



August Opinion Update: Where the Public Stands Ahead of the Conventions

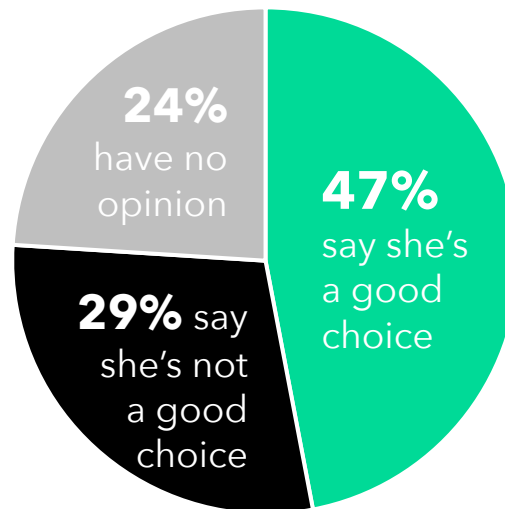
August 2020



A look ahead at the conventions

After much deliberation, Biden has announced Kamala Harris as his running mate.

Analysts see this decision as both historic and practical.



Moderates & Black voters have given her stronger ratings than other potential picks.

- So far, Harris has been a **solid grassroots fundraiser**. The campaign raised a record \$26 million in the first 24 hours after the announcement.
- Harris is 55 years old, a full 20 years younger than Biden, which **may ease some concerns about Biden's age**.
- Relative to other potential VP picks, Harris has so far been **difficult for Republicans to brand** in their attacks.
- After a few standout moments in primary debates, commentators say **the VP debate on Oct. 7 will be one to watch**.

Still plenty of uncertainty around both conventions so far.



Aug. 17-20

- **No travel to Milwaukee.** After postponing the convention due to the pandemic, Democrats will go fully-remote. Pres. Trump plans to visit Wisconsin on Monday.
- **Platform disagreements.** 300+ Sanders delegates vowed to vote against the platform if it doesn't include Medicare for All. This won't change results but could undermine the unity task force.
- **Following spirited internal and external debates** among Biden advisors and Democratic operatives, the party seems to have largely unified behind the Harris decision.



Republican National Convention

Aug. 24-27

- **Location swaps.** First Charlotte, then Jacksonville, now back to Charlotte. Only a fraction of delegates will attend in person.
- **No press?** It's possible that for the first time in modern history, press won't be granted access to a nominating event of a major party candidate.
- **Acceptance speech location shifts.** Pres. Trump now plans to give his speech from the White House lawn.



Sources: NYTimes, 8/5/2020 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/05/us/elections/biden-vs-trump.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>); Washington Post, 8/2/2020 (https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/bidens-delay-in-choosing-a-vice-presidential-intensifies-jockeying-between-potential-picks/2020/08/02/6eea5068-d4d2-11ea-930e-d88518c57dcc_story.html); Politico, 7/27/2020 (<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/07/27/bernie-supporters-medicare-single-payer-381972>); Fox News, 7/24/2020 (<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/whats-left-for-the-republican-nominating-convention-and-how-will-it-work>); Washington Post, 8/4/2020 (https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/republicans-consider-south-lawn-of-the-white-house-for-donald-trumps-convention-speech/2020/08/04/b53ee898-d695-11ea-9c3b-dfc394c03988_story.html); CFP2020 (<https://www.cfp2020.us/speakers>); Washington Post, 8/13/2020 (https://www.washingtonpost.com/elections/2020/08/13/trump-biden-live-updates/?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main_campaign-luf-1045am-1%3Aprime-time%2Fpromo#link-CBKNAEP6XBEE5HJ7CSGQL5REM)

