

THE TIPPING POINT

**A DEEP LOOK INTO THE MINDS
OF CHRISTIANS WHO FLIPPED
FROM TRUMP TO BIDEN**

PREPARED BY



“What Donald Trump says and does looks nothing like the teachings of Christ. For that reason, next year, there is a big opportunity for a large portion of evangelicals and Catholics who normally support Republican candidates to vote differently.” **Ted Lieu, US Congressman, District 33/California**

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“As demographics rapidly shift in America, the lone remaining identity-based voting block for the GOP is the white evangelical Christian. As we learned in the freedom to marry fight and every presidential election since 2004, mitigating excitement among this base and shaving even a small percentage of these voters towards the more progressive side is a key difference between winning and losing—particularly in states with high religiosity. Just as critical, more than 22 million Americans have left the “evangelical” identity since 2016 alone, providing a massive opportunity to engage a community that is desperate for a new sense of belonging and primed for slow, lasting ideological shifts that better reflect their core values of compassion, justice, and kindness. By investing our energy in faith outreach we’re not only shaping a moral narrative that helps our brand, we’re growing a lasting, active, and loyal new set of converts that knows every trick in the religious right’s playbook.” **Rev. Ryan M. Eller, President of Beloved Community Foundation and Founder of New Moral Majority**

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“Many Evangelical and Catholic voters have been taught that to be faithful, they must vote for Republican candidates regardless of the candidate’s character or policy positions. In recent years, a significant percentage of these voters have watched the Republican party disregard a commitment to the common good as they support political and social movements rooted in white-nationalism, a misguided approach to “America First,” and practices of division. This was highlighted by the treacherous insurrection and attack on Congress on January 6, 2021, and the continued spreading of the “big lie” about the 2020 Presidential election outcome. Many Evangelical and Catholic voters are experiencing a reckoning of their faith and feel called to oppose policies and approaches of division, racism, selfishness, cruelty, and exclusion. For many of these voters, their primary commitment is not to switch parties; it is to be faithful to their beliefs and convictions and make the common good their voting criteria. The behavior of many elected Republicans makes it difficult for them to continue to support them. They are open to dis-associating with Republicans in pursuit of the common good. In the 2020 election, we saw a 5-10% shift in Evangelical voters away from Republicans and are confident there is an additional 5-10% who are looking for an “exit ramp” from supporting the Republicans who sacrifice the common good. With intentional outreach and investment these voters are movable and will be willing to vote for Democrats.” **Doug Pagitt, Executive Director, www.VoteCommonGood.com**

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I’ve been waiting for decades for Christians to speak up about the need for a Democratic political movement.” **Moby, Musician, DJ, Author**

In 2016, an overwhelming majority of Christians, and specifically Evangelicals, embraced Donald Trump as their candidate for President and propelled his candidacy in the White House. In 2020, while many Christian Evangelicals held on and maintained their support for Trump, a portion carved out their own path, voting for Biden and discontinuing their previous support for Trump.

Research shows that identifying as an Evangelical was one of the biggest predictors of voting for Donald Trump. So our question was - what happened? What were the tipping points that moved them from full blown support of Trump to Biden?

To answer these questions, we embarked on a unique study using metaphor elicitation, a form of deep psychological, image-based research, to uncover the bigger story behind how a portion of Trump supporters changed their mind and voted for someone that many thought they'd never vote for.

Our work seeks to *uncover the why behind the what* and provide clear guidance to the governing parties of today to better meet the needs of the American people while delivering results that will change their lives for the better.

REGARDING EVANGELICALS

Evangelical voters are estimated to make up anywhere from 60-90 million Americans, and have been a source of significant power for Republican politicians since the '70s and '80s when the then candidate Ronald Reagan went to the National Association of Evangelicals and said "I know you can't endorse me. But I endorse you." He then proceeded to appoint people from the Evangelical community to his administration and since that time, Evangelicals as a voting bloc have made a significant impact in Republicans either winning or losing elections.

In the 2020 election, it's roughly estimated the 5-7% of Evangelical voters flipped from Trump to Biden (upwards of 10% in certain districts), representing a 4-6 point swing from 2016 to 2020 and approximately 2 million votes. According to Vote Common Good, a faith-based organization, at any given time, there are 12 million Evangelicals who are persuadable, of whom 5 million are absolutely gettable by Democrats.

These were game changing shifts in the vote that indicated significant movement from white Evangelicals towards Biden from Trump, arguably making the difference in Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin (please see appendix for more on this).

