GPG 2020 Election Polling Update

October 9, 2020

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The Latest

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President Trump has faced a steady drumbeat of controversy over the last two weeks.

9/27

Tax Returns Released

The NYTimes released information that damaged his credibility as a successful businessperson.

9/29

Chaotic Debate

Pres. Trump's performance in the first debate was seen as off-message and overly combative. 7-in-10 voters who watched left feeling annoyed.

10/1

Covid-19 Diagnosis

Large rallies – a trademark of his campaign – are on hold while Pres. Trump recovers from Covid-19.

His diagnosis comes at a time when he was trying to shift the narrative *away* from the pandemic.

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Source: New York Times, 9/27/2020 (https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/09/27/us/donald-trump-taxes.html); YouGov, n = 1,039, 9/25-30/2020 (https://today.yougov.com/topics/politics/articles-reports/2020/09/29/first-presidential-debate-poll); Washington Post, 10/2/2020 (https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/trumps-illness-forces-cancellation-of-planned-wisconsin-rally-in-covid-19-red-zone/2020/10/02/54d09ba8-0437-11eb-897d-3a6201d6643f_story.html)

Amid these events, the president's job approval has been largely stable.

September 8, 2020

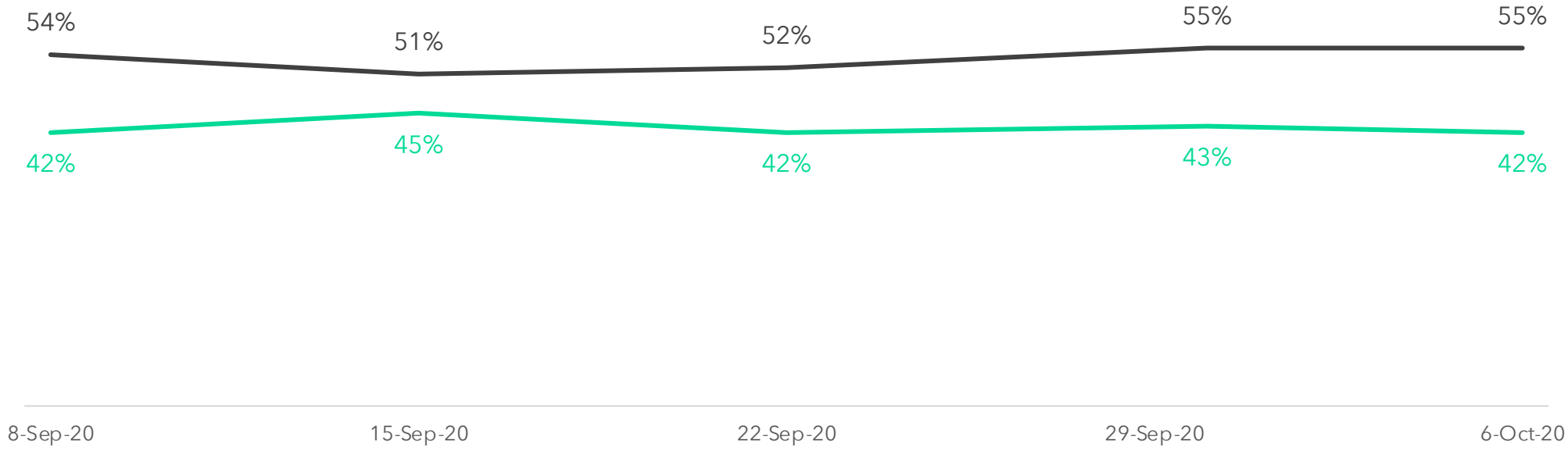
54% disapprove

42% approve

October 6, 2020

55% disapprove

42% approve



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Source: Economist/YouGov, n = 1500, 9/6-8/2020 (https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/8nwf5tw7g2/econTabReport.pdf); 9/13-15/2020 (https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/t0hi1tcqs5/econTabReport.pdf); 9/20-22/2020 (https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/b8ow3q7r1e/econTabReport.pdf); 9/27-30/2020 (https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/9k0tqsqgue/econTabReport.pdf); 10/4-6/2020 (https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/1qb5j6pdqd/econTabReport.pdf)

However, Americans are questioning his decision-making and capacity to lead.