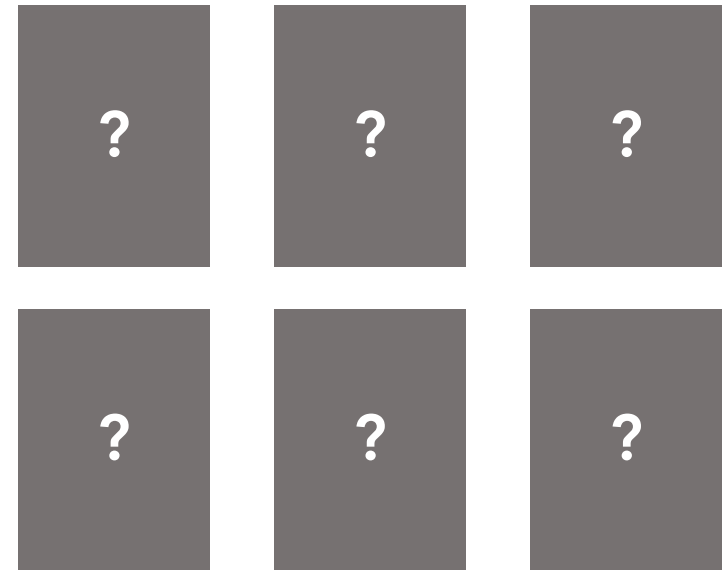
The Democratic convention lineup has taken shape.

- **The Biden campaign has confirmed high-profile speakers across ideologies** including progressives like Bernie Sanders and Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, more moderate Democrats like Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, and even former Republican governor John Kasich.
- **There will also be speakers who aren't public figures**, like a 2016 Trump voter who is planning to vote for Biden, proponents of the Affordable Care Act, and a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient.
- **Speeches will fall under a broader "Uniting America" theme** and are meant to portray Biden as a sharp contrast to Pres. Trump, who Democrats say has divided the nation in a time of chaos.

