



# GPG 2020 Election Polling Update

**October 23, 2020**



# The Latest

## Pres. Trump's pandemic approval rating drops as cases rise.

Coronavirus cases are up across the country, especially in the battleground:



**Wisconsin:** A record number of new cases were announced Friday, Oct. 16 just before Pres. Trump held a rally in Janesville on Saturday.



**Ohio:** Cases have hit record high numbers three times in less than a week in Ohio.



**Michigan:** The seven-day average for new cases is at its highest point since early April in Michigan.



**Iowa:** Iowa's positive test rate is currently four times the national average.

# 37%

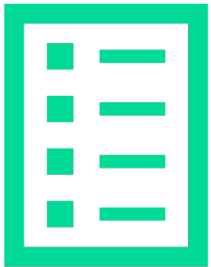
approve of Pres. Trump's handling of the virus – a record low.

# 63%

are somewhat or very worried about contracting COVID-19, up 3 points from mid-September.



Source: NBC News, 10/18/2020 (<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/covid-cases-continue-climb-almost-every-state-u-s-braces-n1243848>); ABC News, 10/19/2020 (<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/key-battleground-states-reporting-record-high-coronavirus-cases/story?id=73667226>); Economist/YouGov, 10/11-13/2020, n = 1,500 adults (<https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/1ace2lgidt/econTabReport.pdf>); Economist/YouGov, 9/20-22/2020, n = 1,500 adults (<https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/b8ow3q7r1e/econTabReport.pdf>); Johns Hopkins, 10/20/2020 (<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/testing/individual-states/iowa>); Reuters, 10/8/2020 (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-trump-coronavirus/trumps-handling-of-coronavirus-pandemic-hits-record-low-approval-reuters-ipsos-poll-idUSKBN26T3OF>)



# The Battleground

Biden has maintained his lead nationally, and has been more consistently ahead in polling than Clinton was in 2016. <sup>5</sup>

