as well as the importance of Mitch McConnell not leading the Senate.

*“So, for 12 years, Mitch McConnell has been locking stuff from presidents...but now we’ll even the playing field for us with a lot of the things that our communities need. With regards to health care, pay scales, taxes, things of that nature. So, there’s a whole lot of things that this could change. It’s a game changer.” – Young surge voter, GA*

A majority – 53% of likely voters in Georgia - hold a favorable view of Donald Trump's performance as President of the United States including 74% of white likely voters. This is in contrast to Mitch McConnell who only has 42% approval, with only 57% of white voters in GA saying they approve of the job he is doing.

The three most important issues for GA voters differ slightly based on population:



All of the Senate candidates have high name-ID in the 90s and it is fairly consistent among subgroups. They also share similar favorability ratings, the lowest being Kelly Loeffler at 42% Pro (42% rate her between a 6-10 on a scale of 0-10), and the highest being David Purdue and Rafael Warnock, both at 45% Pro. Among likely voters in GA, Mitch McConnell also has high name-ID with 95% of voters being able to rate him. He has lower favorability than the candidates running for Senate at 35% pro, but has high favorability among white men (54% pro) and Republicans (60% pro).

### Mitch McConnell as a Motivator

In both the focus groups and the polling, simply explaining Mitch McConnell’s role in the Senate and his relationship to legislation that’s been stalled was an effective tool to demonstrate political impact. At the beginning of the focus group discussion, participants did not believe Mitch McConnell had an impact on their day-to-day life (mean 6.3). After the discussion and messages, impact shifted to a mean of 8.6.

In the poll, initially 67% of voters believe that it’s extremely important (rate 8-10 on a scale of 0-10) to vote to end Mitch McConnell’s control of the US Senate. Groups that rate the importance most highly include Black women (80% extremely important), people of color (75% extremely important) and people who voted for Joe Biden (82% extremely important). Groups who rate the importance least highly include Young voters age 18-24 (57% extremely important), white women (60% extremely important), and Trump voters (54% extremely important).

Further, only 52% of likely voters believe that McConnell is extremely impactful on their day-to-day lives. With only 42% of young voters age 18-24, 33% of Latinx voters, 44% of AAPI voters, and 44% of Black women believing that he is extremely impactful on their day-to-day lives.

Once these voters are taken through messaging about McConnell’s impact, once they learn about the myriad bills sitting on his desk that he refuses to pass, fully 15% of likely voters increase their rating of how important it is to end McConnell’s control of the US Senate, and 10% increase their rating of the impact that McConnell has on their day-to-day lives. Notably, some of our key target groups who initially rated his impact lowest now rate it much higher, with 19% of young voters age 18-24 and 25% of Latinx voters increasing their rating of importance.

Most notably, looking back at GA voters who did not cast a vote for Senate in the race between Ossoff and Purdue in November, 20% increase their likelihood to vote in the upcoming runoff, with 60% saying they are extremely likely to vote, and 20% increase their rating of impact that Mitch McConnell has on their day-to-day lives.