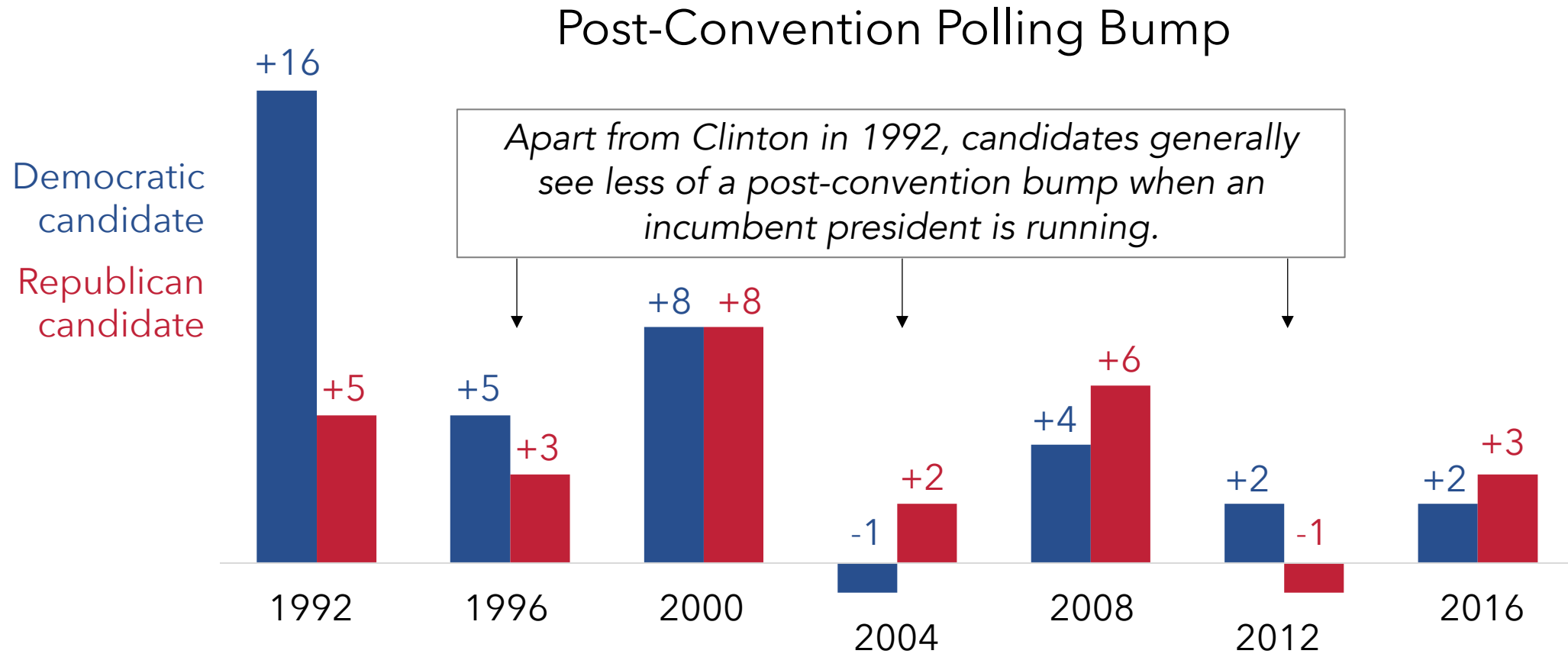


At this point, little is known about the Republican convention speakers.

- **Nightly surprises are built in:** The last hour of each night will be broadcast live. RNC officials say a special “surprise factor” will be built into each evening’s live broadcast.
- **The convention is meant to clarify priorities:** In his speech, Pres. Trump is expected to provide more detail on second term policy priorities, laddering up to a theme of “A Great American Comeback.”
- **Events aim to portray the RNC as the party of “real, hardworking Americans”:** Officials say speeches will highlight the forgotten men and women of America, who they say contrast with Democratic party leaders.



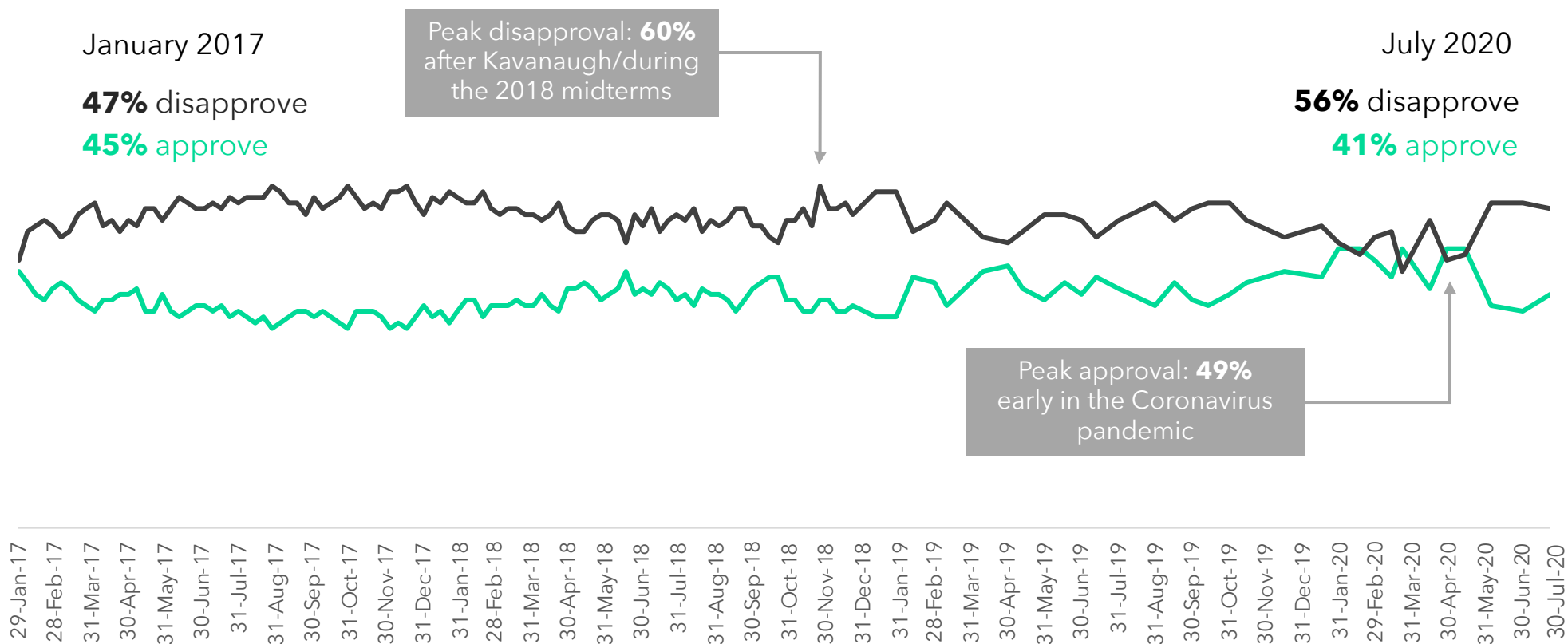
In recent years, post-convention polling bumps have been minimal.





