

## Introduction

The 2024 election was defined by intense partisanship and historic events. President Biden dropping out of the race and de-facto handing the nomination to Vice President Harris before the end of the primary was very controversial. Understanding how the process of the Democratic primary in 2024 impacted the Presidential Election requires more study. Determining how motivations shifted among both Republicans, Democrats, and Independents underlines potential faults in American Democracy.

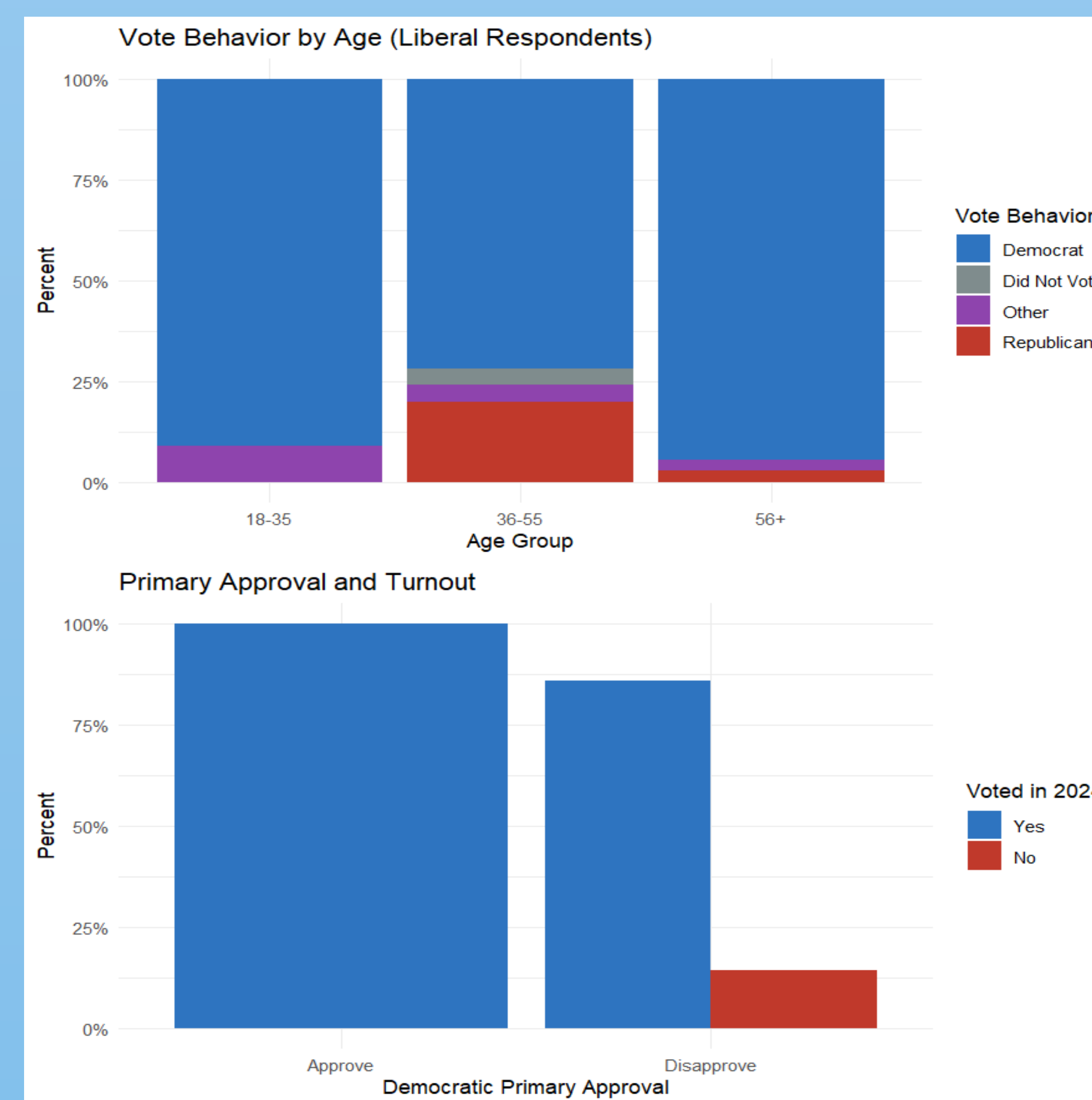
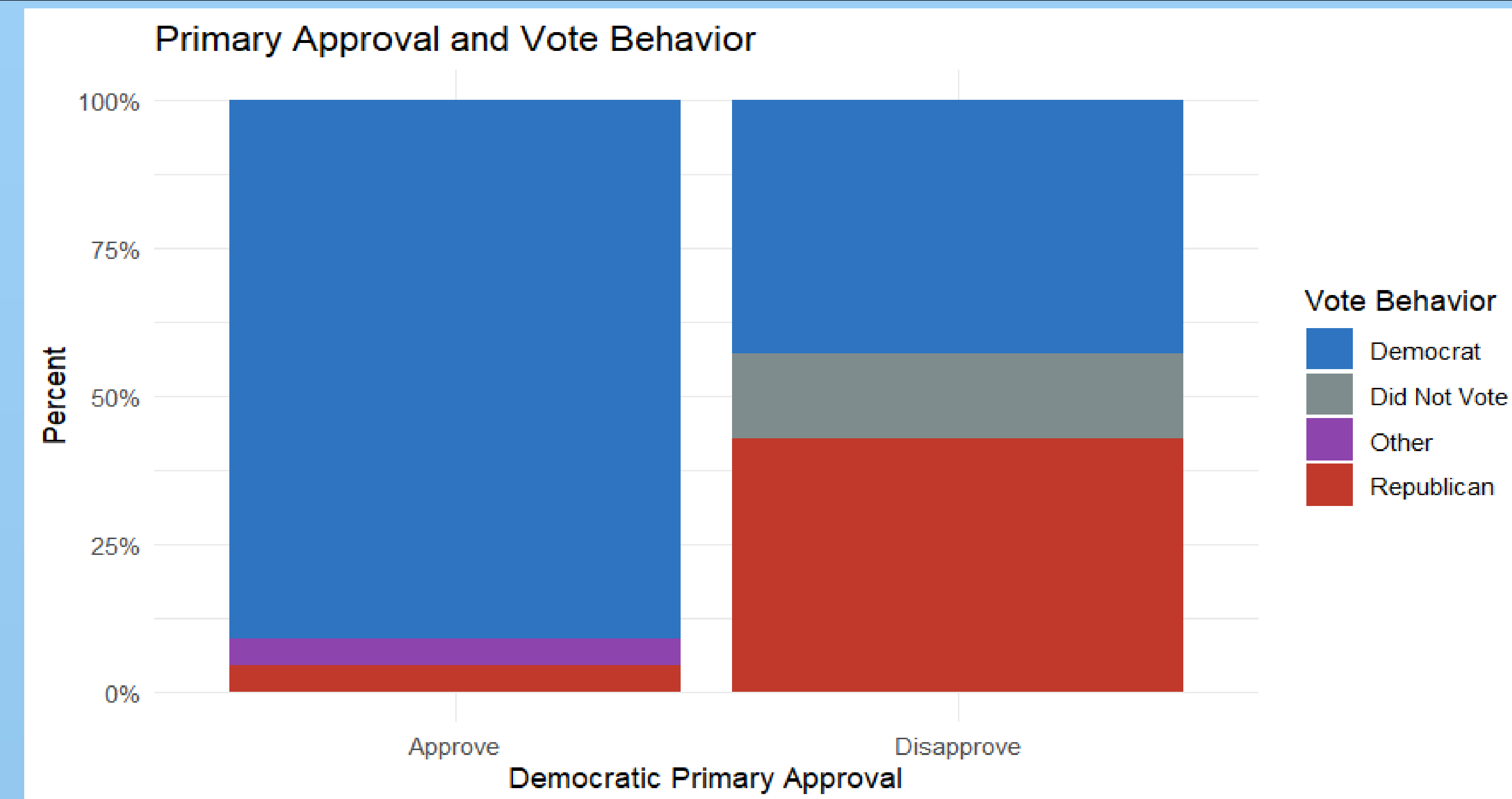
## Hypothesis

