

#1383 The Work That Wins Elections (Political Organizing)

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:00:00] Welcome to this episode of the award-winning Best of the Left podcast in which we shall learn about some of the highlights of how the 2020 election was won, the people doing the work, and what's still at stake.

Before we get started, though, a quick word on the show.

A day that we've been fearing for years has finally arrived. We here at Best of the Left have been kicked out of the Amazon affiliate program. That has been a foundational source of our revenue for the show since 2009, along with memberships and any other advertisers we can find. Amazon has been basically one of the three legs of our financial stool.

To put things into perspective, losing that affiliate funding is approximately like having 400 members cancel all at the same time.

And just to be clear, we did not have 400 members worth of financial breathing room before getting this news. So I'm going to be talking more about this at the end of the show, but what you need to know now is that memberships are available and incredibly easy to sign up for and you can now purchase gift memberships. If you're a fan of Patreon, you can sign up there. And if you are a fan of simplicity above all else, use our standard membership system for the easiest possible process for getting signed up. All the details for all of that are at BestoftheLeft.com/support; that's BestoftheLeft.com/support, which is also linked prominently in the show notes of this and every episode.

As I said, I'll be talking more about this at the end of the show. So please don't miss that.

And now on to the show itself, with clips today from Democracy Now!, Latino USA, It's Been a Minute with Sam Sanders, The Takeaway, the Thom Hartmann Program, and the Majority Report.

Juan González The Media Has It Wrong. Record Latinx Turnout Helped Biden. White Voters Failed Dems - Democracy Now! - Air Date 11-5-20

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: [00:01:51] To talk more about the election and to look at who turned out to vote in this historic election, we're joined by Democracy Now's own Juan González who has been closely looking at who turned out to vote. He's joining us from New Brunswick, New Jersey, where he's a professor at Rutgers University.

So, Juan, it is astounding what has taken place in this country. We are talking about a record-smashing number of voters. It is believed over 150 million people voted. Can you talk about the demographics of the vote? In the last days, the main narrative has been, before the election final day on November 3rd, that African Americans and Latinos were not coming out to vote for Joe Biden to the extent that it was believed they would be. But this is a narrative right now you are refuting. Can you talk about your findings?

JUAN GONZALEZ - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: [00:02:57] Yes, Amy. And I've been poring over the numbers and trying to make sense of what happened in this election. And this developing narrative that Latinos and, to some extent, African Americans shifted more toward Donald Trump in this election, that they underperformed for Joe Biden and the Democratic Party, I believe, is a largely false narrative. I think the main story of this election, as you mentioned that saw record turnout — we won't have the exact numbers, but it looks like about 158- 59-, 160 million people — close to 160 million people voted. The main story is that people of color, especially Latinos, flocked to the polls in numbers that far exceeded what the experts had expected, while the total number of votes cast by white Americans barely increased from the last presidential election, and, most importantly, that white voters, including white women, voted at higher percentages for Trump this year than they did in 2016. So, how come none of the experts are asking why white voters underperformed the Democratic Party?

And let me be a little bit more specific. There does appear to have been some areas of the country where there was an increase in the percentage of the Latino vote for Donald Trump, specifically in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and in the Miami-Dade County, both of which, I should note, for those people who know the voting patterns of the Latino community, have always been relatively conservative areas of the Latino community in terms of voting. Even though South Texas is largely Democratic, it's always been a moderate to centrist or conservative Democratic voting bastion. But my analysis of the numbers shows a completely different story when you look at the country as a whole.

And I'm doing this based on the exit polls that most of the networks use, which is the Edison National Election Pool, which has always been — it's been criticized in the past precisely because it doesn't give correct numbers or doesn't give valid numbers on the Latino community, but it's still the only massive exit poll that we have until we get more scientific studies that come maybe months later or a year later.

So, first of all, the historic turnout, right? If we take the number of 159 million, last election was 136 million people voted, so we're talking about an increase of 23 million voters compared to the last election — phenomenal increase. Who were those 23 million people, and where did they come from? So, I think — I have a chart here. I hope the producers are able to put it up here. But you'll see that, according to the exit polls, 13% of the vote came from Latino voters, Latino Americans. That represents 20.6 million Latinos voted in this election. That is an incredible increase, 65% over the last election, which was already a record for Latinos when it was only 12.6%. For the first time in U.S. history, because Latinos have never voted at more than 50% of the eligible population — they've always been 45, 46 or even less — for the first time, about two-thirds of the eligible Latinos came to the polls. Eight million more Latinos voted in this election than voted in the last election.

Then come the Asian Americans, a phenomenal turnout in the Asian American community, 3.6 million more votes than voted in 2016. And then African Americans also had an increase. They went from 17.1 million who voted in 2016 to 19 million, about 1.9 million. So that's an increase, but it's not as increased as you might expect after a year or two years now of massive racial justice protests and the pioneering candidacy of Kamala Harris, but it's still an increase.

So, what about white voters, the largest sector of the electorate, but a diminishing portion? In 2016, 100 million whites voted in the election. In this election, 103 million voted — just 2.7 million increase in the total white vote in the country.

So, the bulk of the increase of the vote in this election came from people of color, largely Latinos. So, now people say, “Well, but there was a slight percentage increase among African Americans and Latinos for Trump.” Well, percentages don’t win elections. Votes win elections. Right? And that’s what you’ve got to understand. Would you rather have 70% of 12 million votes, or would you rather have 68% of 20 million votes? The increase has been so large, whereas the percentages have stayed roughly the same, that there has been — there was enormous increase in the vote by Asian Americans, Latino Americans and African Americans for Biden and the Democratic Party.

Why was this? And I think the enthusiasm and the turnout of the Latinx community was fueled by four years of constant Republican scapegoating and attacks on Latinos, from the disastrous response to Hurricane Maria for the Puerto Rican community, to family separations, and also to the terrible response of the Trump administration to the coronavirus. And it is why Arizona and Nevada and Colorado are likely, it seems, to go for Joe Biden. And what has happened now is that there is a new Brown Belt voting bloc that is developing in the Southwest, that includes Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, and very soon Texas, as well.