Where the public opinion stands going into the conventions

President's Trump's approval has ticked up slightly but remains lower than past presidents who have won re-election. ⁹

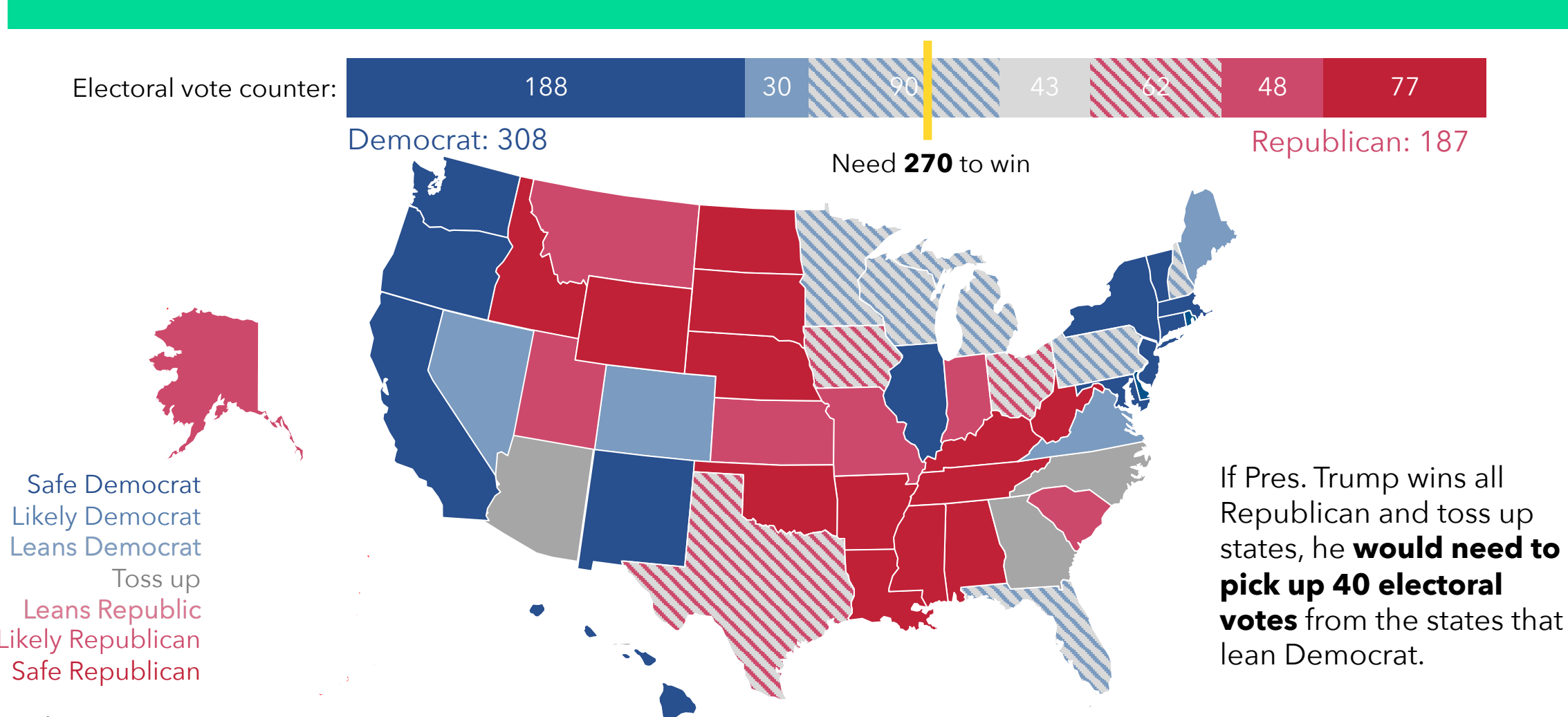


Current approval is higher than Bush 41 and Carter at this point in their terms.