Questioning his judgement

72%

believe Pres. Trump hasn't taken Covid-19 risks seriously enough.

National security concerns

50%

don't believe the president can handle a military or national security crisis while he's in recovery.

His diagnosis has also shaken Americans' confidence when it comes to their *own* health.

Today, 81% are concerned about contracting Covid-19, up from 72% two weeks ago.

Source: ABC News/Ipsos, 10/2-3/2020, n = 506 adults (https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2020-10/topline-abc-trump-covid-positive-2020.pdf)

Confirmation hearings for Pres. Trump's Supreme Court nominee will move forward.

Republicans Have a Clear Plan

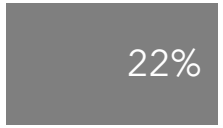
- **When will they begin?** Hearings are set to begin Monday, Oct. 12.
- **Who won't be there in person?** Judiciary Committee members Thom Tillis (R-NC) and Mike Lee (R-UT) are still in quarantine and may need to vote remotely.
- **How have Democrats responded?** Democrats are waging a public campaign denouncing the proceedings but have no path to stop them.

Americans Prefer a Stimulus Package

Americans would prefer for the Senate to prioritize a stimulus package over judiciary proceedings.

Senate should prioritize new legislation to deal with the economic and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senate should prioritize confirming a justice to fill the vacant seat on the Supreme Court.



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Source: Forbes, 10/6/2020 (https://www.forbes.com/sites/elanagross/2020/10/06/report-more-than-120-capitol-hill-frontline-workers-have-had-covid-19/#6fcdabcd3ea6); The Hill, 10/5/2020 (https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/519700-graham-officially-schedules-hearing-on-trumps-supreme-court-pick-to-start-oct); Data for Progress, 9/22/2020, n = 827 adults (https://www.dataforprogress.org/blog/2020/9/24/prioritize-coronavirus-relief-not-supreme-court-confirmation)

The Battleground

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Biden has widened his national lead in both polling and betting markets.

Current National Average

Biden leading by 10 points

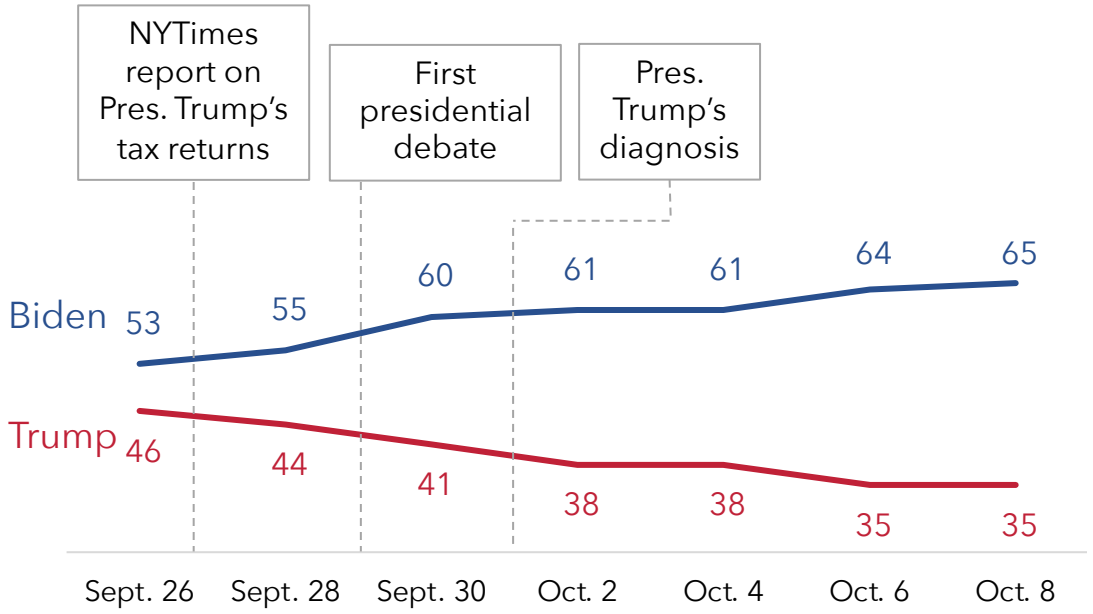
Joe Biden	President Trump
52%	**42%**

Based on aggregated polling from September 22 – October 8

Before the debate, Biden led by 7 points in average national polling.