Of course, the question that really matters - can these Evangelicals who tipped to Biden vote for Democrats in 2022 and in 2024? The simple answer is yes, but Democrats must make an effort to secure their vote and broaden their tent. Right now, the kind of Evangelicals who voted for Biden do not perceive they have a home in either party, nor are they aware that many of the things they want, Biden has done. Democrats have some work to do.



A NOTE

Among major institutions, **there isn't universal agreement on how to classify Evangelicals.** While many religious affiliations are typed in using self-identification, only, Evangelicals tend to be typed in based on church attendance and/or attendance frequency. This behavioral component has the net effect of identifying only the most ardent of Evangelicals and excluding those on the periphery - those who may hold Evangelical beliefs, but aren't necessarily part of the Evangelical in-group.

The study which follows looks at **Evangelicals and other Christians (Baptists and Pentecostals) who described their faith as a very important component to their lives and decision making, but didn't necessarily go to church.** These were tippable voters who represent a real opportunity for the Democratic party, and yet, with the current classification of Evangelicals (who tend to exclusively vote Republican), they are a group that has slipped under the radar.

These voters, who are less tightly tied to the political aspects of Evangelical beliefs (pro-life personally, but pro-choice politically, pro-Israel but economic concerns override), and more **tightly tied to the teachings of Jesus (e.g. kindness, fruits of the spirit).**

This group does not have a home with either Democrats or Republicans, as they are today. They are a sizable group of voters who are largely unattended to (they feel abandoned by Trump) and they are gettable. In this author's opinion, there is both a substantive opportunity and need to expand outreach to these faith voters. Traditionally, the Democratic party's faith outreach has largely centered around Black churches, which is important. However, the party has an opportunity to expand their faith coalition beyond what it is today by speaking to, appreciating and acknowledging these Evangelicals - a significant coalition that includes white, Latino, AAPI voters, and Black voters.

"I consider myself a bad Christian. I try not to ever put myself or anyone on a pedestal. I think that's where we all go wrong. I try to use faith to where cruelty is not part of my decision making. **As a Christian - even though things don't align with the value system you may have politically, you don't take a knee jerk approach** towards something like, "Well, we have illegal immigration, and illegal immigrants are here, so let's pull them apart and throw their kids over here and their parents are here because that'll keep them coming back.

Well, that's real mighty Christian of you, isn't it? But I'm not going to do that. So it's things like that, not supporting things and **speaking out about issues that don't align sometimes with even Christians that go to church every Sunday** and they seem to think that's kosher. I'm not demonizing them at all, because I consider myself a poorly constructed Christian. But at the same time I'm like, "Look, I try not to be judgey, but that right there, pretty sure that's not what Jesus was teaching." - Steven, ND Evangelical

SUMMARY

How to Hold Those Who Tipped

- 1 Not all evangelicals are the cut from the same cloth. The ones who tipped are more about the teachings of Jesus than toeing the line, and **often feel like they don't belong in the evangelical community (or in the Democratic Party or with Trump Republicans). They need a home.**
- 2 **This is a vulnerable cohort - they tipped because they felt abandoned by Trump** and saw the disconnection, dysfunction, chaos, and cruelty he wrought. While they're pleased with the current calm, **they miss Trump's economy, they're not aware of what Biden has done, and they worry Biden is too old** and frail to wrangle our split nation back together.
- 3 These voters are **looking for a leader who feels strong, stable, and visible (e.g. Zelensky)**, and who acknowledges, appreciates, and attends to them.
- 4 More than anything, **they want the country to come back together by meeting in the middle, and believe people should identify as Americans first.** They value freedom and want to live unbothered in a country that thrives economically, restoring America as the bright, shining city on a hill.
- 5 **Democrats who want to hold these voters need to welcome them**, they need to message **pride in America and being American** and show how they're bringing the country forward and together. They need to talk about infrastructure and getting things done, and **talk about spiritual values in an authentic way that embraces kindness and strength.**

The background is a dark, almost black, space filled with dynamic, colorful splashes and geometric shapes. On the left, a large splash of bright blue liquid or energy radiates outwards. On the right, a similar splash of magenta and red is visible. In the center, there is a cluster of translucent, 3D geometric shapes, primarily cubes and rectangular prisms, in shades of red and blue. These shapes appear to be floating or falling, creating a sense of motion and depth. The overall effect is one of high-energy, abstract art.