So, the real underperformers in this election were white voters, who not only did not have a qualitative increase in their vote totals — they dropped from 71% of the electorate to 65% of the electorate — but they voted in an even higher percentage for Trump this time than last time or than they did for John McCain in 2008. And this is especially true among white women. So, now, how is this possible, given the years now of sexual — of allegations of sexual assault against Trump, his denigrating of women, his family separation policies, that white women increased the percentage of the vote that they gave to Donald Trump? What’s up with that? Why are all the commentators not dissecting what the heck is going on in white America and with white women in America? Unfortunately, it seems to me, looking at the numbers, there is no gender gap. There’s a racial gender gap, in that African American and Latino women are voting so overwhelmingly for the Democratic Party, but not white women. And I think that needs to be analyzed more.

And finally, I think the key issue here is that the United States, being the world’s prime imperialist power, with no real competition, no real adversaries who threaten it, and only China who can compete economically with the United States, that we are a country that is increasingly moving to a situation where the Republican Party is moving more and more to be the party of white people in America, and the Democratic Party is increasingly becoming the party of the new multiracial majority of the American people. That’s what I take from the results of this election, no matter who ends up actually winning the election or what happens with the Senate or what happens with the Congress. It’s the developing trends in the electorate of America that are showing enormous racial division between the two parties and who they represent.

**The Myth Of The 'Latino Vote' - Latino USA - Air Date
11-13-20**

MARIA HINOJOSA - HOST, LATINO USA: [00:11:40] So God knows one of the big ideas that has also been out there is that Latinos and Latinas who did vote for Donald Trump were mostly White. And this narrative that, that is because of their own anti-Blackness, their own racism. So what do you think about that narrative Carlos?

CARLOS ODIO: [00:12:01] It is incredibly complicated. I wouldn't isolate it to say it as simply a matter of the identity of the voter. I think there was an anti-Blackness that we have to wrestle with. I think that's manifest in a broader sense, not just because someone is White, I think there is a sense of Americanness. Sabrina did some incredible reporting on voters in Hialeah and the wrapping themselves to the American flag. In parts of Miami was more predictive of Trump's support than even wearing a MAGA hat.

Where Trump made inroads, I think there's now evidence is that it wasn't just among Cubans. It wasn't isolated in certain places. I think you could go out West and see folks who aren't necessarily White identifying, who do identify as Latino or as Indigenous or any of the categories, it's more complicated, but I think that there is a strain of anti-Blackness.

But I don't want to, again, oversimplify to that because I think there are so many other factors. I think that we forget those of us who watch the news every day, the extent to which people aren't getting the same news stories or filtered in quite the same way are very concerned about something like the economy and are letting the economy overshadow all other concerns.

And there is this resilient view of Trump as a better steward of the economy. Again, for those who aren't paying as close attention, who still view Donald Trump as the guy from *the Apprentice*.

MARIA HINOJOSA - HOST, LATINO USA: [00:13:17] All right. So Sabrina, let's go back to you, growing up in Hialeah. Hialeah is more than 80% Cuban, and when you were little, you remember kids at school chanting about George W. Bush back in 2004. So this was his post 9/11 reelection. What were you hearing kids chanting back in 2004?

SABRINA RODRIGUEZ: [00:13:41] I was remembering this this other day, and I remember in my class and I was in elementary school and I remember in 2004, kids were chanting, "vote for Bush because Kerry got smushed." That was actually a thing, and it was heated. There would be heated debates in elementary school and there were heated debates in middle school and high school, always about politics and always if you liked a Democratic candidate, you were going to get picked on or you were going to get criticized by your friends.

MARIA HINOJOSA - HOST, LATINO USA: [00:14:13] Did you do any reporting and was there a similar chant for Trump among kids that you heard of?

SABRINA RODRIGUEZ: [00:14:20] I mean, there was just widespread love for him. One of the most striking things of seeing all the photos of the different caravans across Miami and all the different rallies that were held for him, where the amount of children that were there, and seeing kids with their MAGA hats or seeing kids with a Trump 2020 flag and carrying signs and all of that. They're definitely a part of the equation when you're looking in Hialeah, this widespread support for Trump.

It's not just voters and older Cubans. I think a narrative has always been about Cubans are reliably Republican and Cubans go out to vote in big numbers because a lot of the Republican Cuban voters are old, but this election, we're talking about younger Cubans as well.

Part of the narrative this time around that helped Trump, was the fact that more recent arrivals and more younger Cubans are moving towards the Republican party or are registering or identifying as Republican. In Hialeah, for example, Hialeah specifically that is very reliably Republican, a very red city, in 2016, it was almost split. It was an almost even 50/50 between Hillary and Trump. So that showed that there was obviously a movement towards the Democratic party and that was being led by younger Cubans. But in 2020, that's not necessarily the case.

There are obviously Cuban Democrats. Not every single Cuban is a Republican, I would like that on the record, but the story this year is not about the young Cubans that are supporting Biden, it still is that there's young Cubans supporting Trump.

MARIA HINOJOSA - HOST, LATINO USA: [00:15:51] All right. So Carlos, Trump actually wasn't the only Republican who did well in the state. And so there are a lot of lessons, not just about about Trump, but about the future of Florida and its politics.

So Maria Elvira Salazar, she did unseat Democratic Congresswoman Donna Shalala, who represents part of Miami. Carlos Giménez, who is the Republican mayor of Miami right now, also unseated Democratic Congresswoman Mucarsel-Powell. So is this about support for Trump trickling down or is this because of solid, strong Republican-base politics that are going on?