### Current National Average

**Biden leads by 8 points**

Joe Biden

**51%**

*Based on aggregated polling from October 8 - 22*

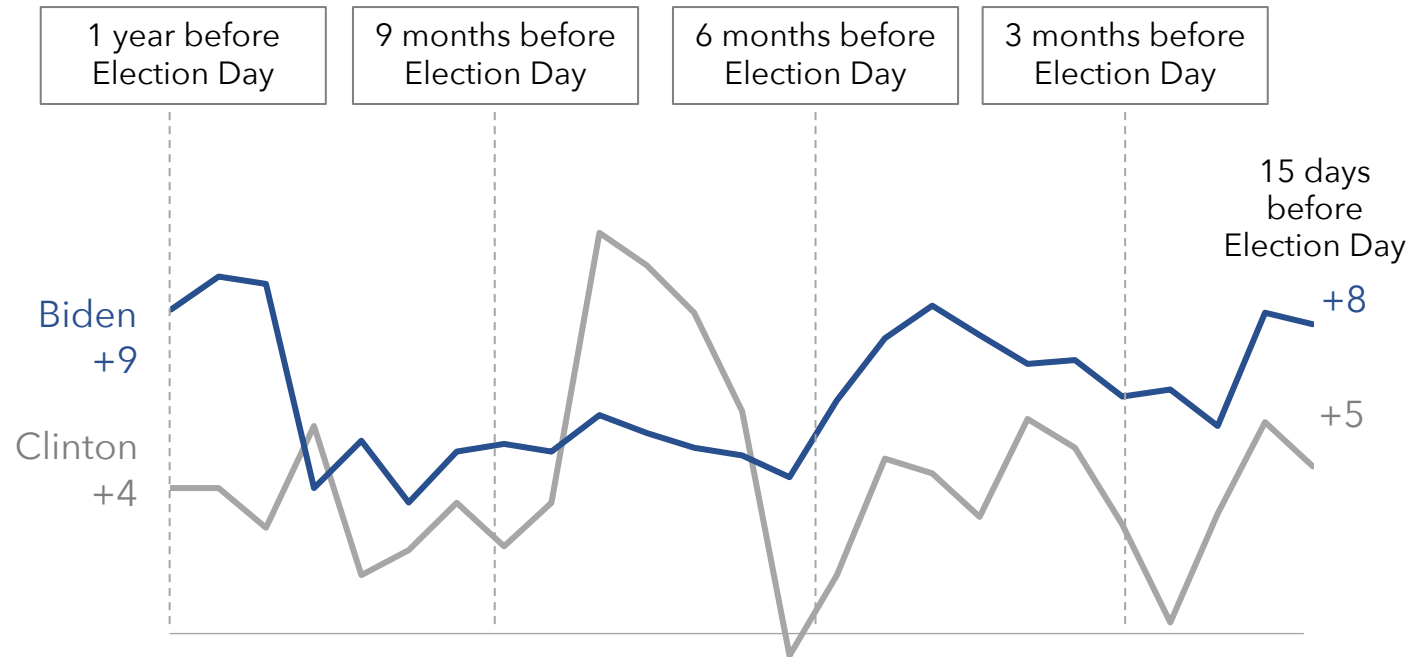
President Trump

**43%**

Biden's lead is two points lower than it was one week ago.

### Clinton vs. Biden Lead

Biden's lead has been more consistent than Clinton's was - but both narrow as Election Day approaches.



Source: RealClearPolitics, 10/13-12/2020 ([https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/us/general\\_election\\_trump\\_vs\\_biden-6247.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/us/general_election_trump_vs_biden-6247.html)); RealClearPolitics, 11/1/2015-10/18/2020 (<https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/us/trump-vs-biden-national-polls-2020-vs-2016/>)

## Notable differences between 2016 and 2020.

	<b>National polling</b>	<b>Clinton/Biden net favorability</b>	<b>Pres. Trump net favorability</b>	<b>Third party candidates</b>	<b>Undecided voters</b>
<b>2016</b>	<b>Clinton +5</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-27</b>	Gary Johnson and Jill Stein pulled votes from Clinton. Johnson won 3% and Stein won 1% of the vote in 2016.	<b>15%</b> two weeks before the election; most ended up voting for Pres. Trump.
<b>2020</b>	<b>Biden +8</b>	<b>+3</b>	<b>-9</b>	No notable third candidates pulling votes from Biden.	<b>8%</b> two weeks before the election, still enough to swing the election depending on the state.