Clinton: 57%
Reagan: 52%
Bush 43: 49%
Obama: 45%
Trump: 41%
Carter: 33%
Bush 41: 32%



Based on current predictions, Biden holds the electoral college advantage.



If Pres. Trump wins all Republican and toss up states, he **would need to pick up 40 electoral votes** from the states that lean Democrat.

Biden's lead nationally has been consistently higher than Hillary Clinton's was in 2016.

Current National Polling

VP Joe Biden

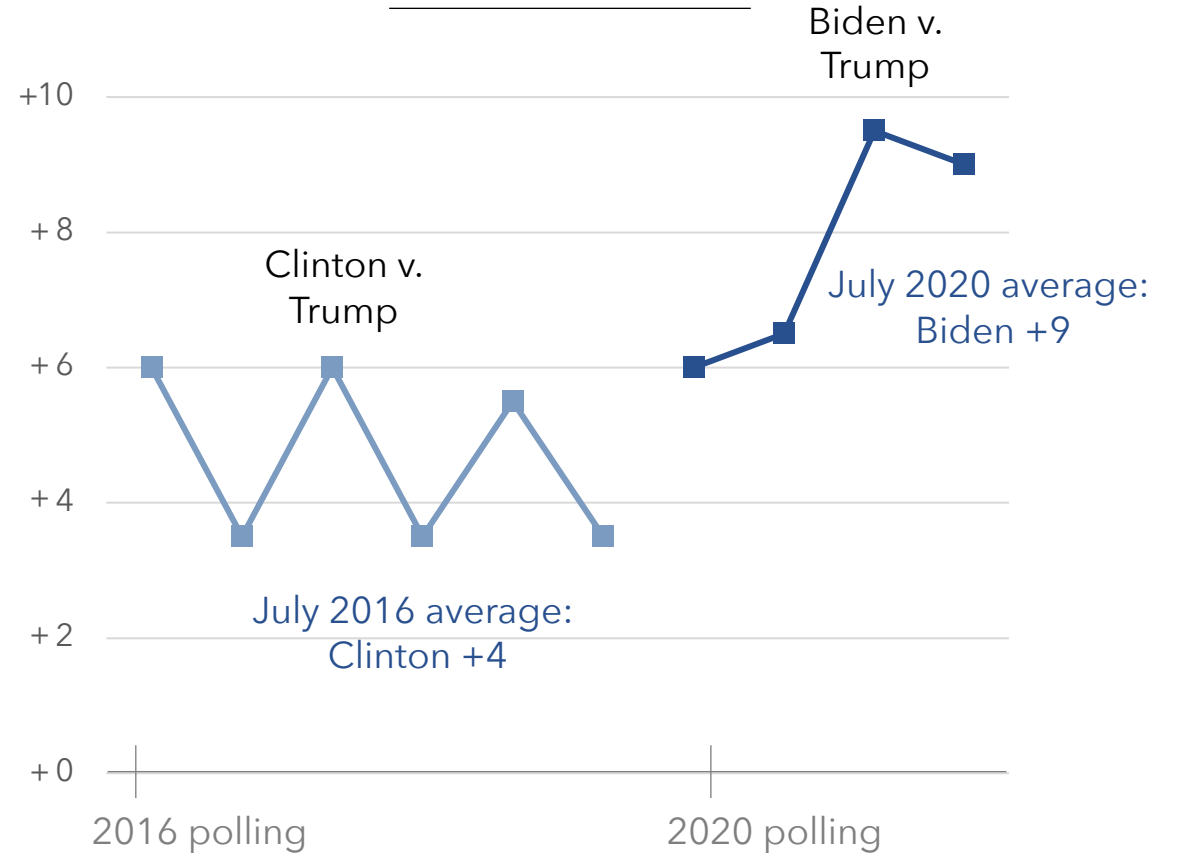
President Trump

49%

42%

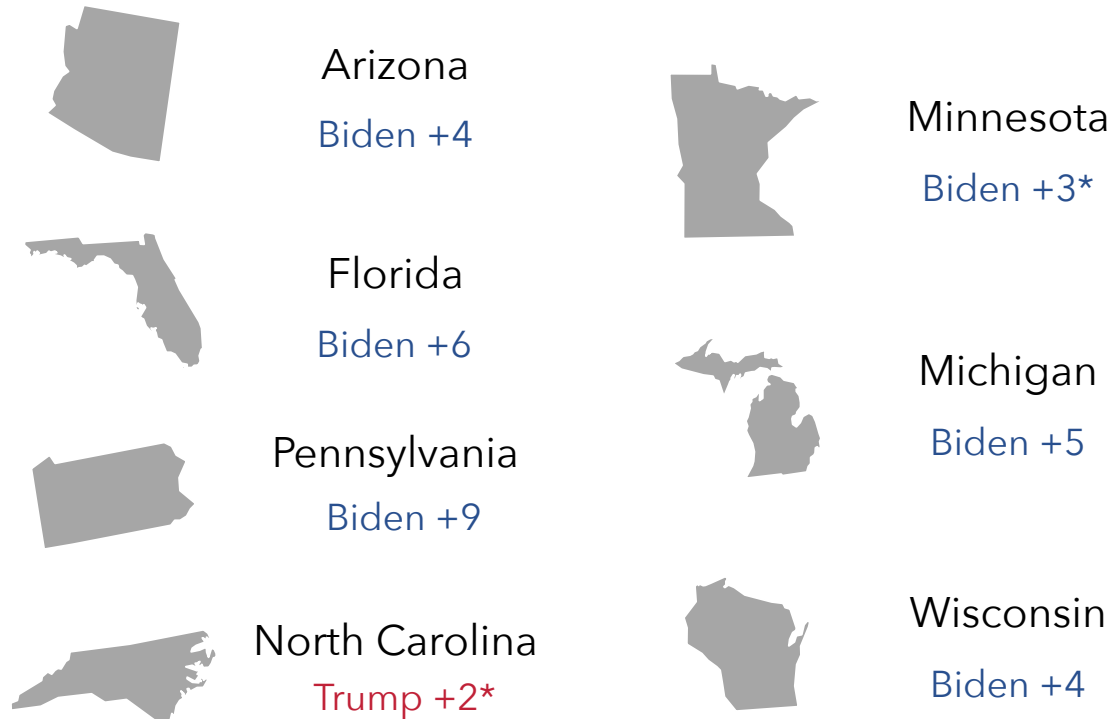
Based on aggregated polling from August 3 - August 12

2016 vs. 2020