THE WHY BEHIND THE WHAT

METAPHOR ELICITATION

WHY THE DIFFERENCE:

THE POWER OF DEEP LISTENING



In traditional focus groups, participants speak for an average **3-10 mins total**, sharing whatever thoughts they feel comfortable sharing publicly and are aware of, consciously.

With **polls**, researchers get off- the-cuff responses to closed-ended questions **for at most 10 minutes**.

In **METAPHOR ELICITATION**, participants are asked beforehand to spend several hours gathering images that resonate with them. Trained interviewers then enter into conversation with them for up to two hours in an open-ended discussion on their political thoughts and beliefs, in what often feels like a therapy session. Then, hundreds of hours are spent analyzing what participants have shared.

What this process does is unearth the raw, unvarnished truth - what people truly think and feel.

THE PARTICIPANTS

Who: We spoke to **24 self-identified Christian voters (primarily Evangelical/Non-Denominationalists and also Pentocostal/Charismatics, Baptists/Fundamentalists)** who voted for Trump in 2016 and Biden in 2020.

Where: The voters came from **across the United States** - and were a representative sample across measures of race, income, education, location, and gender.

We Asked Participants to Bring In a Series of Metaphorical Images, Representing:

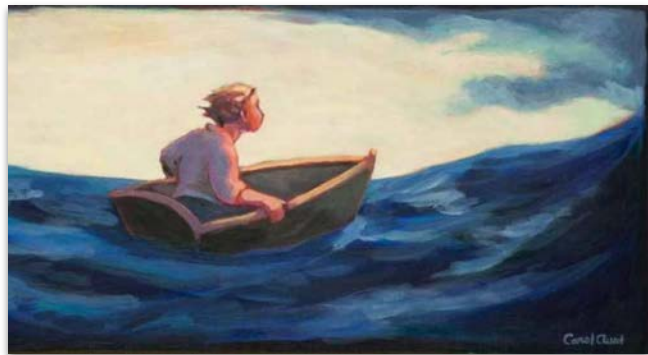
- Why they voted for Joe Biden, and not Donald Trump, in 2020.
- The ultimate moment they decided to not vote for Donald Trump in 2020.

We Also Explored:

- Their perception of America during Trump and Biden's presidencies.
- Their perception of Trump as a leader, Biden as a leader, and the kind of leader the country needed moving forward.

All imagery that follows, unless otherwise indicated, was provided by the research subjects.

AFTER VOTING FOR TRUMP IN 2016...



**THEY FELT
ABANDONED
AND
ISOLATED...**



“He absolutely did not get how people were feeling. It was supposed to be about how people were feeling. This wasn't even about politics. I just - **most of us just felt like we were on the swing, swinging alone without a real commander in chief**” - Leslie, ND

The circus had come to town and now all that was left were the broken pieces to clean up...





For this was the world that had been **UNLEASHED.**



They felt guilty and ashamed having voted for Trump.

Looking back on Trump's term in office, and even at moments throughout, their decision to vote for him in 2016 didn't sit right with them – inklings of guilt and shame began to arise as they witnessed his actions and their aftermath.

"It's embarrassing. **It's super embarrassing...** I felt singled out because **my husband didn't vote for him. My son didn't vote for him...** And then, **I felt like it was my fault because I voted for him...** That kind of came into play, too, where I was **feeling guilty.**" – Deb, ND



"There is no going back. There is no putting it back together because now Pandora's box has been opened and now we all peek inside."

– Cristy, ND



“I know that even though **Donald Trump comes off very abrasive, very brute and no filtered** and et cetera, we definitely needed a change to make sure that the world or that our country was going to get run maybe more so rigidly or structured. That was my hope when I had voted for him originally.” - Susan, ND

And should have known what they were getting into...

Nodding to “The Apprentice” and the titular “You’re fired!”, they expressed a certain degree of familiarity with Donald Trump that signaled what his presidency could be like – in other words, they didn’t go in completely blind.