In a comparison of voters, those who disapproved of the 2024 Democratic primary and are ideologically liberal are more likely to have voted for the Republican candidate or not voted at all than those who approved.

## Literature Review

Ideology explains a great deal about a person's voting record. But loyalty depends on many different variables. Representation, satisfaction plays critical roles in securing loyalty. When voters feel the process is unfair, their loyalty to their traditional party weakens (Morris 2023). When there is a disruption in the process, like a primary, voters may begin to lose trust potentially causing them to withhold their vote. A shortened campaign "runway" may have limited the party's ability to recover (Soong 2026). This challenges traditional assumptions about stable party loyalty.

These responses typically follow two paths. First, a disgruntled voter could turn on their party and vote for the opposition. This is the protest vote (Soong 2026). Second, dissatisfied voters can simply not turn out to vote at all. When voters feel disengaged, they withdraw from the process by not casting their ballot (Jones 2026). This suggests that ideological agreement alone might not prevent defection or abstention among dissatisfied voters.



## Variables

This project uses the American National Election Study (ANES) 2024 Time Series Survey.

**Independent Variable:** Approval of Democratic Primary (recoded into yes & no)

**Dependent Variable:** Voting behavior (recoded using vote choice & turnout)

**Control Variables:**

Ideology (used to restrict sample to liberal respondents)

Age (recoded into 18-35, 36-55, 56+)

## Methods

The data was analyzed with R and RStudio. Variables were cleaned by removing invalid responses and recorded into categorical variables. Crosstabulation was used to examine the relationship between Democratic primary approval and voter behavior, including turnout. Row percentages were calculated to compare how different groups behaved. Additional crosstabs were used to examine other patterns across demographics including race, age, education, and gender.

## Findings

Approval of the democratic primary is strongly associated with voting behavior. Voters who approved of the primary process voted overwhelmingly for the democratic candidate (90.9%) in the general election. Those who disapproved of the primary process were far more likely to vote for another candidate (42.9%) or not vote at all (14.3%). These results seem suggest that dissatisfaction with the primary is associated with both vote defection and abstention.

Analyzing across different demographic groups shows that this a consistent relationship. Patterns of defection and abstention appear across age, education, gender and race. The findings support the hypothesis that liberal voters who disapproved of the Democratic primary were more likely to vote for the Republican candidate or not vote entirely.

## Conclusion

This project shines a light on the importance of party processes in shaping voter behavior. Even with voters who are ideologically similar to the party line, dissatisfaction with candidate selection can weaken party loyalty and lead to defection or disengagement. Future research could expand this analysis by using different samples, examining other elections, and incorporating more statistical methods like regression analysis. Analyzing how those who identify as politically conservative to see if it increased support for the Republicans is another path.

## Bibliography

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