



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on September 17, 2020

Pennsylvania Is the Key to Each of Trump's Paths to the White House

Rob Crilly, the *Washington Examiner's* White House correspondent, [viewed the Trump campaign's seven paths to victory in the November election](#) and learned that in each one Pennsylvania is key.

This is the state that Trump won by a scant 44,000 votes out of 6.2 million cast, a sliver strong enough to give him the victory in 2016. Crilly said the seven scenarios "push back against claims that President Trump had a limited path to victory and illustrate multiple ways he could win."



The paths reflect several possibilities, ranging from a "blowout" win in November to a much closer win based on "Midwest strength." But each scenario needs him to win Pennsylvania:

The notion that holding Pennsylvania was crucial to a Republican president's chance of reelection would not have made much sense until Trump won the state in 2016 by a lick more than 44,000 votes. It had voted Democratic in the previous six elections.

Things have changed in Pennsylvania, a campaign official told Crilly: "This map would have been nonsensical 10 years ago or 20 years ago. President Trump changed that map, and we have more options to get to 270 [Electoral College votes] than any other Republican candidate running in my lifetime."

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Trump has been in Pennsylvania three times so far this month, and his son, Eric, once, and each time the issue has been the same: jobs, the economy, and the Biden/Harris campaign's opposition to fracking and fossil fuels. Nearly 300,000 people work in Pennsylvania's energy industry, which produces more natural gas than any state other than Texas, and is the third-largest coal-producing state in the country.

Because of Biden/Harris' anti-fossil fuel stance, even union leaders are beginning to question their support for the Democrats.

On the other hand, Pennsylvania's rebound from the COVID shutdown has been remarkable. The Philadelphia Fed's manufacturing index just released showed that its gauge of business activity in the region hit 15 in September, the fourth straight monthly positive reading. It exceeded economists' expectations as well who were expecting a reading of 13.

And components of the Fed's Philly gauge were even stronger. Its barometer on new orders rose to 25.5 in September, up from 19 in July, while its shipments index surged to 36.6 in September from 9.4 in July. And the six-month outlook among business owners leapt 18 points to 56.6.

All of which is showing up in the polling. While the RealClearPolitics aggregate of the last six polls shows Biden leading Trump by 4.3 points, the latest Rasmussen poll shows a tie among likely voters.



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The Trump campaign in Pennsylvania is on a roll, having added 150,000 new Republican voters to its ledger, most of them coming in areas that had been reliably blue.

Three bellwether counties accounted for all of Trump's advantage in 2016 and at least one of them, Luzerne County, is clearly swinging to Trump. As Charlie Gerow, a Republican committeeman and strategist, noted: "Th[at] county's Democratic state senator switched his registration to independent and now caucuses with the GOP. Republicans took the majority on the city council and dramatically increased their registration."

If the Trump campaign can keep its momentum in Pennsylvania, the Keystone State should provide the key to the front door of the White House in November.

Photo of Philadelphia: vichie81 / iStock / Getty Images Plus

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