**Vote Shift**

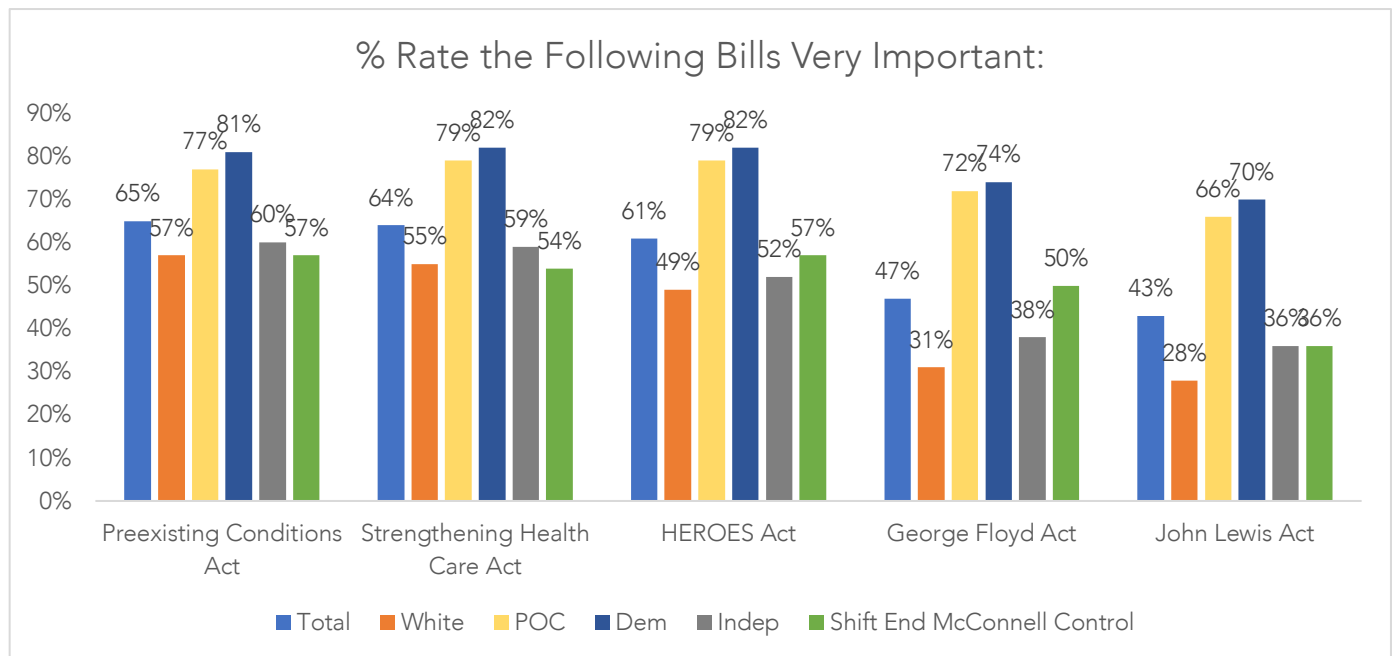
Groups More likely to vote after hearing more information on Mitch McConnell:

Demographic	% Shift to more likely to vote
TOTAL	8%
Shifted to increase rating of importance – end McConnell control of Senate	26%
Did not vote for Senate in Nov	20%
Latinx	17%
AAPI	14%
POC	14%
Men of color	14%
LGBTQ+	14%
Under 50, non-college	14%
Urban area	13%

## McConnell's Graveyard

Corresponding to the issues that are important to them, vast majorities of likely voters in GA (specifically people of color and Democrats in GA) want to see the senate pass bills around COVID-19, health care, and racism and discrimination – they think these bills are extremely important.

Voters who increase their rating of importance for ending Mitch McConnell's control of the US Senate by the end of the survey similarly think the HEROES Act (57%) and the Pre-existing conditions Act (57%) are extremely important.



## Runoff Election

There is extremely high likelihood to vote in the upcoming runoff elections, with 85% of voters saying they are extremely like (8-10 on a scale of 0-10) to vote. Groups that show less likelihood to vote include Latinx voters - 32% of whom say they are unlikely to vote, AAPI voters – 23% of whom are unlikely to vote, and young voters age 18-24 – 27% of whom are unlikely to vote. These are the same groups who tend to be less aware that there is a runoff election taking place, and who are less likely to be able to name the date of the runoff election.

However, overall, 90% of likely voters in Georgia are aware that there is a runoff election taking place, and 83% can name the correct date of January 5th showing that the information is reaching voters even compared to just two or three weeks ago. [Last month](#), we found that only

52% of Black women were not aware of the correct date of the runoff; in this survey, that figure has risen dramatically to 86%.

### Reasons to Vote

While voters overall rated “civic duty” and “making a difference on issues that matter to me” as the most important reasons to vote, those who shift to say they’re more likely to vote by the end of the survey in fact under-index on those same measures. Where they over-index is in advancing the Democratic Agenda – this is a motivator to increase vote likelihood.

Similarly for People of color and Democrats, they over-index on the importance of giving Dems control of the Senate, Electing Raphael Warnock, Electing Jon Ossoff, and giving Kamala Harris the tie-breaking vote in the Senate.