“It’s just that we knew him. **We knew him from his reality shows... We felt like we knew him. He was in our living rooms already.** I watched him all. I’m guilty. I don’t even remember what it was called, but we all got a big kick out of it, because everyone was fired. And I think we were all... **I was comfortable thinking, okay, he’s been in my home.**” - Deb, ND

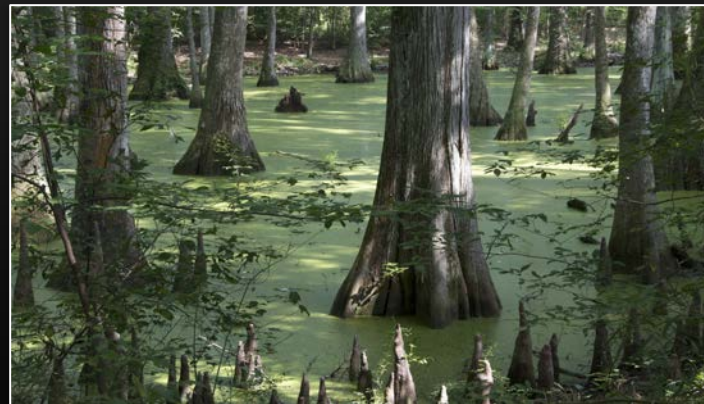
Yet ultimately, they overlooked it.

“[I was] dreaming and hoping [of] bringing jobs back and making America great again... The USA was always ambitious, and with the Democrats, that ambition was... being lost, because America was focusing too much on identity issues, like empowering women, minorities in general, black people, LGBTQ, foreigners. They were forgetting to focus on the economics still. Trump would be focusing on the economics.”