Betting Odds

Biden's odds of winning have also increased.



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Source: RealClearPolitics, 9/22-10/8/2020 (https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/us/general_election_trump_vs_biden-6247.html); Morning Consult/Politico, n = 1,991 registered voters, 9/25-27/2020 (https://morningconsult.com/2020/09/29/biden-carries-post-dnc-image-boost-into-the-first-presidential-debate/); RealClearPolitics, 9/26-10/8/2020 (https://www.realclearpolitics.com/elections/betting_odds/2020_president/); Washington Post, 10/5/2020 (https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/10/05/trumps-biggest-failing-2020-campaign/)

Biden has made gains with some key groups, including voters over 65, white women, and suburban voters, in recent weeks.

Voters over 65

Joe Biden

+22

Up from **Biden +10** in August 2020

Suburban Voters

Joe Biden

+20

Up from **Biden +16** in August 2020

White Women

President Trump

+1

Down from **Trump +3** in August 2020

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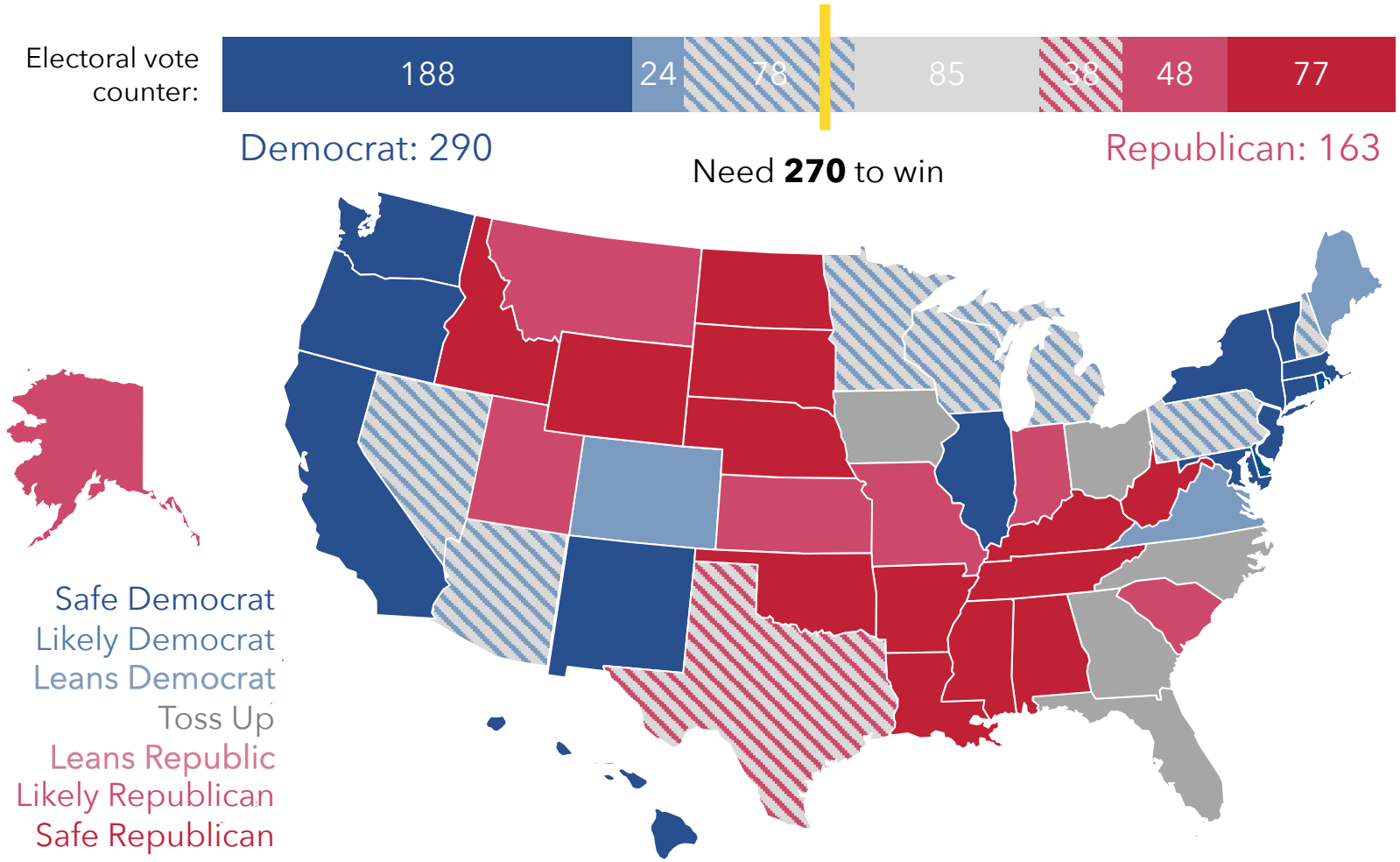
Source: CNN/SSRS, 8/12-15/2020, n = 1,108 (http://cdn.cnn.com/cnn/2020/images/08/16/rel8a.-.2020.pdf); CNN/SRSS, 10/1-4/2020, n = 1,205 (http://cdn.cnn.com/cnn/2020/images/10/06/rel12b.-.2020.pdf); Fox, 8/9-12/2020, n = 1,000 registered voters (https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2020/08/Fox_August-9-12-2020_Complete_National_Topline_August-13-Release.pdf); Fox, 10/3-6/2020, n = 1,107 (https://static.foxnews.com/foxnews.com/content/uploads/2020/10/Fox_October-3-6-2020_Complete_National_Topline_October-7-Release.pdf)