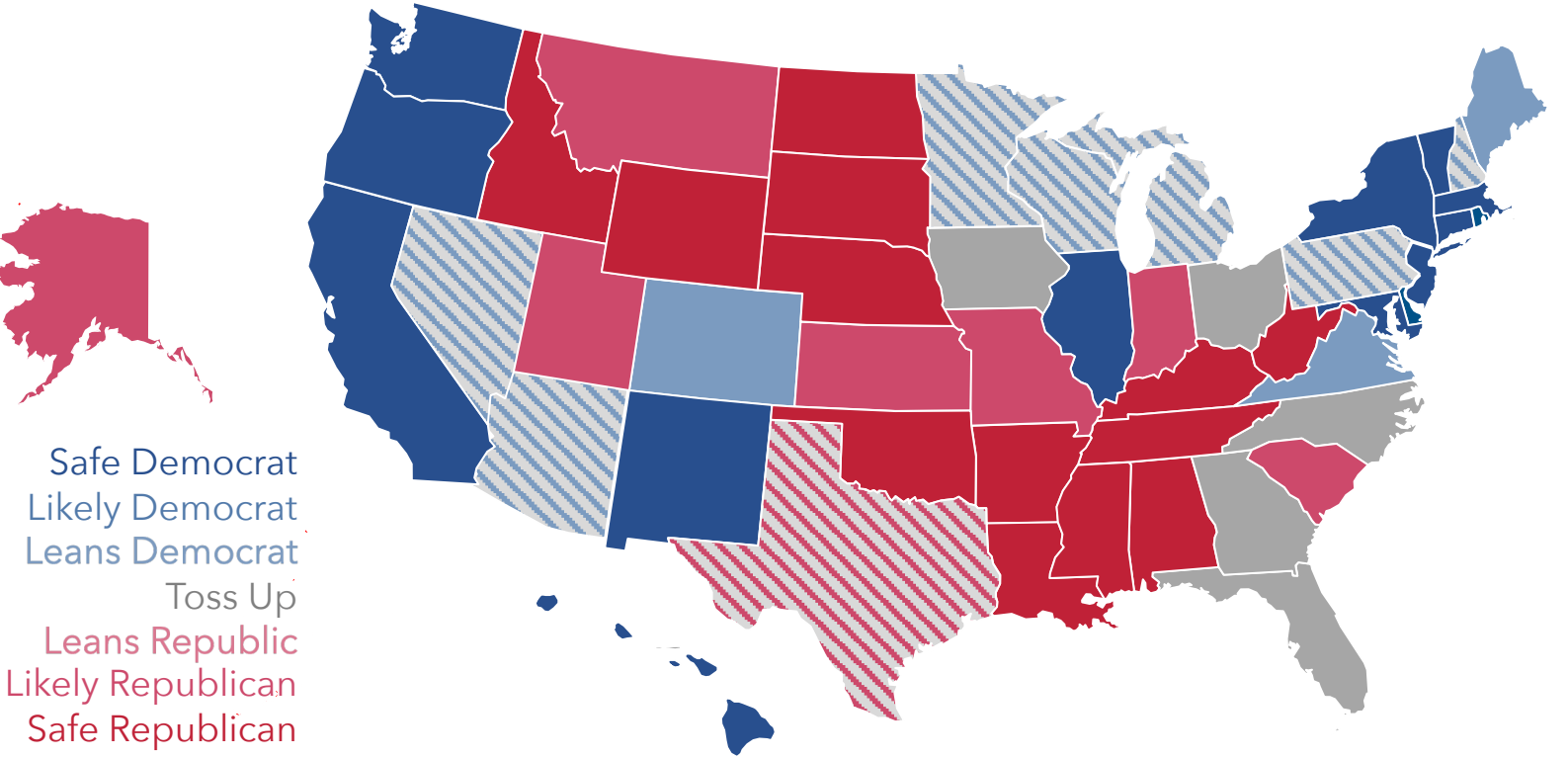


Source: YouGov/Economist, 10/18-20/2020, n = 1,500 (<https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/hxop5lplnj/econTabReport.pdf>); YouGov/Economist, 10/14-18/2020, n = 1,300 (<https://today.yougov.com/topics/politics/articles-reports/2016/10/19/yougoveconomist-poll-october-15-18-2016>); The Street, 10/16/2020 (<https://www.thestreet.com/mishtalk/politics/what-s-different-about-2020-vs-2016-undecided-voters-fuh8eSW2DUuOjwUkCdNZmg>); New York Times (<https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2016/results/president>); FEC, 12/2017 (<https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/federaelections2016.pdf>)

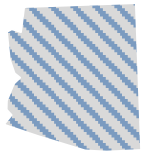
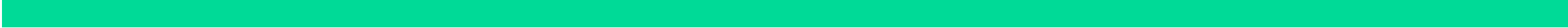
# Biden could win the Electoral College with Dem-leaning states alone if current ratings hold.

If Biden wins all states where he is leading in the polls, he would win the Electoral College 375 to Trump's 163.

To stay in the game, Trump needs to win **all toss-up and R-leaning states** AND **pick up at least 22 votes** from states currently leaning Democrat.



# But a number of Dem-leaning states are close.



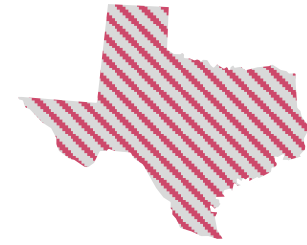
### Arizona

Average polling: **Biden +3**



### Michigan

Average polling: **Biden +8**



### Texas

Average polling: **Trump +4**



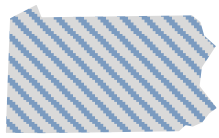
### Minnesota

Average polling: **Biden +6**



### Nevada

Average polling: **Biden +5**



### Pennsylvania

Average polling: **Biden +5**



### Wisconsin

Average polling: **Biden +5**

Blue stripes denote states classified Lean Democrat and red strips denote states classified Lean Republican by Cook Political Report.