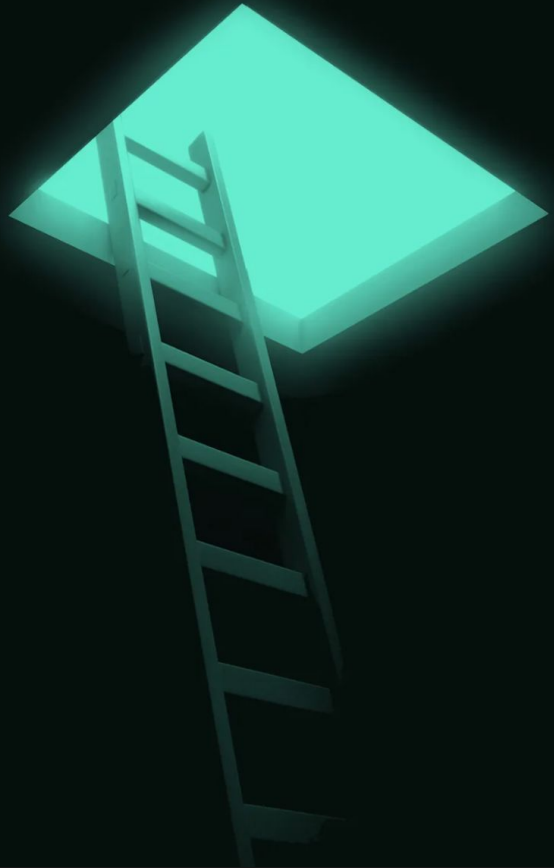
- Davi, ND



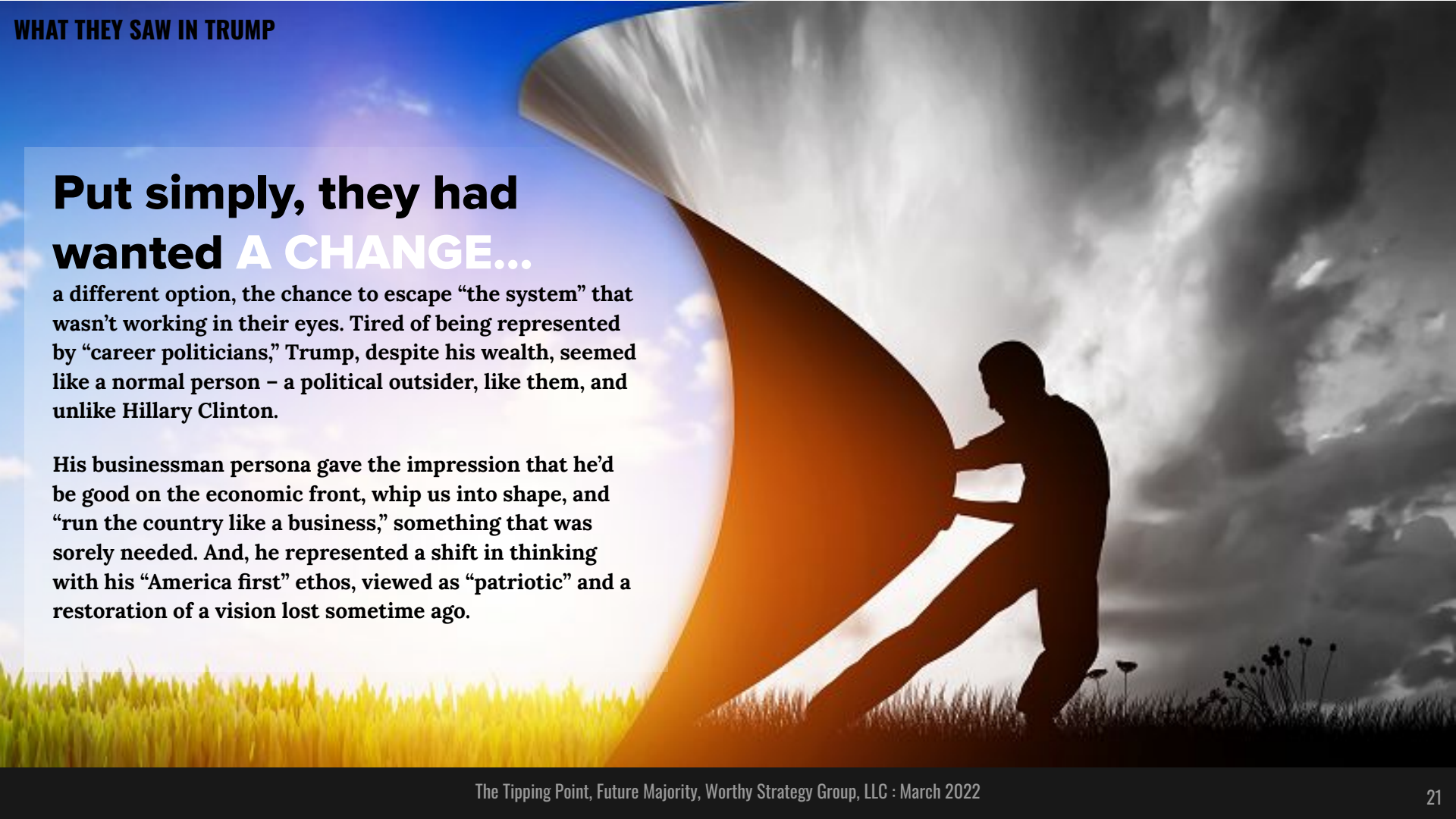
“Trump came along and **was something different**. When he said ‘I’ll **drain this swamp** and the people who hang around DC and are lobbyists and things like that, **they’re not going to have any power anymore. I’m going to do what the people want.’ ... it resonated with me.**” - Brian, ND



“I voted for Trump because **I refused to vote for Hillary Clinton**. Not because she’s a woman, but because she used to get rappers off the hook in Arkansas, back in the ‘90s. **I didn’t trust Hillary Clinton. She had just a lot of shady things going on, [like] the email scandal.**” - Krysti, ND



And after all was
said and done,
they just **needed**
to escape.



Put simply, they had wanted **A CHANGE...**

a different option, the chance to escape “the system” that wasn’t working in their eyes. Tired of being represented by “career politicians,” Trump, despite his wealth, seemed like a normal person – a political outsider, like them, and unlike Hillary Clinton.

His businessman persona gave the impression that he’d be good on the economic front, whip us into shape, and “run the country like a business,” something that was sorely needed. And, he represented a shift in thinking with his “America first” ethos, viewed as “patriotic” and a restoration of a vision lost sometime ago.



“This is my main reason: **he was not a politician.** I know he was this celebrity figure, but in my mind, he was just a businessman, he was an **American.** And when I found out he was going to run, I felt like he was running on a platform of, ‘**I’m just a person, I’m an American like all of you guys, I haven’t been involved in all this political corruption** for the last however many years, I’m going to support your rights and do what you would do. I’m just a regular person like you, I’m not a corrupt politician.’ ... I was **feeling hopeful** because I was like, oh yes, **finally someone who has not been in politics... someone who’s come in from a clean slate,** if you will. So it was a fresh person who’s not a politician.” – Stacy, F/B



From Trump, they wanted to see...

A strong, efficient version of America that operated like a good business, with Donald Trump as the man they thought could deliver. He could “cut the red tape,” bring about different, more business-like approaches, and foster a “collaborative yet competitive” spirit that would strengthen our economy, put America first, and prevent “little countries from pushing us around.”

“I was all for the **America first** as far as **getting off imports**, fair trade, **try to have either a balanced budget or... not spending it to the end and just keep raising the debt ceiling** and all of those kind of things. And I think **there was definitely some accomplishment there.**”

- Adam, P/C



“I got some of the things early on that I was hoping for. **Really strong economy, stronger markets, border control wasn’t an issue... stronger military [and] national defense.**” - Stephen, ND



And in many ways, Trump delivered...