Based on current ratings, Biden could win the Electoral College with D-leaning states alone.

- **Iowa** and **Ohio** may be more in play than originally expected – both have recently moved from Lean Republican to Toss Up.
- If Biden wins in all states where he is currently ahead in polls, he could potentially win more Electoral College votes than Pres. Obama in 2008.



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Source: Cook Political Report, 9/29/2020 (https://cookpolitical.com/sites/default/files/2020-09/EC%20Ratings.092920.2.pdf); Real Clear Politics (https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2020/10/05/democrats_may_soon_get_the_electoral_college_edge_144366.html)

Biden is either tied or ahead in most Toss Up state polls.

States rated Toss Up or Lean R

Florida
Biden +4*

Iowa
Biden +5

Georgia
Trump +2*

Ohio
Biden +1*

N. Carolina
Biden +4

Texas
Trump +7

States rated Lean D

Arizona
Biden +2*

Michigan
Biden +10

Minnesota
Biden +6

Nevada
Biden +6

Pennsylvania
Biden +5

Wisconsin
Biden +5

*denotes polling within the margin of error

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Source: Reuters, 9/29-10/7/2020, n = 678 likely FL voters, (https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2020-10/topline_reuters_florida_state_poll_w2_10_07_2020.pdf); AJC, 9/27-10/6/2020, n = 1106 likely GA voters (https://s.wsj.net/public/resources/documents/spia-election-survey-10-08-2020.pdf); PPP, 10/4-5/2020, n = 911 likely NC voters (https://www.publicpolicypolling.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/NorthCarolinaResultsOctober2020.pdf); Quinnipiac, 10/1-5/2020, n = 1256 likely IA voters (https://poll.qu.edu/florida/release-detail?ReleaseID=3678); NYT/Siena, 19/2-6/2020, n = 661 likely OH voters, 660 likely NV voters (https://int.nyt.com/data/documenttools/oh-nv-crosstabs/d91c22da8b8953eb/full.pdf); Rasmussen, 10/5-6/2020, n = 1000 likely TX voters (https://crosswindpr.com/texas-statewide-poll-shows-trump-leading-biden-7-among-likely-voters/); Reuters, 9/29-10/7/2020, n = 633 likely AZ voters (https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2020-10/topline_reuters_arizona_state_poll_w2_10_07_2020.pdf); Star Tribune, 9/21-9/23, n = 800 likely MN voters (https://www.mprnews.org/story/2020/09/26/minnesota-poll-biden-holds-on-to-lead-over-trump); Emerson, 10/4-5/2020, n = 688 likely PA voters (https://emersonpolling.reportablenews.com/pr/pennsylvania-2020-biden-holds-edge-in-home-state-trump-closing-gap); Emerson, 10/6-7/2020, n = 716 likely MI voters (https://emersonpolling.reportablenews.com/pr/michigan-2020-democrats-hold-10-point-leads-in-presidential-and-us-senate-races); Marquette, 9/30-10/4, n = 700 likely WI voters (https://law.marquette.edu/poll/2020/10/07/amid-major-national-developments-new-marquette-law-school-poll-finds-wisconsin-voter-preferences-holding-steady-in-presidential-race/)

Looking back, Clinton also had advantages – but more negatives too.