Source: Real Clear Politics, average polling from 10/23/2020 ([https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/pa/pennsylvania\\_trump\\_vs\\_biden-6861.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/pa/pennsylvania_trump_vs_biden-6861.html)); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/mi/michigan\\_trump\\_vs\\_biden-6761.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/mi/michigan_trump_vs_biden-6761.html); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/wi/wisconsin\\_trump\\_vs\\_biden-6849.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/wi/wisconsin_trump_vs_biden-6849.html); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/mn/minnesota\\_trump\\_vs\\_biden-6966.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/mn/minnesota_trump_vs_biden-6966.html); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/az/arizona\\_trump\\_vs\\_biden-6807.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/az/arizona_trump_vs_biden-6807.html); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/nv/nevada\\_trump\\_vs\\_biden-6867.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/nv/nevada_trump_vs_biden-6867.html); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/tx/texas\\_trump\\_vs\\_biden-6818.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/tx/texas_trump_vs_biden-6818.html))



# Key Toss Up states are even closer.



## Florida

Average polling: **Biden +2**



## Georgia

Average polling: **Biden +1**



## N. Carolina

Average polling: **Biden +2**



## Iowa

Average polling: **Biden +1**



## Ohio

Average polling: **Trump +1**



Source: Real Clear Politics, average polling from 10/23/2020 ([https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/ga/georgia\\_trump\\_vs\\_biden-6974.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/ga/georgia_trump_vs_biden-6974.html)); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/fl/florida\\_trump\\_vs\\_biden-6841.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/fl/florida_trump_vs_biden-6841.html); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/nc/north\\_carolina\\_trump\\_vs\\_biden-6744.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/nc/north_carolina_trump_vs_biden-6744.html); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/ia/iowa\\_trump\\_vs\\_biden-6787.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/ia/iowa_trump_vs_biden-6787.html); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/oh/ohio\\_trump\\_vs\\_biden-6765.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/president/oh/ohio_trump_vs_biden-6765.html))

## Some key demographics have shifted their support since 2016.

White voters' support for Trump has softened compared to 2016, especially among women. Support from people of color has softened for Biden, though is still strong.

	2016 Exit Polls	Current Polling
White	<b>Trump +20</b>	<b>Trump +7</b>
White women	<b>Trump +9</b>	<b>Biden +6</b>
Black	<b>Clinton +81</b>	<b>Biden +71</b>
Hispanic	<b>Clinton +38</b>	<b>Biden +23</b>



# House and Senate Updates

Assuming each party wins the seats that are currently Likely or Lean in their direction, Democrats need to win two of the seven Toss Ups to take control.

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	KS-Open	ID-Risch
MA-Markey	CO-Gardner	MT-Daines	KY-McConnell	LA-Cassidy
NH-Shaheen		IA-Ernst	TX-Cornyn	MS-Hyde-Smith
NJ-Booker		GA-Perdue	AK-Sullivan	NE-Sasse
OR-Merkley		GA-Loeffler		OK-Inhofe
RI-Reed		SC-Graham		SD-Rounds
VA-Warner				TN-Open
MN-Smith				WV-Moore Capito
NM-Open				WY-Open

**74%**  
**chance of Democrats taking the Senate  
 based on current forecasts.**



# Democrats lead in most Toss Up states.

Most likely to flip from Republican to Democrat:



Arizona



Colorado

Toss Up states:



Georgia



Georgia Special



Iowa



Kansas



Maine



Michigan



Montana



North Carolina



South Carolina

Most likely to flip from Democrat to Republican:



Alabama

\*denotes polling within the margin of error.

Average polling as of October 22, 2020 shown with the exception of AL, CO, KS, SC and GA Special.