Top reasons to vote:

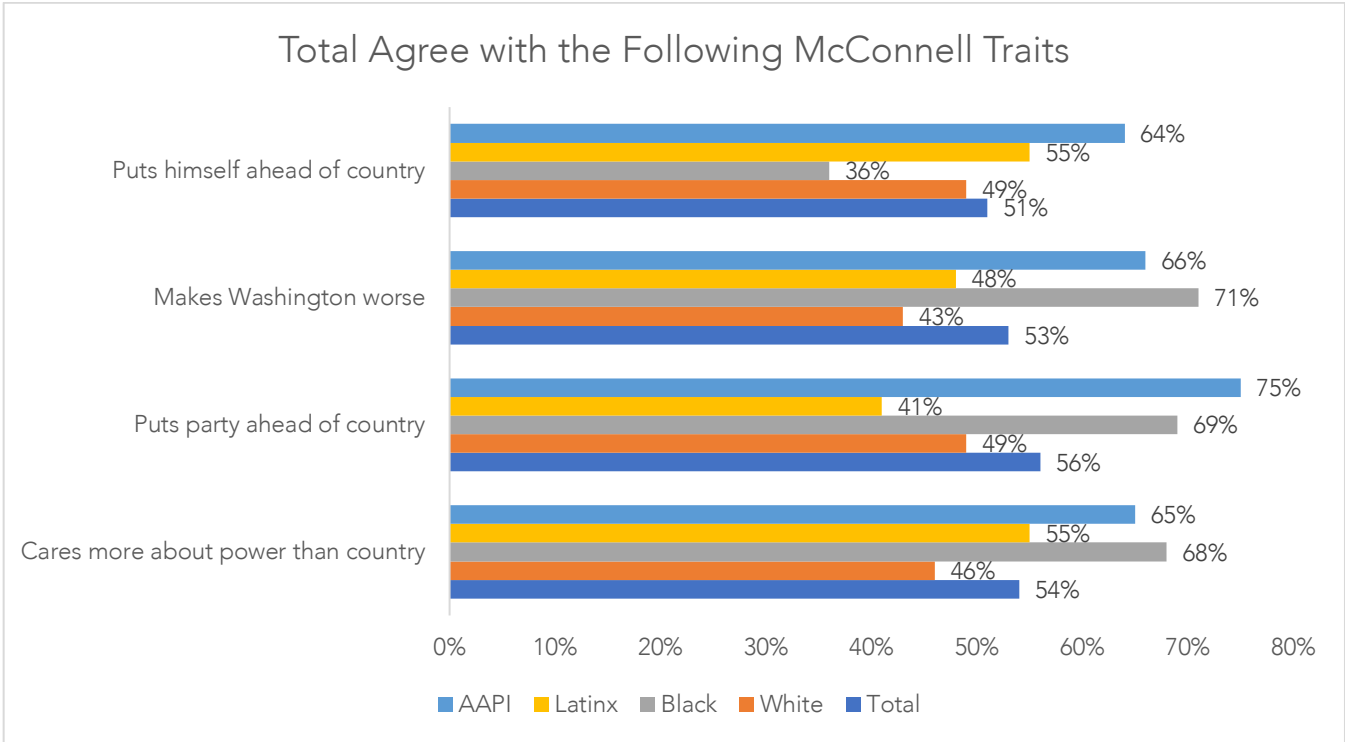
(% extremely important reason to vote)	Total	White	POC	Dem	Indep	Shifted – more likely to vote
Civic duty	88%	89%	85%	88%	82%	72%
Make a difference on issues	82%	80%	85%	88%	74%	70%
Improve economy	79%	75%	87%	90%	67%	76%
Need competent Gov’t	73%	68%	82%	88%	63%	67%
Stop Obstruction of Biden Agenda	51%	54%	45%	49%	43%	38%
End McConnell’s Control	49%	37%	68%	76%	43%	44%
Keep GOP in charge	48%	65%	20%	16%	43%	17%
Give Dems Control	46%	30%	70%	85%	32%	49%
Elect Warnock	45%	27%	83%	84%	29%	44%
Give Harris tie-breaking vote	45%	29%	73%	81%	32%	45%
Fire Loeffler	44%	30%	66%	72%	36%	39%
Elect Ossof	44%	27%	72%	82%	31%	42%
Fire Purdue	43%	30%	65%	72%	34%	39%
Advance Dem Agenda	41%	26%	65%	77%	23%	45%
Bring Radical Change	36%	26%	52%	54%	23%	45%

We also found in the focus groups that there was overall excitement about the results of the general election and Georgia turning blue. Across both groups, participants attributed Stacey Abrams’ organizing efforts to Biden's victory in November.

