



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 31, 2020

“Swing” Voters Are Staying With Trump, Says Liberal Pollster

“Swing” voters — defined as those Democrats who voted for Obama in 2012 and for Trump in 2016 — are staying with Trump, according to Rich Thau, a focus group moderator. Thau, head of the Swing Voter Project for the polling consultancy firm Engagious, told CNN on Wednesday:

Focus groups are early-detection systems of shifting public opinion. Before something important appears in polling it often bubbles up first in focus group conversations.

And, each month for the past 17 months, I’ve had a unique window into the Americans largely responsible for giving the president his slim Electoral College victory: [the] so-called “Obama-Trump” swing voters across the upper Midwest.

Our Swing Voter Project has uncovered that many of these people ... prefer Trump over Biden. In fact, 22 of 33 respondents [in Ohio, Iowa, Pennsylvania and Michigan] feel this way.



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Thau explained why:

- They think a businessman is best suited to turn the country around;
- They feel that COVID-19 was not Trump’s fault;
- They equate the Black Lives Matter protestors with the rioters attacking federal buildings and retail businesses;
- They don’t want historic monuments torn down;
- They dismiss the idea of defunding the police as “ridiculous”;
- They want America to be first;
- They oppose immigration policies that grant benefits to foreigners at their expense; and
- They like a leader who fights back instead of a politician who “folds in the face of special interests.”

From his focus group conversations with these voters, Thau learned that most of them “couldn’t name a single thing [that] Biden had said or done regarding the pandemic. In bellwether Macomb County [Michigan], on July 21, none of the nine voters I interviewed could name a single thing Biden had achieved in nearly 50 years in national politics.”

And several told him they perceived Biden as a “puppet” of special interests if he were elected, while others said they were convinced that Biden has dementia, even mocking him after viewing videos of his gaffes online.

He noted the difference in their views of Biden compared to Hillary Clinton:



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These swing voters do not dislike Biden the way they still dislike Hillary Clinton.

And, so, Trump is taking a different approach, casting doubt on Biden by focusing on questions of his mental acuity and verbal mistakes ... [and for] not having yielded a single, career-defining achievement....

Come Election Day, these swing voters' decisions will hinge on whether they're better off than they were four years ago. For now, most have told me they are.

If Thau is right — that these focus groups constitute a sort of “early-detection systems” whose positions often “bubble up” before the national polling discovers it — is there evidence to show it?

From Change Research, self-described as a left-leaning polling firm in San Francisco that was co-founded in 2017 by a former Democratic Party campaign activist, comes possible proof of the shift from Biden to Trump in six key “battleground” states: Arizona, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

Two weeks ago, Change Research joined with CNBC to quiz voters in those states. In all six of them Biden led Trump by anywhere between one and eight percentage points. One week later Biden's lead had shrunk significantly, to just two or three points, within the polls' margins of error.

As Change Research no doubt reluctantly admitted: “The battleground ballot has tightened ... [with Trump's] approval up two points [in the past week].”

Other pollsters such as Cardinal Point Analytics (CPA) — a North Carolina pollster based in Raleigh that claims it accurately predicted “every major political race in North Carolina including President Trump's election and Governor McCrory's defeat” — show an even tighter race. In North Carolina, CPA shows Trump ahead of Biden by two points.

With the vast majority of most voters firmly locked into supporting either Biden or Trump, it will be these “swing voters” who will likely determine the outcome in November.

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