Sources: Real Clear Politics Senate race averages, 10/23/2020 ([https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/ia/iowa\\_senate\\_ernst\\_vs\\_greenfield-7072.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/ia/iowa_senate_ernst_vs_greenfield-7072.html)); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/me/maine\\_senate\\_collins\\_vs\\_gideon-6928.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/me/maine_senate_collins_vs_gideon-6928.html); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/ga/georgia\\_senate\\_perdue\\_vs\\_ossoff-7067.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/ga/georgia_senate_perdue_vs_ossoff-7067.html); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/mt/montana\\_senate\\_daines\\_vs\\_bullock-7063.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/mt/montana_senate_daines_vs_bullock-7063.html); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/nc/north\\_carolina\\_senate\\_tillis\\_vs\\_cunningham-6908.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/nc/north_carolina_senate_tillis_vs_cunningham-6908.html); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/mi/michigan\\_senate\\_james\\_vs\\_peters-6964.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/mi/michigan_senate_james_vs_peters-6964.html); [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/az/arizona\\_senate\\_mcsally\\_vs\\_kelly-6801.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2020/senate/az/arizona_senate_mcsally_vs_kelly-6801.html); NYTimes/Siena, 10/13-19/2020, n = 759 likely GA voters (<https://int.nyt.com/data/documenttools/ga101320-crosstabs/96723fae2a9846ed/full.pdf>); Morning Consult, 10/11-20/2020, n = 926 likely SC voters (<https://morningconsult.com/2020/10/22/senate-race-polling-north-carolina-texas-arizona-south-carolina/>); Auburn, 9/30-10/3/2020, n = 1,072 registered AL voters (<https://www.aum.edu/aum-poll-tommy-tuberville-leads-doug-jones-by-12-points-in-closing-weeks-of-alabama-senate-race/>); NYTimes/Siena, 10/18-20/2020, n = 755 likely KS voters (<https://int.nyt.com/data/documenttools/ks101820-crosstabs/fcc9a5346866c517/full.pdf>); YouGov, 10/5-9/2020, n = 800 likely CO voters ([https://www.colorado.edu/lab/april/sites/default/files/attached-files/2020\\_colorado\\_political\\_climate\\_report\\_election\\_topline\\_10-19-20\\_.pdf](https://www.colorado.edu/lab/april/sites/default/files/attached-files/2020_colorado_political_climate_report_election_topline_10-19-20_.pdf))



## Analysis give Democrats a 96% chance of keeping the House.

Lean Dem		Toss Up			Lean Rep	
AZ-1 O'Halleran	NV-03 Lee	CA-21 Cox	AZ-6 Schweikert	NY-2 Open	AK-AL Young	<b>NC-9 Bishop</b>
CA-48 Rouda	OR-4 DeFazio	IA-1 Finkenauer	CA-25 Garcia	NY-24 Katko	AR-2 Hill	NC-11 Vacant
<b>FL-26 Mucarsel-Powell</b>	PA-8 Cartwright	IA-2 Open	<b>IL-13 Davis</b>	OH-1 Chabot	CO-3 Open	NY-1 Zeldin
GA-7 Open	PA-17 Lamb	MN-7 Peterson	IN-5 Open	PA-10 Perry	FL-15 Open	PA-1 Fitzpatrick
IA-3 Axne	SC-1 Cunningham	NM-2 Torres Small	<b>MI-3 Open</b>	TX-21 Roy	MI-6 Upton	TX-3 Taylor
<b>IL-17 Bustos</b>	TX-23 Open	NY-11 Rose	<b>MN-1 Hagedorn</b>	TX-22 Open	MT-AL Open	TX-10 McCaul
MI-8 Slotkin	<b>VA-2 Luria</b>	NY-22 Brindisi	MO-2 Wagner	TX-24 Open	NC-8 Hudson	<b>WA-3 Herrera Beutler</b>
MI-11 Stevens	VA-7 Spanberger	OK-5 Horn	NE-2 Bacon	VA-5 Open		
NJ-3 Kim	WI-3 Kind	UT-4 McAdams	NJ-2 Van Drew			

NJ-7 Malinowski



Source: Cook Political Report, 10/21/2020 (<https://cookpolitical.com/ratings/house-race-ratings>); FiveThirtyEight, 10/23/2020 (<https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-forecast/house/>)