Biden's national lead is larger than Clinton's was at this point, and his negatives are lower.

Clinton ultimately lost most of the Toss Ups where she led in early Oct.

	Polling	Favorable Ratings		Early Oct. Toss Up Polling
Early Oct. 2016	Clinton vs. Trump **+6**	Clinton **53%** unfavorable	**44%** favorable	Clinton led in FL, NC, MI, MN, PA and WI. Trump ultimately took all of these but MN.
Early Oct. 2020	Biden vs. Trump **+10**	Biden **41%** unfavorable	**43%** favorable	Biden leads in NC, IA, MN, MI, NV and WI.

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Source: Washington Post, 10/5/2020 (https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/10/05/trumps-biggest-failing-2020-campaign/); Real Clear Politics, 10/10.2016 (https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/other/clinton_favorableunfavorable-1131.html); RealClearPolitics, 10/10/2016 (https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/us/trump-vs-biden-national-polls-2020-vs-2016/); Economist/YouGov, 10/15-18/2020, n = 925 registered voters (https://today.yougov.com/topics/politics/articles-reports/2016/10/19/yougoveconomist-poll-october-15-18-2016); Economist/Yougov, 10/4-6/2020, n = 1500 (https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/1qb5j6pdqd/econTabReport.pdf)

House and Senate Updates

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Democrats maintain their advantage in Senate races.

Solid Dem	Likely/Lean Dem	Toss Up	Likely/Lean Rep	Solid Rep
DE-Coons	MI-Peters	ME-Collins	AL-Jones	AR-Cotton
IL-Durbin	AZ-McSally	NC-Tillis	GA-Loeffler	ID-Risch
MA-Markey	CO-Gardner	MT-Daines	KS-Open	LA-Cassidy
NH-Shaheen		IA-Ernst	KY-McConnell	MS-Hyde-Smith
NJ-Booker		GA-Perdue	TX-Cornyn	NE-Sasse
OR-Merkley		**SC-Graham**	AK-Sullivan	OK-Inhofe
RI-Reed				SD-Rounds
VA-Warner				TN-Open
MN-Smith				WV-Moore Capito
NM-Open				WY-Open

68%

chance of Democrats taking the Senate based on current forecasts.

Bold denote ratings that have shifted left in recent weeks.

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Source: Cook Political Report 10/7/2020 (https://cookpolitical.com/ratings/senate-race-ratings; https://cookpolitical.com/analysis/senate/senate-overview/almost-100-days-out-democrats-are-favored-take-back-senate); FiveThirtyEight (https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/senate/)

Democrats hold more of an advantage in Toss Up states, but it will be close.

Georgia

Incumbent: David Perdue (R)
Challenger: Jon Ossoff (D)
Recent polling: **Perdue +8**

South Carolina

Incumbent: Lindsey Graham (R)
Challenger: Jaime Harrison (D)
Recent polling: **Graham +1***

Maine

Incumbent: Susan Collins (R)
Challenger: Sara Gideon (D)
Recent polling: **Gideon +1***

Iowa

Incumbent: Joni Ernst (R)
Challenger: Theresa Greenfield (D)
Recent polling: **Greenfield +5**

Montana

Incumbent: Steve Daines (R)
Challenger: Steve Bullock (D)
Recent polling: **Daines +9**

North Carolina

Incumbent: Thom Tillis (R)
Challenger: Cal Cunningham (D)
Recent polling: **Cunningham +6**