CARLOS ODIO: [00:16:30] Yeah, elsewhere in the country, we saw actually a lot of Republicans down-ballot outperforming Donald Trump. In Miami, he had coattails. And I think when you look at Maria Elvira, when you look at a state Senate race, Ileana Garcia, who was the founder of Latinas for Trump is now in a recount against an incumbent Democrat who no one thought was going to lose, Trump created a kind of MAGA identity that other people have latched onto.

There was a confluence of factors that created this kind of identity and this new kind of social pressure where to borrow a phrase, "if you're voting for Biden, you ain't Cuban" right, like that's the message. Or you ain't Venezuelan or whatever it was.

I think that the mistake people make is trying to isolate it in terms of a set of policies. I think policy is over-simplistic. There was a very active media ecosystem and there was this message that was drawing a line in the sand that was essentially a culture war. It was essentially a culture war of saying either you're with us, you're with them. And candidates like Maria Elvira we're very much on one side of that line.

MARIA HINOJOSA - HOST, LATINO USA: [00:17:28] So can we talk about the Puerto Rican vote for a second? What is the narrative that was upsetting to you about this vote in Florida?

CARLOS ODIO: [00:17:36] You look at a vote like the Puerto Rican vote and you can't oversimplify, there is such a complexity to it. You have a combination of Nuyoricans, others who had moved from the Northeast down to Florida, just like other retirees. You had Puerto

Rican's who moved to central Florida in previous waves. And then you had, those would moved post 2010. Not just around the hurricane, but a little bit before the hurricane, in moments of economic crisis on the island.

And those waves all behaved a little bit differently. And I think part of the mistake that was made was narrowing or flattening the Puerto Rican interest in this election down to one issue, being the hurricane. If you look at the ads targeting Puerto Rican's, it was all Donald Trump throwing paper towels. When, in our polling and all of the research, repeatedly, what were Puerto Rican saying they cared about the most and was shaping their vote? It was the economy, it was COVID, it was healthcare, just like everyone else.

And yet those messages were not leading in the ads that were targeted at the Puerto Rican vote. Puerto Rican vote in Orlando, by the way, being very different from even the Puerto Rican vote in Pennsylvania. We didn't see Trump make inroads into the Puerto Rican vote in Pennsylvania the way that I think we saw him make in central Florida.

And so there are differences even there in both the nature of the Puerto Rican voter, their worldview ideology, and in the ways that the campaigns approached them.

SABRINA RODRIGUEZ: [00:18:52] And I think another piece of this that's really important for the Puerto Rican vote, for the Cuban vote, for everyone in South Florida and throughout Florida of Latinos, was all the misinformation that was coming out. They were being targeted left and right with messaging about how Biden was a pedophile, or how Biden was actually going to be part of a satanic cabal. All this kind of messaging, which seems insane, but actually persuaded people or actually got people to stay home.

The idea wasn't necessarily that with misinformation, you go from being a big Biden supporter to being a Trump supporter, but if you're one of those people that's not sure, that hasn't really participated in the political process you don't speak English well yet and you're trying to navigate this process, you just decide to stay home because you say, "okay, well, you know, if all these things about Biden were to be true, then why would I go out to vote for him?"

MARIA HINOJOSA - HOST, LATINO USA: [00:19:44] Yeah. I think a lot of people are like, "well, that sounds completely crazy." How is it possible that that even had an impact?

CARLOS ODIO: [00:19:50] In Florida, when we talk about the Hispanic vote, we talk about in terms of a margins game, because, again, Republicans, aren't trying to win a majority of the vote. What Jeb Bush started to perfecting back in the day and that has been carried forward is this game of trying to just shave off a few votes here and there from different subgroups.

So even when we talk about Puerto Rican's, Joe Biden still wins over 60%, easy, of the Puerto Rican vote, but Donald Trump gets a few points in. And some big part of that is that it's no longer just about two campaigns warring through ads and the nightly news, it's that now, there's a whole other world of information that is below the radar.

And then in Miami, the added problem that it's an echo chamber, that it's not just on WhatsApp, it's that event is reported, it's on the local nightly news. Telenovelas Telemundo local affiliates are part of the problem. It's local radio in Miami that's then echoing these same messages.

It's even getting into the local newspaper. We had a whole scandal around El Nuevo Herald running a supplement that was full of misinformation for weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks. And then the Trump campaign picking up on it and cultivating it and sending it out and trying to further push those narratives themselves. So it's this very sophisticated circuit where you can't just blame any one channel, but where WhatsApp is I think an obvious cesspool of awful political information for sure.

An Election We Could Not Sit Out How Indigenous Voters Helped Defeat Trump & Elect Biden - Democracy Now! - Air Date 11-18-20

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: [00:21:17] We're going to break and then come back to talk about what Native Americans can do and that has to do with voting, which certainly people came out in force. We'd like to ask you to stay with us, Allie. We're also going to be joined by a Native American from Wisconsin. But, Jodi Archambault, in this last 30 seconds that we have you, can you, overall, talk about the massive voter turnout, at least increase in Native American turnout, not noted in the mainstream media?

JODI ARCHAMBAULT: [00:21:51] Sure. I just want to say that despite the risk of being exposed to COVID, the numbers were incredible. And I think that this is something that is often overlooked by mainstream media, only because mainstream media has a tendency to leave out the full picture when it comes to Native Americans. In fact, CNN did an infographic, and they labeled — they did a breakdown of all the different people who voted in the election, and for Native Americans, they didn't have us labeled as Native Americans. They called us "something else," 6%.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: [00:22:31] We have that actual graphic right here. It says "white." It says "Latinx" [sic]. It says "Black." And then — or "Latino," "Black," and then "something else," and then "Asian."

JODI ARCHAMBAULT: [00:22:46] Yeah, yeah. And social media, we are very much — our resiliency is through our humor. And so, it just took off. Everybody kept saying, like, "Custer said, 'Yeah, they sure are something else.'" You know, Custer, from the last couple centuries ago. And a lot of people have just taken it as a call to try to bring attention to the people at CNN, to the people at the mainstream, who just continuously don't see us. They don't see us, and it's intentional, because we are a reminder of the bloodshed that it took to make this country. We're not congruent with the American dream.