**Bold denote ratings that have shifted in the past week.  
All shifted to the left with the exception of IL-17.**

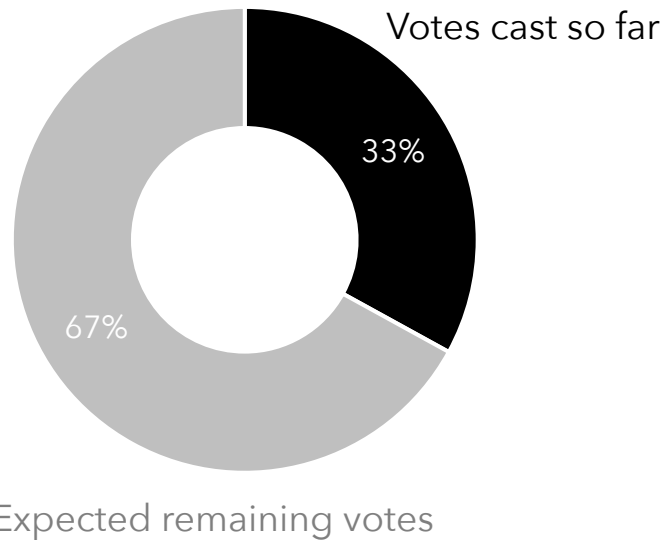


# Looking Ahead

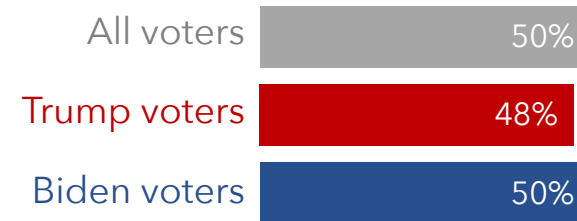
# With millions of ballots cast, Biden voters are more confident than Trump voters that results will be known after all mail and absentee ballots are counted.

So far, **over 50 million votes have been cast in the 2020 election**, already **36% of the total votes cast in 2016**.

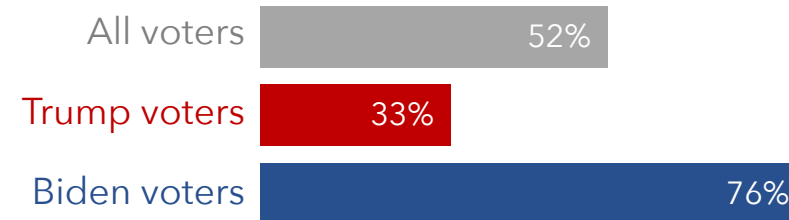
There are still many more votes expected to be cast.



Share of voters confident they will know who won the election within a day or two of Election Day



Share of voters confident result will be known after all votes (including mail and absentee) are counted





## Things to keep in mind about election polling in the final days of the election.

1

Most of the votes being cast pre-Election Day are believed to favor Biden over Pres. Trump. **Pollsters are accounting for this well-observed trend in their modeling and predictions.**

2

Since 2016, **more has been invested in state polls**, which were underfunded in some cases four years ago. That allows for higher-quality work and will help prevent the mis-predictions in certain states in 2016.

3

**Pollsters have learned a lesson about weighting.** In 2016, some pollsters did not adjust for the over-representation of college graduates in their surveys: polls that did not correctly weight their data therefore over-estimated support for Clinton – which was higher among college-educated Americans. Most well-established pollsters are weighting their samples correctly this time around.

## What's Ahead: Final days

### OCTOBER

#### **SCOTUS CONFIRMATION**

- The Senate Judiciary Committee advanced Judge Amy Coney Barrett's nomination to the full Senate on Thursday, Oct. 22. The full Senate is expected to vote on Pres. Trump's nomination the week of Oct. 26.

#### **COVID-19 STIMULUS**

- There has been some progress on a potential \$2 trillion aid agreement, though it may not pass before Election Day.

### NOVEMBER

#### **ELECTION DAY**

- Tuesday, Nov. 3.

#### **STATES TALLY MAIL-IN BALLOTS**

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

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