The economy was strong and businesses thrived, VA hospitals were overhauled to deliver better outcomes, and anti-abortion, pro-life views were amplified. Most importantly, he stuck to promises made on the campaign trail and after, like moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and beginning construction on the border wall.


"I like that he always backed up Israel and he spoke about pro-life." - Osmara, ND

"I'm a veteran. He whipped the VA hospitals into shape. I respect and honor the work he did for the veterans. Also, I respect that he reached out to the church and let the church know it was okay for the church to be the church." There wasn't going to be any pushback from Washington regarding church matters. It was okay to say God bless, do things that were religious without having the government step in and push back." - Derrick, ND

"When Trump said he was going to do something, he did a really good job at sticking to those promises...One of those things that sticks out in my mind had to do with Israel and the embassy in Jerusalem... He talked about doing that and he did it." Frankly, that did take some guts. **The wall was another one."** - Michelle, ND

"One of the things that Trump did well...businesses were thriving. If you look pre-pandemic, jobs were growing. The job market was thriving...there was a lot more financial security at the time." If you look at the stock market, it was up. It was growing. I have to give credit to Trump did to bring back those results." - Polina, F/B

"He was getting campaign promises done. I'll say the wall - he actually started on it" imposing the tax regulations or the tariffs. He got those done in the first couple years." - Joe, F/B

A red knitted heart is mounted on a brown, textured wall. A large, jagged crack runs vertically through the heart, splitting it into two halves. The crack extends above and below the heart, revealing a lighter, greyish material underneath the brown surface. The heart is made of a thick, textured yarn.

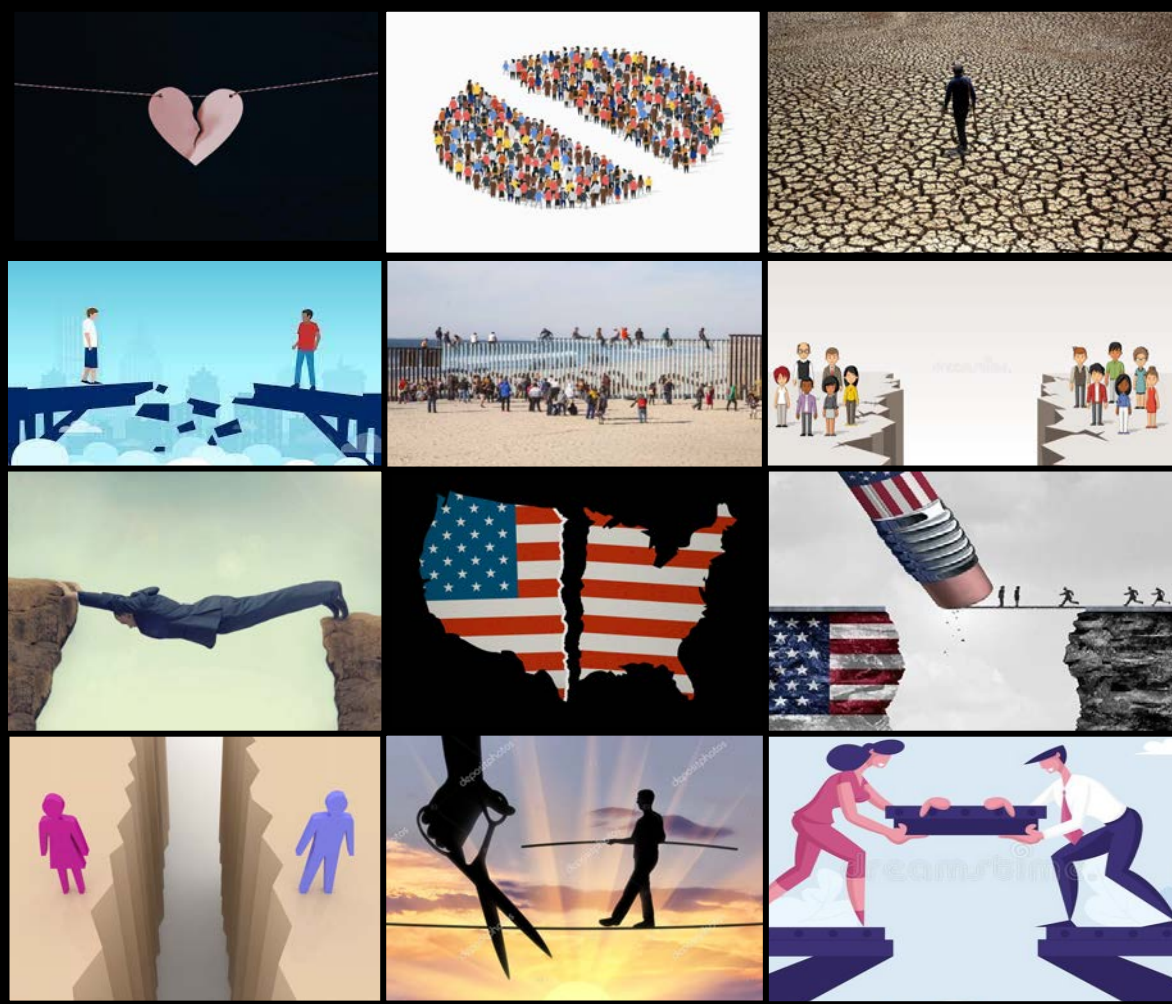
But a crack had formed, even though they didn't know.