Sources: RealClearPolitics, 8/3 - 12/2020 (https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/us/general_election_trump_vs_biden-6247.html); NYTimes, 7/20/2020 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/upshot/biden-trump-poll.html>); Washington Post, 7/24/2020 (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/07/24/nearly-every-swing-state-this-point-bidens-outperforming-obama-clinton/>)

Biden still has an edge in most swing states and is tied with the president in AZ and NC.



Biden's advantage shouldn't be taken for granted:

Clinton also held leads in most of these states in 2016 polls, but Trump ended up winning all but Minnesota.

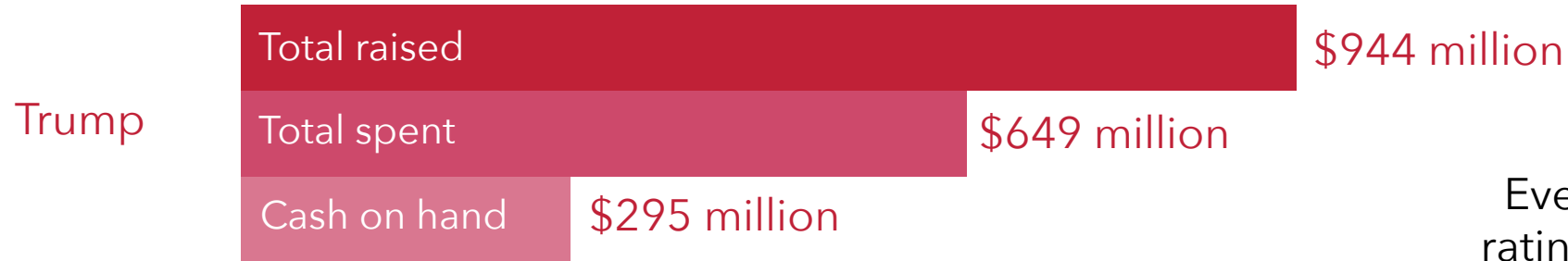
*denotes polling within the margin of error



