The Bell Curve Electorate

In 1994, Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray published The Bell Curve, which generated enormous opposition and slurs that the authors were racists. The controversy centered on the section of the book in which the authors detailed the well-established cognitive differences among racial groups. I have owned the book for over two decades, but just got around to reading it along with Murray's new book, Facing Reality (my book backlog is embarrassingly large).

Beyond the fascinating analysis on the relationship between cognitive ability and poverty, crime, divorce, and other social issues, I was struck by the breakdown on educational attainment, as it looked similar to the bifurcation of today's electorate. Specifically, the book shows the breakdown among 23-year-olds in 1990 with and without college degrees related to IQ. Those without college degree represented by far the largest bell curve, followed by a much smaller bell curve of those with a college degree and a third bell curve of those with college degrees from top universities that was so small it couldn't be represented with the other two bell curves.

Based on 2020 exit polling data, America is increasingly becoming segmented by party by educational attainment. Broadly speaking, Joe Biden won college graduates 61% to 37%, as Donald Trump won those with some college or less 53% to 45%, with both margins increasing since the 2016 election. Because there are far more people without college degrees than with college degrees, Trump's smaller win nearly pushed him over the top in 2020. On a more granular level, Biden won those voters with postgraduate degrees 67% to 32% and those with college degrees 56% to 42%. In contrast, Trump won those with some college by just 1%, but those voters with a high school degree or less 56% to 41%.

At a county level, among counties in which 40% to 78.5% of the population had college degrees, 63% of those counties voted for Biden; conversely, in counties where only 6.9% to 22.9% of the population had college degrees, 63% of those counties voted for Trump. Biden also won the counties in which 31.5% to 39.9% of the residents had college degrees 57% to 41%, whereas Trump squeaked out a 50% to 48% win in counties in which only 23% to 31.4% of citizens held college degrees.

One small, but significant, caveat is that these trends only apply to white voters. Among black voters, despite Trump's impressive inroads among black male voters in 2020, Biden won 84% of black voters regardless of their educational level. Among Hispanic voters, Biden won those with college degree 69% to 30% and those with some college or less 55% to 41%. These two outcomes vividly illustrate why Democrats spend so much time casting Trump and Republicans as racists. It also explains their zealous push to massively expand entitlements, as they hope to lure these voters the old fashion way: buying them off. Imagine what election outcomes would

look like if Republicans can attract and grow a meaningful segment of black and Hispanic voters without college degrees to their column. Biden's 43,000-vote win in three states and the Democrat's grip on Congress would evaporate.

There are reasons to be optimistic that black and Hispanic voters without college degrees will increasingly align with similarly-situated white voters along the education bell curve.

First, Biden's disastrous handling of the border has resulted in his popularity among Hispanic voters to drop substantially. Contrary to the Democrat's erroneous (and racist) belief that Hispanic citizens support illegal immigration by other Hispanics, many Hispanic citizens oppose illegal immigration because they are just beginning to climb the economic opportunity ladder and know that cheap, illegal labor undermines that climb.

Next, regardless of race, most Americans are rightly concerned about their safety due to Biden's failures on the border and in withdrawing from Afghanistan. They know that both failures will only increase the flow of opioids, human trafficking, and terrorists into their cities. The COVID pandemic kicked the opioid epidemic off the front page over the last year-and-a-half, but 2021 overdose deaths may set a new record. Voters are experiencing those deaths daily.

These same Americans also are facing the economic headwinds resulting from Biden's wrongheaded attack on America's energy independence that, along with his various employer mandates and inept pandemic response, are leading to higher food, gas, and energy costs; fewer jobs; and wages falling behind inflation. Add to that dangerous mix the growing supply chain issues that could dramatically impact Christmas and, in the longer term, drive prices even higher and Biden's plummeting approval rating may just set a presidential record.

Finally, and, most importantly given crime rates and locations, the Democrats' push to defund the police and their attack on law enforcement over the last year are driving good men and women to quit. Their actions are also causing law enforcement to step back on close calls when out on the streets. As a result, the murder and other serious crime rates are skyrocketing in many cities. With big city politicians ordering law enforcement to stop arresting shoplifters and Chicago's District Attorney shockingly declining to prosecute gangbangers, the toxic mix is placing good, hardworking citizens—many of whom are black and Hispanic—in grave danger and those voters know it.

As Americans continue to realign politically, the environment is right for a 2022 Republican wave election in which more black and Hispanic voters split by educational attainment and finally more closely mirror white voters. It doesn't have to be a huge shift to cause a large wave to crash. A 7% to 10% shift among black and Hispanic voters would be a tsunami, which is why Democrats invest so heavily in the race card industry.

Our continuing realignment to a Bell Curve electorate in which the educated elite vote Democrat at one end, as the more populous working class vote Republican on the other end could be the decisive factor that leads to the strong governing majority needed to pass an agenda aimed at reinvigorating America for the majority the elite left behind.