*denotes polling within the margin of error

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Sources: AJC, 9/27-10/6/2020, n = 1106 likely GA voters (https://s.wsj.net/public/resources/documents/spia-election-survey-10-08-2020.pdf); BDN, 9/25-10/4/2020, n = 466 likely ME voters (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rgOpdiClcbEBjnt2pVvQO7ztkbfsNB90/view); Emerson, 10/5-7/2020, n = 500 likely MT voters (https://emersonpolling.reportablenews.com/pr/montana-2020-republicans-hold-advantages-in-presidential-us-senate-and-governor-races); Data for Progress, 9/23-28/2020, n = 824 likely SC voters (https://filesforprogress.org/memos/2020-senate-project/week-2/dfp_psp_SC_Senate_week2.pdf); Quinnipaic, 10/1-10/5/2020, n = 1256 likely IA voters (https://poll.qu.edu/florida/release-detail?ReleaseID=3678); PPP, 10/4-5/2020, n = 911 likely NC voters (https://www.publicpolicypolling.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/NorthCarolinaResultsOctober2020.pdf)

Analysts give Democrats a 99% chance of keeping the House.

Lean Dem		Toss Up			Lean Rep	
AZ-1 O'Halleran	NV-03 Lee	CA-21 Cox	OK-5 Horn	NJ-2 Van Drew	AK-AL Young	MT-AL Open
CA-48 Rouda	**OR-4 DeFazio**	FL-26 Mucarsel-Powell	UT-4 McAdams	NY-2 Open	**AR-2 Hill**	NC-8 Hudson
GA-6 McBath	PA-7 Wild	IA-1 Finkenauer	VA-2 Luria	OH-1 Chabot	CO-3 Open	NY-1 Zeldin
GA-7 Open	PA-8 Cartwright	IA-2 Open	VA-7 Spanberger	PA-10 Perry	FL-15 Open	NY-24 Katko
MI-8 Slotkin	**PA-17 Lamb**	IA-3 Axne	AZ-6 Schweikert	TX-21 Roy	IL-13 Davis	PA-1 Fitzpatrick
MI-11 Stevens	**SC-1 Cunningham**	MN-7 Peterson	CA-25 Garcia	TX-22 Open	MI-3 Open	TX-3 Taylor
MN-2 Craig	TX-7 Fletcher	NM-2 Torres Small	IN-5 Open	TX-24 Open	MI-6 Upton	TX-10 McCaul
NJ-3 Kim	TX-23 Open	NY-11 Rose	MO-2 Wagner	**VA-5 Open**	MN-1 Hagedorn	
NJ-7 Malinowski	**WI-3 Kind**	NY-22 Brindisi	NE-2 Bacon			

Bold denote ratings that have shifted in recent weeks.
Only DeFazio, Kind and Lamb have shifted right. All others shifted left.

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Source: Cook Political Report, 9/29/2020 (https://cookpolitical.com/ratings/house-race-ratings); The Economist, 10/8/2020 (https://projects.economist.com/us-2020-forecast/house?utm_medium=pr&utm_source=inf-a)

Looking Ahead

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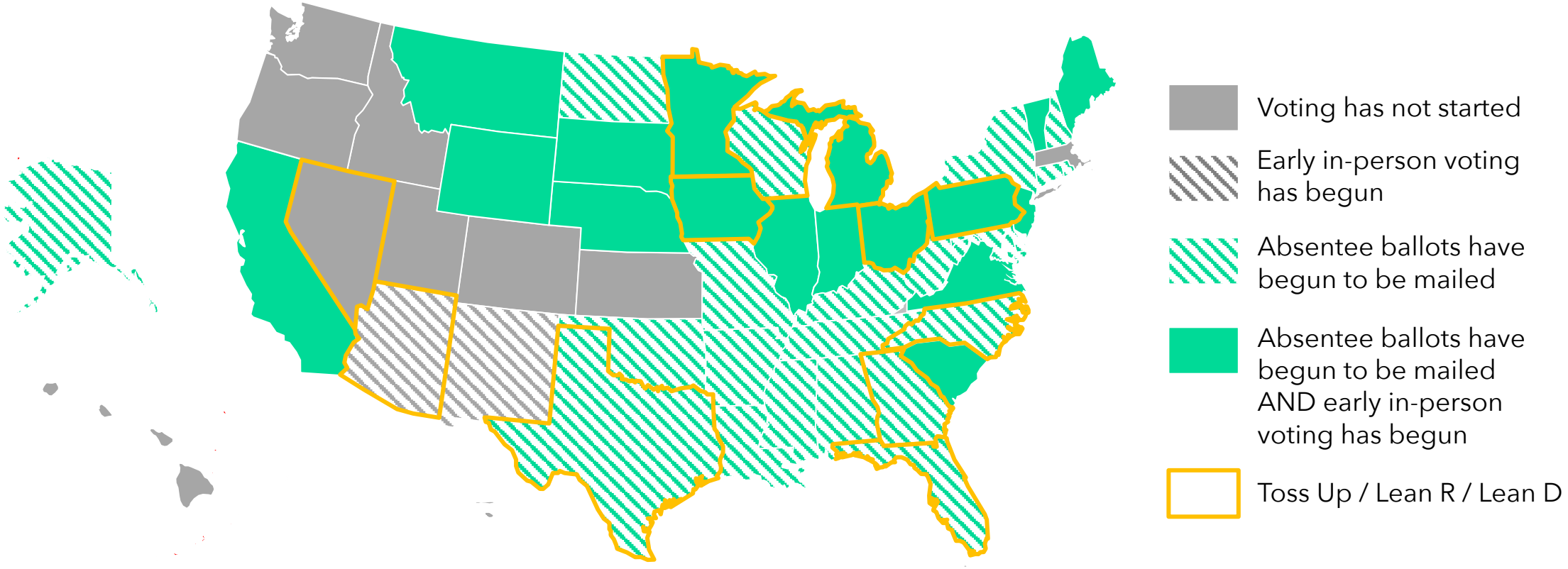
41 states have already begun voting – including nearly all Toss Up states.