And we are still here. We're actually leading, leading the way on how to handle pandemics, because we've been through so many of them. And it's so much ingrained in our communities that we're not seeing this as — we're not victims in this; we're actually ready to fight. We're ready to push back and do what we can to protect ourselves, because it's the only way we've made it this far. And we know that people in America don't see us, so we have to do it for ourselves.

JUAN GONZALEZ - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: [00:24:03] Yeah. And, Jodi, I wanted to comment on this, because I also, when I saw this figure of "something else" or "other" in these exit polls, tried to dig down a little deeper into what was behind it, especially since it

had appeared to grow by about a percentage point from the previous election. It turns out that this is a catch-all placeholder, where they include people who identify themselves as multiracial, people who declined in the exit polls to identify their race, and also Native Americans. So it's a catch-all, which — it's indefensible, but it is a complex number. And it turns out that about two-thirds of those who identified as "other" or "something else" voted for Joe Biden versus Donald Trump. So, it's a shortcut for the exit poll people not to have to do a better job of being able to parse the various parts of the electorate.

And, Allie, I wanted to ask you about that. What were the results, from what you've been able to tell? Not so much, obviously, because the exit polls didn't factor in or count Native American votes, but what's been the result in the actual vote totals that you've been able to see so far?

ALLIE YOUNG: [00:25:16] Yeah, well, I believe around 60-something thousand Navajos in Navajo Nation. So, Coconino County, Navajo County — which is where I did all of my work, and I vote in Navajo County — and Apache County, they all overlap the Navajo Nation. And in those areas, Navajo people turned out to vote. I think 84% of those who had registered turned out to vote, and 97% of those who cast their ballot voted for Joe Biden. And that's just incredible. That just shows the contribution of the Native vote in key swing states, in not only Navajo Nation, but there is a map that compares tribal communities, and all of those tribal communities voted blue. And so, we came out strong. I think we did do a great job in reclaiming Arizona, saying that we're still here, that we've always been here, and that now we're going to keep working to hold this new administration accountable, as well.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: [00:26:29] You know, you not only organized Navajo voters, Allie, but one of the hardest groups, not so much to organize, to get out in the streets, to be activists, but to actually vote. And that's young people. Maybe it's because of your last name, Allie Young, but you sure managed to galvanize a lot of young people. What kind of message do you have for what is the most effective way to get first-time voters involved, to make them feel like they really are making a difference, when it's — you know, they haven't done this before?

ALLIE YOUNG: [00:27:05] Well, my strategy was all around, you know, you've got to think about what we're working within. With young people, we are very tuned in to social media, so definitely it is a powerful tool. So, connecting with them that way, we had a huge social media strategy, and also layering in the cultural revitalization, and particularly with Native youth, but also, I think, with a lot of other youth across other communities of color, because I think we're in this amazing moment where all of our communities of color are reconnecting to our cultures and really proud of who we are and where we come from. So, using that and saying, "Let's show up in that way. Let's show, through social media, in fighting for our representation," that takes work. And we have to — you know, we're not just going to automatically be talked about in the media. We have to show up.

And that's the messaging that I used, especially for Native people, who — we're too often invisible in the media. We're called "something else." And so, you know, let's turn that on its head. Let's show them that we're still here, we're not going away, and we're going to make our statements. And I think that's really effective, with especially our leaders, our young leaders today. We are very progressive. We are — I think, as Native people, we're innately

activists and political, because we're not even supposed to be here. And that's definitely the messaging and strategy that I used.

JUAN GONZALEZ - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: [00:29:02] Allie, we have less than a minute left, but I'm wondering just if you could quickly say what your main expectations are of the new Biden administration's policy toward Native American people?

ALLIE YOUNG: [00:29:14] Yeah. Well, we're definitely going to be making sure that we're represented, especially when it comes to climate change. We do want a seat at the table. We want to be in that conversation, because we have just incredible knowledge about the ways that we respect Mother Earth, that we honor Mother Earth, and those are things that will end up saving Mother Earth. And so, learning from us and collaborating with us, and also on issues of — we're still in COVID-19, and it's still severely impacting our tribal communities, so we're expected — we're expecting them to work with us in helping us to bring the funding and the aid that we need, because \$8 billion was not enough in the initial stimulus package.

Georgia's Senate Runoffs - It's Been a Minute with Sam Sanders - Air Date 11-20-20

SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE: [00:30:06] Two run offs for the US Senate, both happening in Georgia this January.

JOHN KING - CNN: [00:30:10] Right? Two Republican incumbents. Here's the math heading into them. 50 Republicans, 48 Democrats, meaning Democrats need to win them both. 50-50 means Vice President Harris would break the tie in the Senate.

SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE: [00:30:21] To figure out what's really at stake, I called up a reporter covering both of these races, Tia Mitchell. Tia is the Washington correspondent for the Atlanta Journal Constitution. And to start, I asked her to break down who the candidates are in one runoff there's incumbent, Senator David Perdue, a Republican.

TIA MITCHELL: [00:30:38] He was one of those outside candidates who had never run for office before.

SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE: [00:30:42] He is facing off against Jon Ossoff, a Democrat.

TIA MITCHELL: [00:30:45] A lot of you guys remember him because he ran for Congress in 2017 in a special election. And he lost then in a runoff.

SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE: [00:30:54] And the other runoff there is incumbent Senator Kelly Loeffler. She's a Republican, and she was appointed to the role after an unexpected Senate vacancy.

TIA MITCHELL: [00:31:03] She's only been serving for almost a year.

SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE: [00:31:06] She is up against Raphael Warnock, a Democrat.

TIA MITCHELL: [00:31:09] Even though this is his first time running for office, he's been an activist on progressive issues.

SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE: [00:31:16] So with all eyes on Georgia right now, I had a lot of questions for Tia.

So I was reading the other day that already in these two races, more than \$120 million has been spent. And that number will only grow between now and the actual runoff, which is, what, early January. How big of a deal is that amount of money in these races. And what does that look and feel like if you were just a person in Georgia? Is that just bombarding you everywhere you go?

TIA MITCHELL: [00:31:48] Absolutely. That's what it looks like. Especially if you're one of those super voters you're getting mailers--

SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE: [00:31:55] Who's a super voter?

TIA MITCHELL: [00:31:56] You know, somebody who like votes all the time. I might not be using the right language for it, but a frequent voter who, you know, can be counted on to show up.

But just in general, on TV, you're seeing these four individuals -- Ossoff, Warnock, Purdue and Loeffler -- at every commercial break. And when you turn on YouTube, you're seeing digital ads. But it also means that there's a lot of attention on Georgia. You have a lot of national media sending their reporters to Georgia to cover the race.

And so, I mean, in some ways I think Georgia finds it cool to be the center of attention. It's something that Democrats in Georgia have been saying, like, pay attention to us. We can make a difference. And it's finally coming true.

SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE: [00:32:47] Yeah, I've been hearing about a lot of progressive activists just flocking to the state right now. The GOP also just sending folks down as well. Do southerners like all that outside influence when they're getting ready to vote in a very important race, two very important races?

TIA MITCHELL: [00:33:06] So I think it's interesting because you know, Republicans usually point the finger at Democrats and say, look, you're raising all this money in California and New York for Georgia races. And you're bringing all your carpetbagger friends in to try to influence our Georgia races. But now Republicans are doing the same thing. They have a 50-state fundraising strategy that they just launched. And they're sending folks to Georgia too, because it's so crucial. I think for Georgia, for the residents of Georgia, it's not so much about who's saying what, at this point. You're not changing a lot of minds. It's turnout. It's getting people to show up to cast their ballots. We haven't even talked about the whole attack on Georgia's election process and how that may or may not influence people to participate. Because if you're a Republican for the past few weeks, you've had the leaders of your party tell you that Georgia doesn't know how to run an election.

SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE: [00:34:10] You know, at least nationally, Democrats in Georgia seem to have a more unified face. Everyone on the left has fallen in line behind Stacey Abrams and her work to mobilize potential progressive voters and Black voters. Is that portrayal of solidarity actually true for Democrats in Georgia?

TIA MITCHELL: [00:34:36] Yes. For right now, Democrats are much more unified because the stakes are very clear for Democrats. Either you win those seats and you help President Biden with his new administration. Or you lose either one or both, and that makes it much more difficult for this president that Georgia already helped deliver.

So Stacey Abrams is such a high profile voice. Not only because she has this playbook that everyone's crediting with providing a blueprint for how Democrats can compete in Georgia and she's turned out to be right in a lot of ways, but she also has her own credibility she built up when she ran for governor in 2018. And the thing that made her really special then was she campaigned statewide. Georgia has 159 counties.

SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE: [00:35:34] That's a lot. Wow.

TIA MITCHELL: [00:35:35] Yes. A lot. Stacy Abrams visited every County when she was running for governor, because her philosophy was, I might not be able to win a majority of voters in this County, but there are some votes I can get.

SAM SANDERS - HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE: [00:35:49] Yeah. You know, there are so many interesting data points in the Georgia results this November and possibly more interesting data points to come in this runoff in January. We saw Black voter turnout increase almost exponentially in some instances in this state. What in your mind are the biggest demographic stories come out of Georgia right now when it comes to these votes?

TIA MITCHELL: [00:36:18] So Georgia's demographics are changing, particularly in the Atlanta suburbs, becoming more diverse, more people of color, younger voters making the state more Democratic. Right now Republicans still control the legislature, the governor's office and all statewide elected offices. But you have this one recent bright spot for Democrats with Joe Biden carrying in the state. And they're hoping that this trend will continue.

But the other thing that really helped Joe Biden win Georgia was college educated white people, who particularly in Atlanta suburbs, but all across the state, they had soured on president Trump and were willing to give Joe Biden a chance.

So that's again something that is going to be a data point we look at in this runoff, because in one race we have Purdue versus Ossoff. There's an age difference, but they're both white men. But in the Loeffler-Warnock race, there is a different racial dynamic there with Warnock a Black man who's a pastor of a Black church and who has championed very progressive issues very publicly in a way that Republicans are using to paint him as a radical progressive, whereas Kelly Loeffler is a white woman, a wealthy white woman who lives in Buckhead, the posh Atlanta suburb. The question is where white people fall in these races can help determine whether Democrats can win.

The Power of Black Women at the Ballot Box - The Takeaway - Air Date 11-9-20

TANZINA VEGA - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY: [00:38:01] Martha, when we talk about, Black women and political activism, we can't ignore the fact that Black Lives Matter was founded by three Black women. That is also something that - can you tell us a little bit about the

historical engagement of Black women in terms of organizing movements like that, organizing to get the vote, organizing to bring attention to issues that affect not just Black women, but Black people more broadly?

MARTHA JONES: [00:38:29] We can't miss in this moment, even as Senator Harris is the Vice-President Elect, that what undergirds that is Black women's organizing. Just tune into Alicia Garza and appreciate her message, which is, "yes to the streets and yes to the ballot box." What we saw in this election season was the wedding of those two approaches to American politics.

TANZINA VEGA - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY: [00:38:53] Is that something that you would say has gotten stronger not just taking it to the streets, but actually taking it to the ballot box? Was that the missing link in terms of engagement particularly for Black women, Black people in this country?

MARTHA JONES: [00:39:08] That has always been true for us, but I think that in this season that became apparent in the compressed circumstances of Coronavirus, a summer of Black Lives Matter uprisings across the country with this extraordinarily consequential election, we all got a lesson in African-American politics I think this season by seeing it compressed under extraordinary circumstances. Those facets that have always been there and we saw them come together vividly.