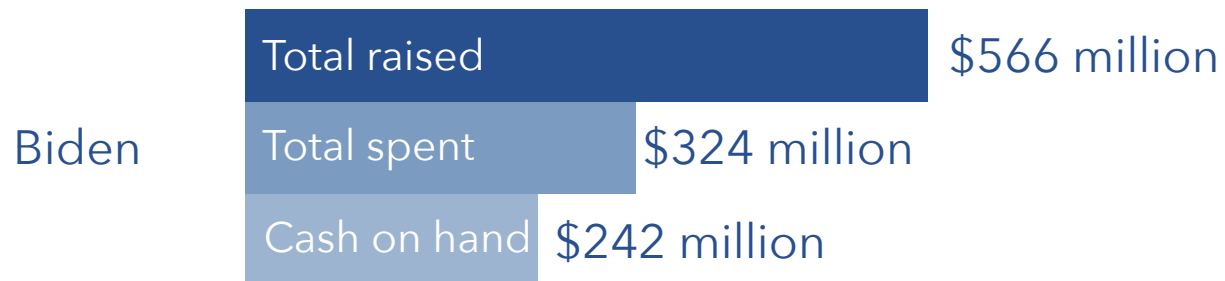
Source: Emerson, 8/8-10/2020, n = 661 likely AZ voters, 843 likely PA voters, 673 likely NC voters (<https://emersonpolling.reportablenews.com/pr/north-carolina-pennsylvania-and-arizona-2020-tight-races-in-battleground-states-leading-into-party-conventions>); CNBC, 8/7-9/2020, n = 469 likely FL voters, 413 likely MI voters, 384 likely WI voters (<https://www.changeresearch.com/post/states-of-play-battleground-wave-11>); Emerson, 8/8-10/2020, n = 733 registered MN voters (<https://emersonpolling.reportablenews.com/pr/minnesota-2020-north-star-state-in-play-for-presidential-and-us-senate-races>)

President Trump has raised more throughout the election cycle, though Biden's cash on hand is nearly even with Trump's.

Through June 2020



Even when his approval ratings were down, Trump outraised Biden by \$25 million in July.



The Trump campaign is expected to use this advantage to run more attack ads in the coming weeks.



Sources: TMG (https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/e/2PACX-1vQQWvR-f_eoWvpgMm1ZEC4LdI23Jrmd1jRt-8xb0H_g22hqf18zVSCUkYEdf11RryAKMCK3Xx93GLa/pub?start=false&loop=false&delayms=60000&slide=id.g8d9b599d25_0_3); Politico, 8/5/2020 (<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/08/05/trump-outraises-biden-in-july-breaking-short-biden-streak-392040?nname=playbook&nid=0000014f-1646-d88f-a1cf-5f46b7bd0000&nrid=0000014c-2414-d9dd-a5ec-34bcda200000&nid=630318>)



Looking Ahead

What's Ahead

SEPTEMBER

SCHOOLS IN SESSION

- Most begin in-person or online in late-August or early September.

EARLY VOTING STARTS

- Voters can begin casting mail-in votes in North Carolina (Sept. 4) and in-person in Minnesota (Sept. 18).

FIRST DEBATE

- First presidential debate, held in Cleveland (Sept. 29).

EXPECTED VIRUS SURGE

OCTOBER

DEBATES CONTINUE

- Vice Presidential debate, held in Salt Lake City (Oct. 7).
- Second presidential debate, held in Miami (Oct. 15).
- Third presidential debate, held in Nashville (Oct. 22).

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