**Moderator:** Well, let's go ahead and get started. So my first question. Amelia, I'll start with you on this one. Each of you is here because you said that this election you voted for the very first time. And so I want to hear from each of you, why did you decide to vote? Why participate in this election? So, Amelia, we'll start with you first.

**Amelia:** Sure. So the last election I was 19, so I was able to vote, but I didn't feel that I was educated enough on who to vote for to make a correct decision and I didn't want to follow through with that. Now this election, I'm a little bit older and I think I have formed enough of an opinion to feel confident in my vote.

**Moderator:** Great. How about, Dylan C. You say you voted for the first time in this election. Tell me a little bit about why you decided to participate this time.

**Dylan C.:** Yeah, so last election I was 17, so I was not able to vote. And now I'm 21, so basically it was my first time being able to. And yeah, kind of like the same thing Amelia said. I just felt like I was able to form enough of my own opinion to be able to voice it.

**Moderator:** How about you, Dylan B. What was your rationale for deciding to vote this time?

**Dylan B.:** I just turned 19 in October, so I wasn't eligible for the last election. But I think it's important to vote because it's more of a responsibility to represent yourself and choose the people representing you. So that's why I voted.

**Moderator:** Haley, how about you? You are a first time voter. Why did you decide to participate in this election?

**Haley:** Yep. So last election I was able to vote, but I was out of state for school. And then I didn't feel it was worth the effort to try to like deal with an absentee ballot for where neither candidate was someone I was that passionate about or that opinionated against. So this election I had a stronger opinion, so that made me more inclined to vote.

**Moderator:** Got it. Nifemi, how about you? This is your first time voting. Why did you decide to participate in this election?

**Nifemi:** Personally, last time I didn't really care about the voting and everything like that, but over the last four years I've kind of realized the impact of why it's necessary to vote. So I just feel like it was a huge responsibility for me personally to make sure I put my own opinion and my own decision out there to be effective.

**Moderator:** Was there anything in particular that was the moment or the piece of information or the thing you heard that made you decide? Okay, this time around I am going to vote?

**Nifemi:** Not necessarily, but I just feel like over the last four years, the way the society have. Kind of the way the president has impacted the society has been huge. And it's kind of important for me to put my voice out there if I want to make a change. Yeah, that's kind of what I would think. Yeah.

**Moderator:** Alejandro, how about you? What was the reason why you decided to participate in this election?

**Alejandro:** Same as other people. I couldn't vote because I just turned 21, but I think it's like our duty to vote and I want to have my voice heard. And especially with these elections, I think it was especially important.

**Moderator:** Brooke, how about you?

**Brooke:** Kind of like the others, I was also too young to vote last election, but I feel like it's really important to democracy to vote every time you can and be educated on the subject. And so I was really excited to this year.

**Moderator:** So one thing I want to say up front is at no point do you have to say who you voted for. That's completely something that you can keep confidential. But I do want to ask a couple questions about your decision making around how you came to the decision that you did and also around your decision to choose what method to vote this time around. Obviously, a lot of different states offered different options. So I want to start with you, Haley. I'll start with you for this question. You talked about how in the past you had. You were out of state and so it had been maybe more complicated to vote. What method did you use to vote this time?

**Haley:** I did mail in ballot.

**Moderator:** And why choose that method?

**Haley:** I didn't really want to take the risk of COVID of like waiting in line and the exposure to people. So I thought that was a good way to get my vote out but remain safer.

**Moderator:** Dylan B. How about you? What method of voting did you choose?

**Dylan B.:** I voted in person.

**Moderator:** Any particular reason why?

**Dylan B.:** The town that I'm in is not too large, so the voting area was pretty easy to get to. I didn't have to wait in line and it was pretty quick. It was my first time voting, so I liked the fact that I was able to actually do it in person and not just sign a piece of paper.

**Moderator:** Dylan C. How about you? What was the method you chose to vote?

**Dylan C.:** Yeah, I chose the in person voting kind of last minute. I did it on actual election day, but I don't know, I just kind of felt like I didn't trust the whole mail in system. I'd rather just kind of go do it in person. Just know I got it done. Not risking it getting lost or something.

**Moderator:** Amelia, how about you?

**Amelia:** I voted by mail, but I dropped it off at the post office or wherever because I didn't want to leave it in my mailbox. But I don't believe my state was offering in person. But I also was working, so it wasn't convenient.

**Moderator:** Got it. Brooke, how about you?

**Brooke:** Yeah, I voted in person early, mostly because I'm really lucky. And also, the town I live in isn't too crowded, so it was really easy to get in and out safely. And I also liked the idea of going in person.