KAMALA HARRIS - VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT: [00:39:40] Black women, Asian, White, Latina, Native American women who throughout our nation's history have paved the way for this moment tonight. Women who fought and sacrificed so much for equality and liberty and justice for all. Including the Black women who are often, too often, overlooked, but so often prove they are the backbone of our democracy.

TANZINA VEGA - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY: [00:40:20] Kimberly, we just heard Kamala Harris say that Black women cannot be overlooked anymore. Joe Biden in his speech essentially over the weekend said that he recognized the power of Black voters. Are Black women going to finally get their due from this administration?

KIMBERLY PEELER-ALLEN: [00:40:42] That is the hope. I think we're really hoping to finally get the return on our political investment, that our issues will have a voice and have a place in this administration. As much as we fought to support and get the ticket to this place, we will definitely be holding it accountable and looking at many of the policies that the President Elect laid out in his victory speech on Saturday night, that he actually puts a lot of policy and meat behind them.

I think this is a huge step forward, the fact that things like systemic racism and healthcare are front and center in his mind and absolutely in the Vice-President Elect's mind as well. I think there's a huge potential for a tremendous amount of progress, but we will definitely be doing as much as we can to help advance that and also hold them accountable.

TANZINA VEGA - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY: [00:41:51] Martha, to your point about making a lot about being the first, being the first often also means being the only and there will be an enormous amount of pressure, not just on Joe Biden, but also on Kamala Harris, being in that role.

She received a lot of criticism before earning her spot as Vice-President in terms of how she dealt with criminal justice issues when she was attorney general of California. So the pressure that she is under is, I think in many ways, unimaginable to have to satisfy the demands of a very progressive constituency that essentially voted her into office.

MARTHA JONES: [00:42:32] I don't think Senator Harris is new to that sort of pressure. As you've mentioned, she's already been subject to that scrutiny as she herself was part of this primary contest that led up to her nomination. So in one sense, I think she's someone who is frankly, very tested when it comes to that sort of scrutiny, that sort of pressure.

On the other hand, the pressure I'm interested in, is what it is like for not only leaders in this country, but leaders across the globe to come to the table in Washington and sit across from now Vice-President Harris, to contend with a Black woman world leader not only to understand her history, but to understand her position, her ideas and frankly, to understand her culture.

One of the things that we've commented on is everything from Senator Harris rocking Tim's and Chuck's on the tarmac, to the side-eye during debates. I think there's a new page in the hand book of world diplomacy and it will be one devoted to understanding how Black women come culturally to the table in American and world politics.

TANZINA VEGA - HOST, THE TAKEAWAY: [00:43:53] I think about John Lewis and I think about him being the conscience of Congress and why Black people have to bear this weight and wonder how we can take some of that weight off of Black women to have to be this deciding factor every time an election comes around. Or maybe it's not a weight, I don't know.

MARTHA JONES: [00:44:17] I think it is the burden. It is not an enviable burden, I think, to be the conscience of this nation season after season. It is not an enviable burden to be holding up fundamental pillars of this democracy, like voting rights, season after season.

At the same time, someone has to do that work, it seems, in our democracy. Thank goodness, that Black women have been willing and able to step into that role and to be our conscience, but also to do the work on the ground to make good on our best ideals. I think that if there is one thing we could do, it might be, for example, to use these years to finally dispense with voter suppression.

Part of the effort that Black women have to make is because we're not only doing the work of getting folks registered, getting to the ballot box, getting those ballots counted, we're doing that in the face of a still rising tide of voter suppression across this country. Whether it's shuttered polling places, or it's four hour long lines, or it's voter ID requirements, or exact match obligations.

The heavy lifting is in part structural and we have an opportunity here going forward out of this election to restore the Voting Rights Act and to take down the kinds of barriers that Black women are having to hurdle themselves over in order to do the fundamental work of democracy.

No Car - No Vote in Georgia Senate Run-off 2021 (w/ Greg Palast) - Thom Hartmann Program - Air Date 11-23-20

THOM HARTMANN - HOST, THE THOM HARTMANN PROGRAM: [00:46:09] Investigative reporter Greg Palast drops by to expose Brian Kemp's latest scam down in Georgia to keep people from voting. Yep, sure enough. It's a new poll tax. If you don't own a car that's registered in Georgia, he wants to keep you from voting in the January 5th election. Check this out, leave your comments, ding the bell, share it with your friends and subscribe to our channel.

Our old buddy, Greg Palast is on the line with us. The investigative journalist, the author, his latest book, *How Trump Stole 2020*. Something that is still up in the air. Jeez! His website, gregpalast.com. You can tweet him at [greg_palace](https://twitter.com/greg_palace). Greg, welcome back to the program. I understand there's some new, uh, new goin's-on down in Georgia. Tell us about it.

GREG PALAST: [00:46:51] Oh my God. The smell of audacity! The Secretary of State has proposed a new rule to stop voter fraud. You know, all the voter fraud that they've found in Georgia! But this is really serious stuff. He stuck in a rule, I kid you not, at midnight last night Georgia time, with an emergency hearing this morning of the board of elections to stop, uh, to prevent people from coming into Georgia and voting in the Senate runoff, which is of course going to decide everyone's Senate.

Now, how are they going to catch these fraudsters? Well, they're going to prevent anyone -- any county official and any elections official in any of the 159 counties can stop anyone from registering -- ready? If you don't have a car registered in Georgia. Now, needing to buy a car to vote, Tom, that's kind of a heavy pole tax, so they can't actually stop you from voting or registering, but they can withhold your registration until they give you a hearing to confirm that you're a Georgian.

This is no joke by the way, they actually pulled this

THOM HARTMANN - HOST, THE THOM HARTMANN PROGRAM: [00:48:06] . . . and the hearings will happen no doubt after the election. Right? But forgive the interruption.