Experts predict roughly **80 million** will vote before Election Day, either in person or by mail.

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Source: CNBC, 9/4/2020 (https://www.cnbc.com/2020/09/04/election-early-absentee-mail-voting-every-state.html); NYT, 8/14/2020 (https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/11/us/politics/vote-by-mail-us-states.html); TargetSmart, 10/6/2020 (https://insights.targetsmart.com/insights-new-and-infrequent-voter-counts-early-vote-stats.html)

Voting in 2020 already looks much different compared to 2016.

So far, **over 8 million votes have been cast in the 2020 election**, compared to only **75,000 at this point in 2016**.

In 2016, **nearly 137 million votes** were cast total.
Analysts predict **a record-breaking 150 million votes will be cast this year**.

20% of voters expect to know the winner on Election Day.
66% of voters don't expect to know until *after* Election Day.

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Source: U.S. Election Assistance Commission, 10/17/2017 (https://www.eac.gov/documents/2017/10/17/eavs-deep-dive-early-absentee-and-mail-voting-data-statutory-overview); Forbes, 10/6/2020 (https://www.forbes.com/sites/roberthart/2020/10/06/more-than-4-million-people-have-already-voted-in-the-election-50-times-this-point-in-2016/#3494d63c2d6c); NPR, 10/1/2020 (https://www.npr.org/2020/10/01/916494111/fewer-people-may-vote-by-mail-than-expected-that-could-mean-election-day-chaos); NPR/PBS News Hour/Marist, 9/11-16/2020, n = 1,152 (http://maristpoll.marist.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/NPR_PBS-NewsHour_Marist-Poll_USA-NOS-and-Tables_202009171415.pdf#page=3); Morning Consult/Politico, 9/25-27/2020, n = 1986 registered voters (https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000174-d671-d162-a977-d77face80000); U.S. Elections Project, 10/9/2020 (https://electproject.github.io/Early-Vote-2020G/index.html)

What's Ahead: First Presidential Debate

NEXT EVENT: SECOND PRES. DEBATE

Scheduled for Thurs., Oct. 15

The Commission on Presidential Debates announced a plan for candidates to debate virtually, but Pres. Trump has not agreed to this format.

Pres. Trump and Biden are currently weighing in on their preferences. As of now, the next (and potentially final) debate could occur on Oct. 22.

OCTOBER

DEBATES CONTINUE

- Third presidential debate scheduled in Nashville (Oct. 22).

SCOTUS CONFIRMATION

- Confirmation hearings being on Oct. 12.
- Vote to confirm appointment expected late-Oct.

NOVEMBER

ELECTION DAY

- Tuesday, Nov. 3.

STATES TALLY MAIL-IN BALLOTS

- Expected to continue into the weeks after Nov. 3.

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