**Moderator:** You wanted to have that experience? Yes. Alejandro, how about you?

**Alejandro:** In my case, I was sure I didn't want to go for election day because of the crowds and everything. So I was planning on doing the mailing ballot, but then my university opened an early voting station, so I ended up voting there.

**Moderator:** And Nifemi, how about you?

**Nifemi:** I went in person since it was really right beside where I stay at. And also I just wanted to make sure that it went through the right way and not have to worry about my ballot missing or whatnot. So, yeah, I went in person.

**Moderator:** Do you think that if the election had not been affected by a pandemic, are there any of you who would have voted in a different way if there hadn't been a pandemic happening right now? Haley, you?

**Haley:** Yeah, I would have voted in person.

**Moderator:** Got it. Anybody else? Who would have used a different method to vote if there hadn't been a pandemic?

**Amelia:** Yeah, I would have voted in person as well.

**Moderator:** So I want to hear a little bit about the process of registering to vote and voting itself. Was it challenging at all? Were there any hurdles you felt like you had to overcome in the process, or did you find it to be pretty easy? And I'll start with you, Dylan B. on this one.

**Dylan B.:** It was actually pretty easy. I registered when I got my license, and then I went to the voting place. They looked at my ID, gave me the correct ballot. I go over to the machine, a guy walks me through, and then just like that, it was done.

**Moderator:** Haley, how about you? Did you find it easy to participate?

**Haley:** So I had registered when I got my license several years ago, so that part wasn't a problem. I felt in the mail-in was slightly confusing with the multiple envelopes and instructions. And then the thing that I found most confusing, I think, was the Adventist signature.

**Nifemi:** Match.

**Haley:** Since legally I have two middle names, I usually only use one. And fitting everything was tight, and making it match my license was a little tricky.

**Moderator:** So the signature part, even trying to do it right, still had a little bit of anxiety to it. Nifemi, how about you? Did you find the process easy or challenging?

**Nifemi:** The people at the voting center made the process a lot easier. Went in, gave my ID, and everything went smooth from there. There wasn't any difficulties. It took me, like, five minutes, actually. I was in and out.

**Moderator:** Alejandro, how about you? Any challenges or was it easy?

**Alejandro:** The process of voting, in my case, it was kind of challenging because I didn't have a license by then. I just got it today, actually, but I registered online. I didn't know how to do it, and then I dropped it at the mail station, and I never got the mail back confirming my registration. So it was until, like, two days before when I found out I could look it up online and I saw I was registered. But, yeah, it was kind of confusing.

**Moderator:** Oh, so there was a little bit of time where you weren't quite sure, am I registered? Can I participate?

**Alejandro:** Yeah, I thought I didn't even register on time, to be honest. I was kind of scared.

**Dylan B.:** Got it.

**Moderator:** Got it. Well, I'm glad it all worked out. Brooke, how about you? Was it easy or challenging, the process of voting itself?

**Brooke:** Yeah, I live somewhere where you don't have to register, so I just showed up with my ID. Super easy. All the people there were super helpful. They made it really easy. It was in and out for me, too.

**Moderator:** Dylan C., how about you? What was the process like for you?

**Dylan C.:** Yeah, so in terms of registering to vote, I did that back in high school, my senior year. They had us do that, actually, in school, so that was easy. So I was kind of done, but then I just recently moved. So when I got to the new place, I just had to look online, like, you know, I literally typed in "where do I vote?" and put in my address, and it gave me that information of the place in my new town. And then when I got there, I just gave them my ID and they just told me what to do. I was in and out in five minutes, so it was super easy.

**Moderator:** Amelia, how about you?

**Amelia:** Yeah, so I also registered to vote when I got my license years ago. So it was super easy, very simple.

**Moderator:** So I want you guys to then walk me through your thoughts and feelings when you actually cast your vote—whether it's the moment that you fed that ballot into a machine or you dropped that ballot into a box or the mailbox. What was running through your head and your heart in that moment? Brooke, I want to hear from you first on this one.

**Brooke:** Sure. During the voting, I was just kind of anxious to get it over with and get my voting done and counted. Afterwards, I felt kind of also anxious, but hopeful that my vote actually did matter and it was counted correctly and that the people around me were also voting in their best interests.

**Moderator:** Amelia, how about you? How did it feel when you actually cast the ballot?

**Amelia:** It felt really interesting because I didn't picture voting by mail. I had always pictured voting in person and getting a sticker. But of course, because of COVID things are a little bit different this year. But filling it out just kind of felt like filling out any other piece of paper. But, you know, putting it in the envelope and putting it in the mailbox, it was really exciting, and it made me really excited for the future, and it made me feel important. Even though it's just one vote, it all matters in the grand scheme of things.