Now,

GREG PALAST: [00:48:11] understand . . . That's right. It'll happen after the January 5 election. So, understand who's going to be hit here. We are going through a massive registration re-registration drive, you know, working with the frontline groups like Black Voters Matter.

This will hit students, especially like the students in Savannah and in Atlanta and Athens. Um, how many students have cars? The other is of course, urban low-income voters who don't have cars either who are registering or re-registering. They happen to be, they just happen to be black or, of concern to the state, blue voters.

So students, low-income people, urban -- people in urban areas use public transportation -- that is low-income people, in other words, they literally say you have to have a car in Georgia to vote. Again, they're not stopping you from registering. They're just going to withhold your registration until after the election.

Again, they've pulled this stunt a couple times back in 2014, when I first met Stacy Abrams. I met her at the Ebenezer Baptist Church with Reverend Warnock, of all people, because they were concerned that this guy Brian Kemp, their Secretary of State, had withheld for six months -- six months -- 50,000 new registrants, young voters of color. He withheld their registrations until after a Senate election in 2014. Now they're pulling this stunt again. No other state that I know of does this, by the way. But this is, this is really serious stuff because it's going to be down to, you know, a handful of votes. It's a blood battle in Georgia right now.

THOM HARTMANN - HOST, THE THOM HARTMANN PROGRAM: [00:49:53] This happened to your daughter, Greg?

GREG PALAST: [00:49:55] Yeah, when she was a Georgia resident, student in Savannah for four years, and she tried to register, they said, Oh, well, wait, you have a New York driver's license. She said, well, because on summer vacations, I drive in New York, but I don't in Savannah, Georgia, everyone uses bicycles, right. But, okay, so they withheld her registration. She had to fight them. So of course, a lot of her fellow students simply didn't go through the battle to get on the voter rolls. She did, but, you know, again, she missed an election.

And this is January 5; the cutoff for registration is December 7. But Georgia has a rule that they don't put your name right on the voter rolls; they have to "confirm" your residence. This is, you know, and now they're adding this new thing that they can withhold and say your residence isn't confirmed unless you have a car registered. And by the way, it says not only registered, but you will have had to have paid the registration tax.

What does this have to do with voting except to knock out students, low-income people, urban people: the blue people.

THOM HARTMANN - HOST, THE THOM HARTMANN PROGRAM: [00:51:06] All right. So, this is mind boggling. Kemp has done this before, um, what . . . How's this going to play out, Greg? I mean, I'm assuming that the NAACP or somebody is launching a legal . . . So, I mean, we've got two weeks until the deadline

GREG PALAST: [00:51:27] telepathic, Tom, I just heard from the ACLU and others that our lawyers . . . because you know, people have not noticed . . . again, this was slipped in at midnight last night, they held hearings this morning and they decided, the board of elections at 8:00 AM this morning with the secretary of state there, oh, we've actually don't even have to vote in this new . . . we don't have to hold hearings.

Now, our person on the ground there Terry Manpearl asked, Hey, do you have a single case of fraud of someone coming in from out of state and registering? Do you have one case? This is going to knock out thousands of new voters. Do you have one case of fraud that backs this up? She got no answer. They said, we don't have to have a hearing. We don't have to answer questions because the attorney general, a Republican, has now said we can simply implement this rule. We don't even have to have a vote on it. It's really serious stuff, and

they're sneaking it in without notice. That's why I'm shouting about it on your program. Please, I'm still telling people, if you're not registered, please check your registration, even if you think you are, in Georgia. Cutoff is December 7th. And please do it now, because if you have to go through a confirmation process, my friends, you're going to miss January 5.

Sam Breaks Down the HUGE Georgia Runoff Election - The Majority Report w/ Sam Seder - Air Date 11-14-20

SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT: [00:52:46] There is, as you know, January 5th . . . There's going to be a runoff in Georgia, two Senate races, David Purdue versus Jon Ossoff, Raphael Warnock versus Kelly Leffler. These races, traditionally Democrats have not won in runoff races in Georgia. Traditionally, they have -- and this is from Dave Weigel -- the trailer just giving a couple of examples historically, Democrat John Barrow faced a runoff with Republican Brad Raffensperger in the race of secretary of state. This was two years ago. Barrow trailed in the first round by 16,000 votes and lost by more than 65,000 votes. Turnout overall had fallen by half. Twelve years ago, when turnout surged in the race between McCain and Obama, then Saxby Chambliss went to overtime with Democrat Jim Martin. Chambliss led the first round by three points and the second by 15. So, the trend is, in Georgia, if past is indicative of future, that the Democrats are not going to win.

However, we just saw a Democratic president win Georgia for the first time in almost my entire lifetime, and I'm a fairly old. Certainly, within . . . It's been decades upon decades So it is unclear as to what the outcome is It couldn't have more relevance despite the fact that Ossoff and Warnock are not necessarily the most progressive of Senate candidates Putting aside that apparently Zephyr Teachout has said that Ossoff has some pretty good antitrust bona fides Warnock has I think is closer in terms of like some policies that we would appreciate as progressives I guess Clinton won Georgia in 92 So that's 30 years almost On day one If the Democrats control the Senate even by one vote and the tie vote would be Kamala Harris's you have the opportunity through the CRA which is an administrative law that says Congress can reverse any executive orders that have come down by the president Within a 60 day working day threshold So that goes back to almost basically through six months ago seven months ago Congress can reverse it They do not need a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate to do so So the house a Senate Where the Kamala Harris is the tie breaker and Joe Biden can reverse a whole slew of executive orders that I think I anticipate we're going to get from Donald Trump over the next couple of months Certainly ones that he's had in the past And once these executive orders are reversed to reinstitute those as laws the next Congress has to pass them with a two-thirds majority Many of Barack Obama's executive orders particularly dealing with the environment were overturned by Republicans in this manner and made well out of reach for future congresses to fix even legislatively even statutorily The implications for Joe Biden to seat cabinet members and to pass legislation all ride on these two races in Georgia This is an all hands on deck The reality is the odds are stacked against the Democrats There But again that assessment of reality is based on past performance And we have seen in Georgia specifically an ability to outperform past performance nearly 30 years it's been since a Democrat won Georgia as a president, and we saw it happen a couple of days ago So, If you have the opportunity to engage in that, I can certainly understand the cynicism and the pessimism but , there's no value in that whatsoever So , better to engage with that situation than not.