“The heart represents **brokenness** really... fractured relationships, broken relationships, feelings... you can see in the photo **there's a crack right through it. That's not getting repaired.** That's always going to be there... Honestly, I think in my eyes, **the crack happened the day Trump was elected...** In the past there's been presidents elected that [weren't] my first choice... but they were elected and so we're going to support the person who is leading our country. That didn't seem to be the case with Donald Trump. There wasn't going to be any supporting of Donald Trump... That divide to me started right when he was elected ... **I think the crack happened then, but it wasn't felt, at least for me. For a while we chugged on just fine.**”

- Cristy, ND

THE UNIFYING DIVIDE

Across our participants, the pain of the country being divided was real. They had voted for Trump to bring the country back together, and instead he had torn it even further apart.



The Trump Post-Mortem

For these voters who tipped to Biden, for some it happened in an instant, for others, over years.

Yet core themes underpinned all of these decisions to make a change - disconnection, dysfunction, chaos, and cruelty. As an agent of chaos – not for the good of the country, but for himself – Trump tore the country apart, making what once functioned, dysfunctional, and inspired cruelty against people who weren't his supporters and were different from his supporters.

He spoke out when he should've been silent, and remained silent when he should've spoken out. He inspired division, anger, and hatred, he harmed the country's reputation and he mishandled COVID.