**Moderator:** Alejandro, how about you? How did it feel? What was going through your head and your heart when you cast that ballot?

**Alejandro:** Well, I was really excited because it was my first time, so actually going there and everything, I thought it was gonna be a fun experience. And when actually I was filling out the vote, I felt kind of lost because I saw a lot of names I didn't even know about. But, yeah, overall, it was a cool experience.

**Moderator:** How about you, Nifemi?

**Nifemi:** I was a little bit anxious as well because I thought the process of voting was gonna be complicated and like choosing who you want and what you don't. But after the whole process, I felt pretty calm and pretty responsible with my decision, so I felt pretty good after.

**Moderator:** Dylan C., how about you? How did it feel when you actually cast that ballot?

**Dylan C.:** I don't know. I've kind of always felt that it was just your responsibility to vote. So filling it out and casting it, leaving, I was just like, okay, I did my part.

**Dylan B.:** That was it.

**Dylan C.:** It's kind of just something you do.

**Moderator:** Dylan B., how about you?

**Dylan B.:** I was excited because it was the first time I ever did it, but I was a little bit cynical because I didn't really know if it would matter or if it was kind of for show, if that makes sense.

**Moderator:** And Haley, how about you?

**Haley:** Yep. So I felt pretty excited that I was doing it and then slightly worried that if everything was filled out correctly.

**Moderator:** For the decision to vote, did any of your friends or family encourage you to vote? Were you contacted by any organizations or campaigns? Was there anybody sort of outside of you telling you, "Hey, you should vote?" Haley, I'll start with you for this one.

**Haley:** Nope. This was solely on me to decide and to do it.

**Moderator:** Nifemi, how about you? Were there any friends, family? Was there anybody encouraging you, saying, "Hey, you should vote?"

**Nifemi:** Yes, a little bit. I was gonna vote already, but I wasn't really taking it as seriously as I should have. But after talking to my friends and seeing all my close friends online as well as my parents kind of encouraging and stressing how important it was, that kind of persuaded my decision to take it a little bit more seriously. And yeah, pretty much.

**Moderator:** Dylan B., how about you? Was there anybody sort of outside who was encouraging you to vote?

**Dylan B.:** Yeah, I went with my parents, actually. But there were a lot of websites like Google and YouTube and Snapchat saying, "Oh, go out and vote, go out and vote," which I was already going to, but it was reminding me, I guess, so it was a good thing.

**Moderator:** Anybody else want to jump in? Did you see anything anywhere that was saying, "Hey, you should go vote?" Did any of that have an impact on you?

**Dylan C.:** I think kind of everywhere. Like other Dylan said, seeing it everywhere on social media and a lot of celebrities and influencers just telling you to go out and vote. But I took notice that a lot of them weren't trying to put their views on you. They were just saying, like, "Okay, go out and vote."

**Amelia:** Mm.

**Moderator:** If you had to guess—and I'll just throw this question out to the group—do you think most of your friends voted too, or not? And if you had any friends that you know were not voting, did any of them say, like, "Here's why I'm not participating?"

**Nifemi:** Yes, personally. I had one of my friends, one of my coworkers actually, that said she wasn't gonna vote because she thought that the electoral vote was the one that really mattered and our vote wouldn't count as much. So that was her opinion about it.

**Moderator:** So the electoral college system was part of why they decided?

**Nifemi:** Yeah, she said they're gonna make the decision anyway, and our vote is not gonna make the difference because they already know who they're gonna vote for.

**Moderator:** Brooke, do you think that most of your friends probably voted, or do you have any friends that you know said, "I'm not voting this time?"

**Brooke:** No, I think most of my friends also voted. All the ones that I talked to definitely did. And seeing that they voted made me more excited to vote, too.

**Moderator:** Who else? Did any of you have friends who were really encouraging you to vote, or the other way, saying they didn't really want to vote?

**Dylan B.:** I actually had two people. My friend didn't vote—I don't know why—but he actually took his father to go vote. But my other friend's dad said he didn't vote because he doesn't want to do jury duty.

**Moderator:** Oh. So he believed those two things were related, and so he didn't want to participate?

**Alejandro:** Yeah.

**Moderator:** Amelia, how about you? If you had to guess, do you think most of your friends voted or not?

**Amelia:** Yeah, I think pretty much all of my friends voted. It never made me want to vote more or less. I was always planning on voting, but it was definitely encouraging that we were all kind of doing this together and in a collective effort.