

Active Conservative Christians Were Huge for Trump SAGE Con Turnout and Trump Vote Set Records

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(Glendale, AZ) – Donald Trump would have lost by a landslide had a significant slice of the voting populace—conservative Christians who are active both spiritually and politically—not turned out and voted for him in overwhelming numbers. Their perception of the election process and allegations of voting fraud has led a large majority of them (79%) to believe that there have been “numerous instances of abuse” in the election, with a mere 1% believing that the voting process was legally carried out and the votes were accurately counted.

A survey conducted the week after the election by the [Cultural Research Center](#) at Arizona Christian University discovered that among SAGE Cons—an acronym for Spiritually Active Governance Engaged Conservative Christians—99% turned out to vote. That nearly universal turnout level dwarfed the estimated national turnout level of 66%, which itself was above-average.

But just as remarkable as their turnout was the solidarity of the segment’s vote: 97% of SAGE Cons cast their ballot for President Trump. To place that unity in context, the national exit polls show the highest levels of solidarity among other population segments to include Democrats (94% voted for Joe Biden), Republicans (94% voted for Donald Trump), black women (90% for Biden), liberals (89% for Biden), blacks (87% for Biden), and conservatives (85% for Trump). However, none of those segments had a turnout level approaching that of SAGE Cons.

SAGE Cons represent 9% of the adult population but their extreme level of turnout enabled them to constitute slightly more than 14% of the voting population. In raw numbers, there were approximately 23 million SAGE Con votes cast. With 97% of those going to Donald Trump, the SAGE Con bloc provided the president with a net margin of more than 21 million votes.

Changed Perceptions

In 2016, when SAGE Cons received national recognition for putting Donald Trump over the top, the reasons were far different. At that time most SAGE Cons were voting **against** Hillary Clinton more than they were voting **for** Donald Trump. He was viewed as the only viable option available.

SAGE Cons are known as realists, and after four years of the Trump presidency the views of SAGE Cons were radically altered. In 2016 they transitioned from a majority starting out in the “Never Trump” camp to populating the ranks of “Never Hillary” voters. By 2020, they had transitioned from reluctant Trump supporters to perhaps his most enthusiastic segment of supporters.

In 2016, SAGE Cons, despite their reservations, led all voting segments measured in both turnout (91%) and unity of vote (93% went to President Trump). Yet, as stellar as those numbers were, SAGE Cons eclipsed those figures in 2020.

Why Support Trump?

SAGE Cons, whose political choices are driven by their biblical perspectives and personal commitment to Jesus Christ, have been a target of criticism during the past four years. Critics argue that President Trump lacks the moral character that a public official or candidate should possess in order to receive the support of Christians.

The survey revealed that SAGE Cons were not, as some have said, voting for a Pastor-in-Chief but were instead responding to his track record in office. While previous surveys during the election cycle found that SAGE Cons were displeased with the content of some of his social media messages and his name-calling of political opponents, the current CRC research noted that his performance on a range of issues reflected the political preferences of SAGE Cons.

In fact, the most common reasons they gave for voting for the brash New Yorker were his track record as president (listed by 30% as one of the two most influential reasons for voting for him); his positions on social issues (listed by 28%); his positions on fiscal and economic issues (27%); his conservative political ideology (25%); and his leadership abilities (21%).

Survey respondents also identified the issue positions that mean the most to them. Far and away the most significant of those has been Trump's anti-abortion stances (identified by 60% of SAGE Cons as one of the two issues that most influenced their vote). Other positions of significance were his court nominations and appointments (23%); support for religious freedom (17%); and positions regarding law and order, rule of law, and obeying the U.S. Constitution (12%). An additional three out of ten SAGE Cons (28%) identified the economy as a top issue of influence.

Election Perceptions

The record turnout among SAGE Cons can be attributed to the perceived significance of the election, as well as the importance of the diametrically opposed views of the two major-party candidates. Three-quarters of SAGE Cons (75%) noted that they expect the outcomes from this year's election to make a big difference in their and the nation's life.

At the time they voted, nearly eight out of ten SAGE Cons (78%) expected Donald Trump to win the election.

Since the close of the election, there has been widespread disappointment, if not outright anger, among SAGE Cons regarding the election outcome. Eight out of ten (79%) felt that there were "numerous instances of abuse" in the voting process, some of which have changed the outcomes. Just 1% of SAGE Cons believe that the voting process was legally carried out and the votes were accurately counted.

No Reason to Wait

Unlike 2016, a huge majority of SAGE Cons had made up their mind which candidate they would support for president in the 2020 election many months before Election Day. The CRC survey shows that eight out of ten SAGE Cons (79%) decided to support President Trump before or during the primary elections. In fact, just 1% of SAGE Cons waited until sometime during the final week of the contest to make up their mind.

Not surprisingly, two-thirds of SAGE Cons (68%) voted prior to Election Day, with half of the early voters doing so in-person.

Fundamental Principles

The election was essentially a competition of opposing worldviews, according to veteran researcher George Barna, the Director of Research responsible for managing the study for the Cultural Research Center.

"Nobody is going to confuse Donald Trump with Jesus Christ, but SAGE Cons believe that the Trump portfolio of policy positions much better reflects the biblical worldview that SAGE Cons seek to implement in all walks of life than do those of Mr. Biden," Barna explained. "With the American population moving away from the Bible as a source of truth and moral guidance, SAGE Cons have been pleasantly surprised at how the Trump agenda has coincided with many biblical principles on social and economic matters."

[Research](#) from the Cultural Research Center, released earlier in 2020, indicated that nearly half of SAGE Cons possess a biblical worldview—roughly seven times the proportion found among the population at large. Because SAGE Cons, by definition, are driven by their faith, political candidates and officials who reflect those biblical views are more likely to garner the group's support.

"In 2016, Donald Trump was put over the top by the 91% of votes he received from an unexpected and largely ignored voter segment," Barna noted, referring to SAGE Cons. "This year he was expected to carry that segment in a big way, but nobody would have predicted 99% turnout and 97% support from them—or from any large-scale voter segment. It is an astonishing display of consensus and support that, statistically speaking, is not likely to be outdone."

About the Research

The nationwide post-election survey conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University included interviews with 6,000 SAGE Cons, 2,000 Semi-SAGE Cons, and 1,000 adults randomly selected from the general public. The survey was conducted November 4 through 16 through an online questionnaire.

About the Cultural Research Center

The Cultural Research Center (CRC) at Arizona Christian University is located on the school's campus in Glendale, Arizona, in the Phoenix metropolitan area. CRC conducts nationwide research studies to understand the intersection of faith and culture and shares that information with organizations dedicated to transform American culture with biblical truth. Like ACU, CRC embraces the Christian faith, as described in the Bible, but remains non-denominational and non-partisan. Access to past surveys conducted by CRC, as well as additional information about the Cultural Research Center, is available at www.culturalresearchcenter.com. Further information about Arizona Christian University is available at www.arizonachristian.edu.