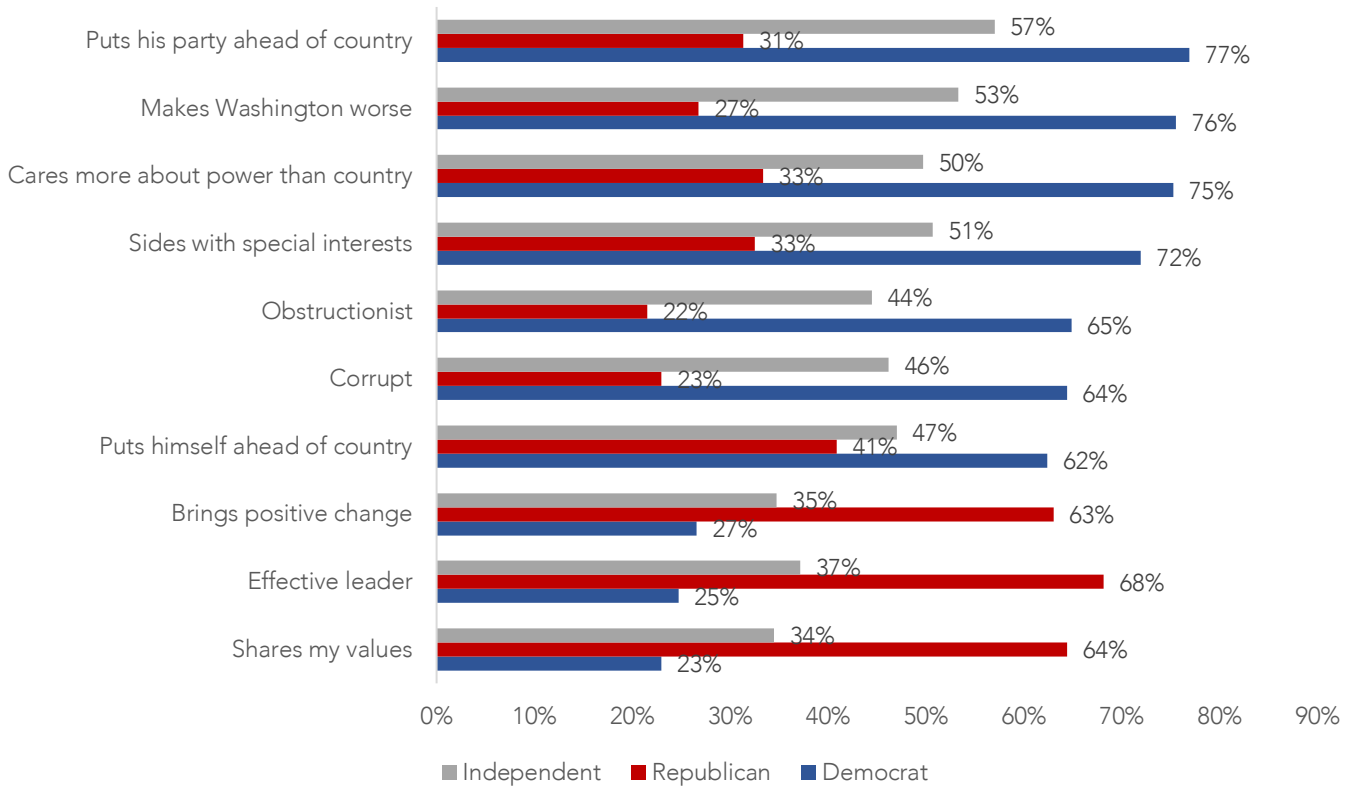
*“Stacey Abrams [was] organizing and it was really good to see the black community turnout. We were the linchpin for this election. It's unfortunate that we are not going to get our just due in the cabinet or any other positions. But if it wasn't for black folks, Georgia, wouldn't be blue and Biden wouldn't have won this election.”*

Traits

Top 4 traits associated with McConnell by Demographic:



## Total Agree with the Following McConnell Traits

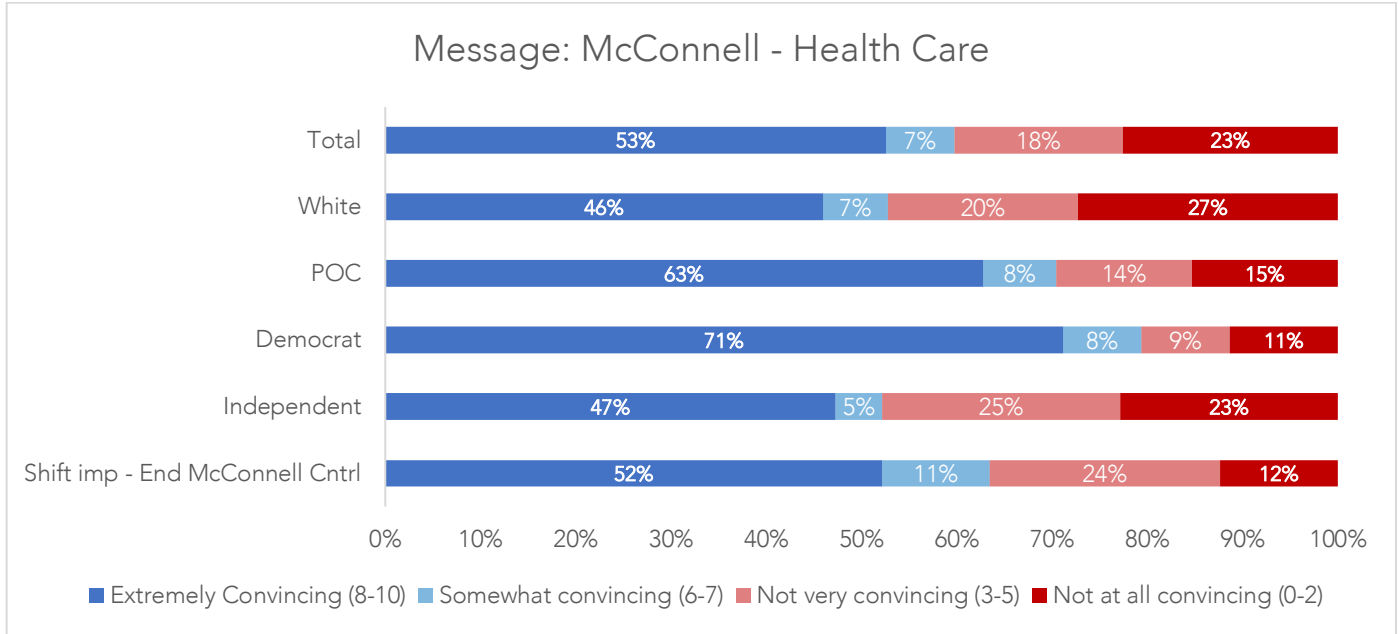


## Messaging

The most motivating message for those who increase their rating of the importance of ending McConnell’s control of the Senate, as well as for voters overall, white voters, and Independents by one point is our health care message:

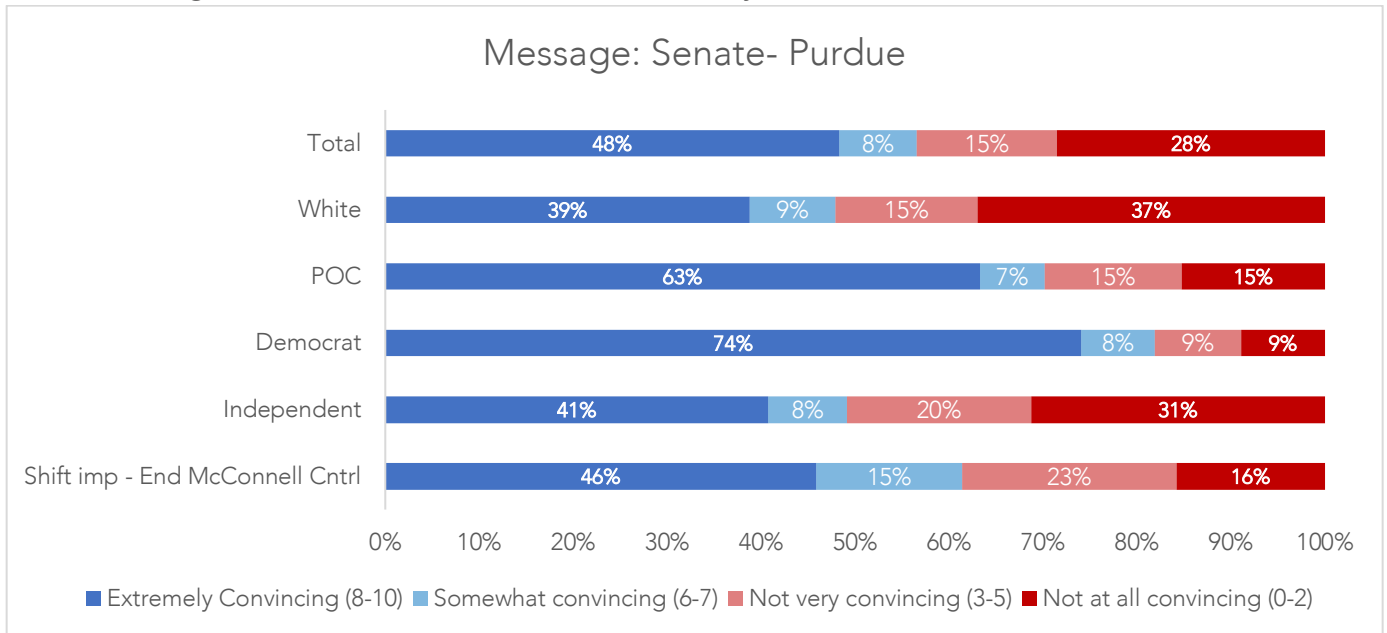
*[MCCONNELL – HEALTH CARE] McConnell is trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which would eliminate protections of patients with pre-existing conditions and widen racial disparities in health care coverage. His war on health care also led him to fight for Trump’s Medicaid work requirements, which again targets communities of color and has cut off care for low-income families in communities across the country.*