Final comments on memberships and merch

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:58:24] We've just heard clips today, starting with *Democracy Now* speaking with Juan González, who broke down the demographics of the 2020 vote. *Latino USA* burst to the myth of the Latino vote. *Democracy Now* spoke with a Native youth leader about the major Native vote push. *It's Been a Minute* with Sam Sanders featured a discussion of the organizing going on in Georgia ahead of the runoff election. And *the Takeaway* explained to the power of Black women at the ballot box and as the bulwark of democracy itself.

That's what everyone heard, but members also heard two bonus clips, including Thom Hartman discussing the new voter suppression tactic in Georgia for those without cars and *the Majority Report* with Sam Seder breaking down the importance of the runoff elections regarding the future of the Senate.

For non-members, those bonus clips are linked in the show notes and they're part of the transcript for today's episode, so you can still find that if you want to make the effort, but to hear that and all of our bonus content, which includes bonus episodes and additional conversations and everything like that, you can have all of that delivered seamlessly into your podcast feed by signing up to support the show at bestoftheleft.com/support. Or you can request a financial hardship membership because we don't make a lack of funds a barrier to hearing more information so every request is granted, no questions asked.

Now, speaking of financial hardship, I'm going to slide right into the fiscal cliff that we're running into. Longtime listeners may hear some echoes from last year, but I promise that this time is a little bit different. In the fall of 2019 I announced that we were approaching a fiscal cliff. I had been warned by the company that sold ads for the show that they were no longer going to be doing ads for the show because I refused to go along with their plan to use listener IP addresses to automatically insert customized ads based on your location and possibly your internet usage and all of that, because I find that super creepy.

So they said, "okay, if you don't want to do that, we're just not going to sell ads for you anymore as of the end of the year." And so I announced we're headed for a fiscal cliff. This was the end of 2019, a little more than a year ago, and so hundreds of people heard the call and signed up for memberships to help fill the gap of what did eventually come to pass. That advertising company did eventually drop us, stopped selling ads, and for the vast majority of 2020 we have not had very many ads in the show because of that.

What's different this year is that we've already fallen off the cliff. We didn't have any notice, I wasn't able to warn you ahead of time, we were not able to prepare a couple of months in advance. The rug has been pulled out from under us as of the moment I found out about it a couple of days ago, and we are not in a good financial situation right now.

So we, as I said, really need for people to sign up for memberships right now. And as it just so happens it's the holiday season and our new system for memberships includes a gift memberships, so if that resonates with you then go forward and we'll appreciate every single new sign up that comes in regardless of how that comes in.

Now, it just so happens, the timing of this is completely coincidental. It just so happens we also are launching a new merch store. This is like, "Oh, wow, Jay you're so on the ball, you're able to launch a merch store to help offset the fiscal cliff problem." Uh, yeah, kind of. That wasn't the plan. Really, the plan is that the merch store, it might make a little bit of money and that would be okay, there's a little profit margin built in there, but what we're excited about and the reason why I was willing to do merch for the first time since the beginning of the show – I've had merch before, but not for sale actually.

We've had merch that was available for special rewards—we would do a membership drive and we'd have merch available as a reward. So, a few people out there have some Best of the Left merch, but not many. It's pretty rare, but our new merch is super fancy and high-tech—it is merch with a purpose. It doesn't just help advertise the show because it has the logo on it and people can see it, no, our merch has our new, not patented but I probably should, Show Sharer.

And you may have noticed the Show Sharer built into the image of the show. Every time there's a new episode and you can see the image on your device, that has the QR code, Show Sharer, or built into it. It was an idea I came up with in February of 2020. It was basically the best idea for how to share a podcast from one person to another when those two people are within six feet of each other. Like, Hey, just check out my device, scan the Show Sharer with yours and it'll make it – it's the easiest possible way to subscribe to a podcast when you want to share it with a friend.

And then we all moved more than six feet away from one another. And it hasn't, I don't think, been as useful as we otherwise might've thought, but as part of this idea, our merch now incorporates the Show Sharer as well. And of course that's for use on stickers, which can be put places where people are going to see and scan, shirts, mugs, hoodies, magnets. Did I say stickers? So anyway, our merch store is available. You can find that by going to our website, there's a big banner there.

So that's the situation we're in now. We lost our Amazon affiliate program funds, which is the equivalent of about 400 members. So if you've ever considered signing up for a membership now is definitely the time and we have gift memberships available as well. Any amount helps get us back to financial health. So please do that if you can. Also, we just opened a merch store.

So the links to all of that are in the show notes very prominently, or just go to bestoftheleft.com/support. Everything you need to know about all of this stuff is at bestoftheleft.com/support.

Now as always, keep the comments coming in at (202) 999-3991 or by emailing me to jay@bestoftheleft.com. That is going to be it for today, thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks, of course, as always, to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at bestoftheleft.com/support, that is absolutely, now more than ever, how the program survives. And now everyone can support the show new way by telling everyone you know about it, especially by using our new Refer-O-Matic system, which as you to earn rewards for doing your friends and the show a favor by introducing us to each other.

For details on the show itself, including links to all of the sources and music used in this and every episode, all that information can always be found in the show notes on the blog and likely right on the device you're using the listen. So coming to you from far outside, the conventional wisdom of Washington DC, my name is Jay, and this has been the *Best of the Left* podcast coming to you twice weekly. Thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from bestoftheleft.com.