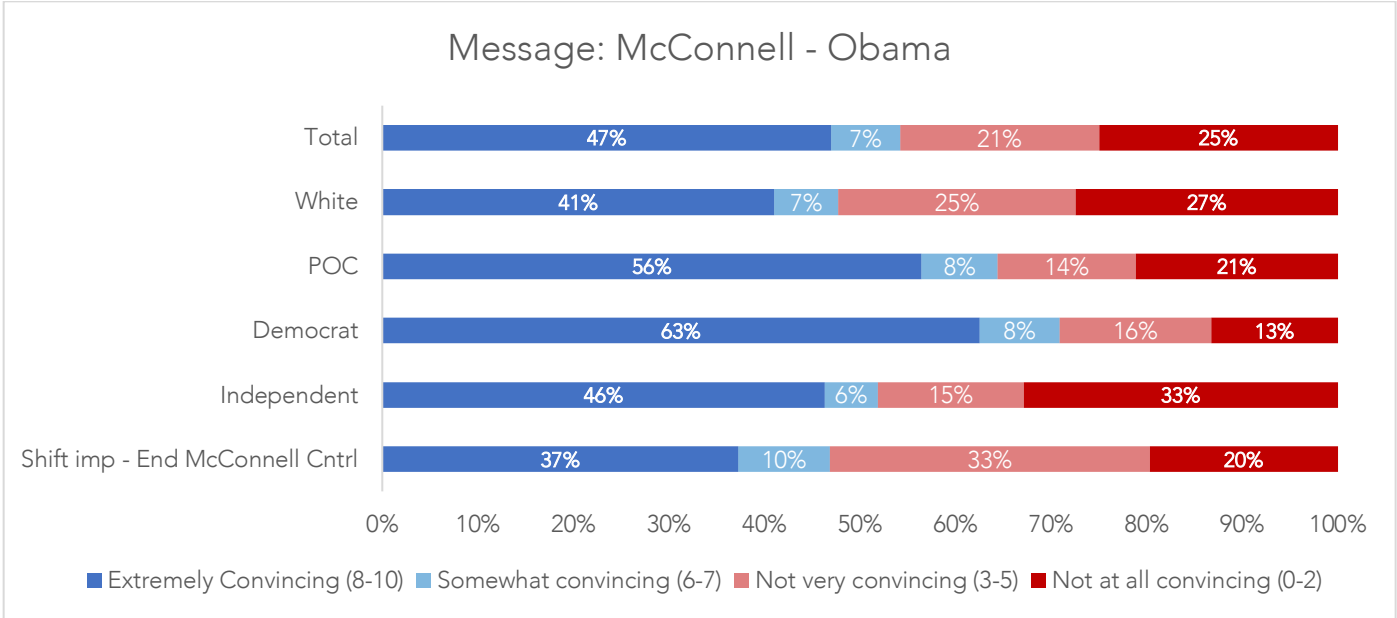
The most motivating message for People of color and for Democrats is our Senate – Purdue Message:

*[SENATE - PERDUE] When Senator David Perdue received classified intel about COVID-19 he made stock transactions worth millions of dollars into companies that make personal protection equipment like masks and gloves. He still has never acknowledged how this pandemic is devastating Black communities in Georgia. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the time, Perdue votes with Mitch McConnell. Perdue and McConnell have made their priorities clear and it's time to vote against their control of the Senate in January.*

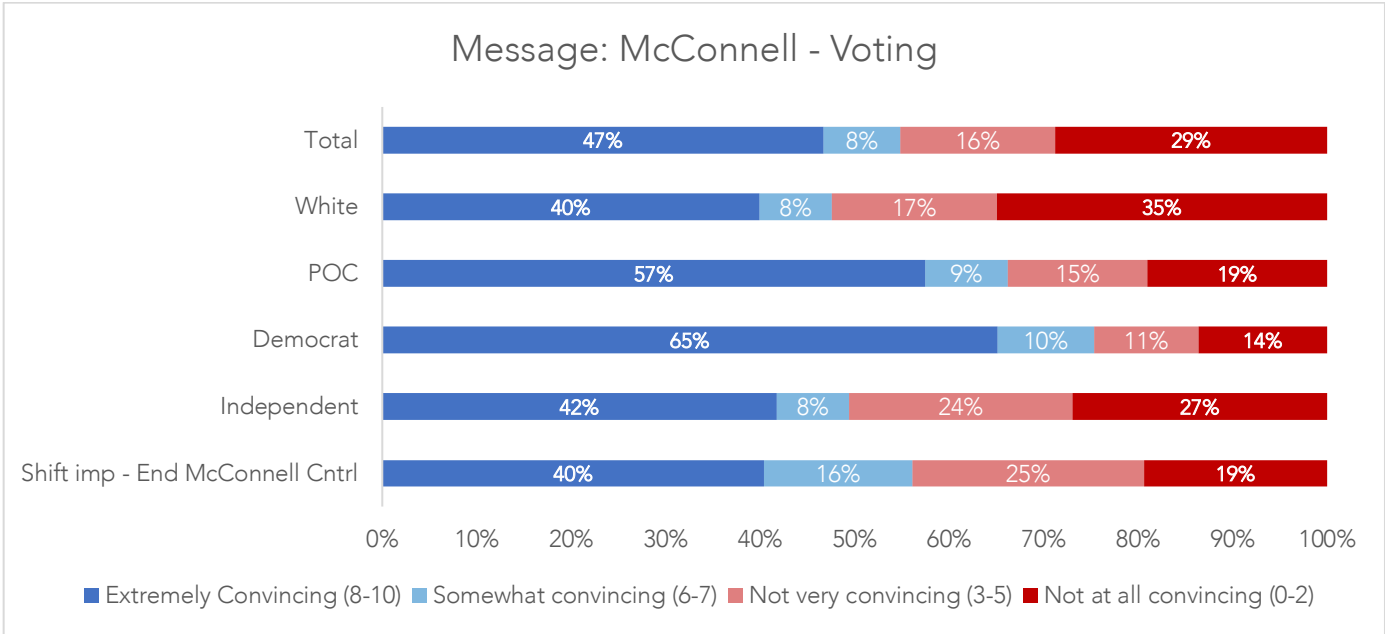


The second-most motivating message for Independents is the Obama-McConnell Message:

*[MCCONNELL – OBAMA] McConnell blocked 82 Obama nominees for the federal courts, almost as many (86) as the Senate had blocked for the previous 43 U.S. presidents combined. Then, McConnell worked with Trump to fill more than 200 court vacancies mostly with conservative white male judges, only one Latino judge, and not a single African American judge.*



*[MCCONNELL – VOTING] Mitch McConnell disputed claims that Black Americans are disadvantaged at the polls by state-based measures like voter ID requirements or shortened voting hours and has refused to allow a Senate vote on legislation to make it easier for people to cast ballots, including by allowing same-day registration.*



*[Senate – Loeffler] Kelly Loeffler proposed a bill that would increase the mass incarceration of Black and Brown individuals more than the 1994 crime bill and allow people to be profiled on a gang registry because of who their family members are, who they appear in a picture with, or even what color clothes they wear. Meanwhile, Mitch McConnell has tabled several bills that have passed in the House of Representatives that would make significant, positive criminal justice reforms for people of color. Loeffler and McConnell have made their priorities clear and it's time to vote against their control of the Senate in January.*