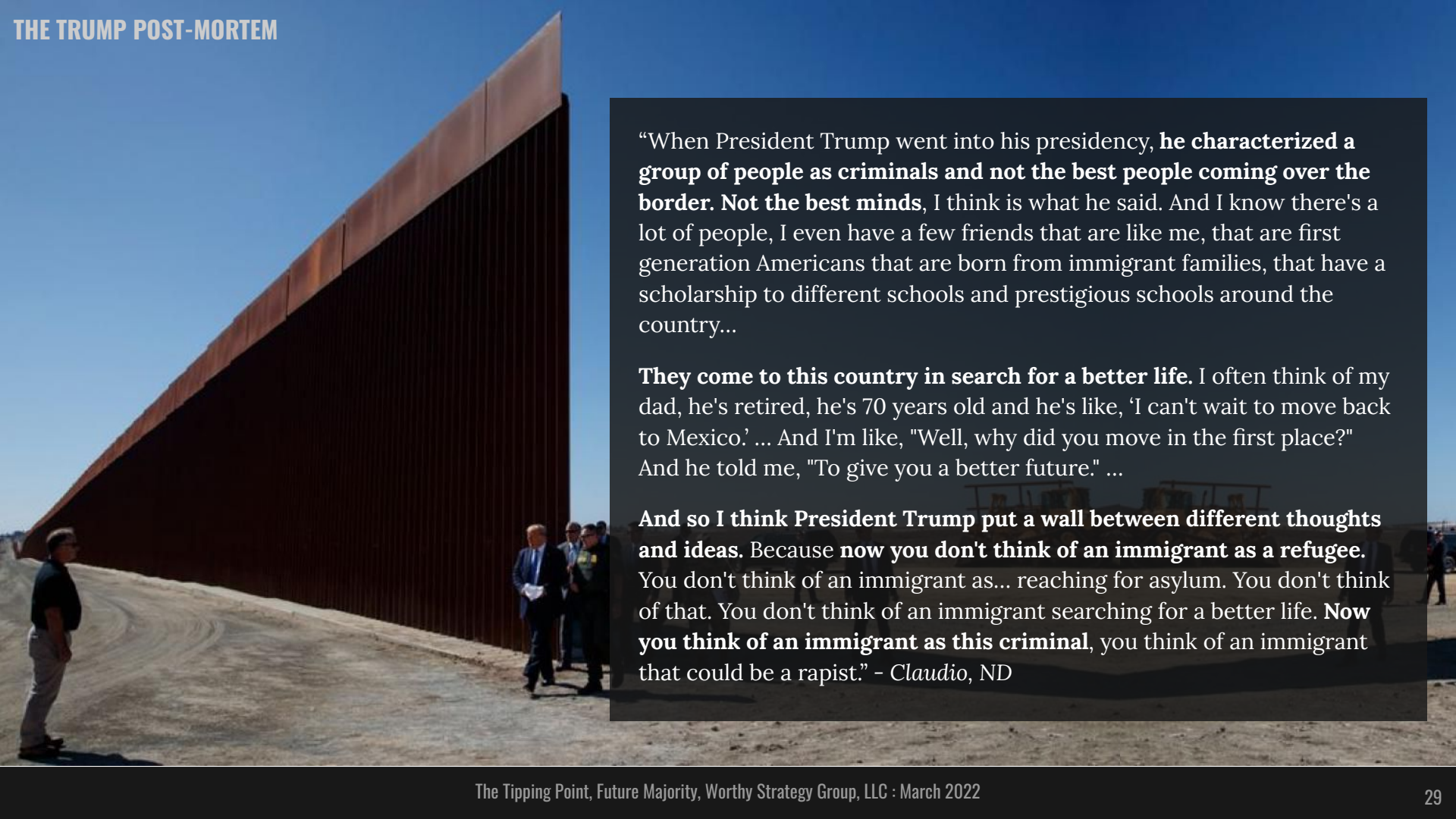


Trump Exacerbated Existing Divisions



“I wanted the hate to stop - all the chaos and people fighting in the street and all of this division to stop. And the only way I could help do that was to vote against Trump. There was so much hatred going around, so much arguing and bad things, and **bad things come when people have hate [seeing the KKK] was the moment that I was like, I cannot support anything that has anything to do with hating each other, hating people who are different, hating people who don't support Trump, hating anything to do with that.**” - Stacy, F/B

“I couldn't vote for Trump again. **Charlottesville was a tipping point for me when he made the statement about nice people on both sides.** The way that he, that I interpreted that his tone was that we got to defend these people that are making trouble, if you will. So rather than trying to bring the sides together, **I feel like he just created more division.**” - Irene, ND



“When President Trump went into his presidency, **he characterized a group of people as criminals and not the best people coming over the border. Not the best minds**, I think is what he said. And I know there's a lot of people, I even have a few friends that are like me, that are first generation Americans that are born from immigrant families, that have a scholarship to different schools and prestigious schools around the country...

They come to this country in search for a better life. I often think of my dad, he's retired, he's 70 years old and he's like, 'I can't wait to move back to Mexico.' ... And I'm like, "Well, why did you move in the first place?" And he told me, "To give you a better future." ...

And so I think President Trump put a wall between different thoughts and ideas. Because **now you don't think of an immigrant as a refugee.** You don't think of an immigrant as... reaching for asylum. You don't think of that. You don't think of an immigrant searching for a better life. **Now you think of an immigrant as this criminal**, you think of an immigrant that could be a rapist.” - Claudio, ND

And Encouraged the Crazies to Come out of the Closet.

“I think I mentioned this before with **Trump planting these selfish seeds in our country, it gave people a more authoritarian feel that they can do what they wanted to do, or what they been wanting to do.** And Trump opened the levies for that. And it started creating this chaos, uplifting individuals that didn't need to be uplifted and needed encouragement. And needed the floodgates to open for them to start **spewing their agendas and ideologies and selfish and righteous thinking...** It just gave room for them to grow and to feel like they were in power once again. And that they were the dominant force in this country.” - Israel, ND

“The nation, to some extent, had hidden pockets of division anyway, but I think it brought out of the closet, so to speak, everybody who wanted to be divisive. **There are a lot of cuckoos that came out of the closet, people who wouldn't have even have been given a voice back in the day** came out of the closet. **People who just say the very first thing that comes to their head without thinking,** everybody came out and just started yacking all over the place and saying things that were crazy. Voices were given to people who had absolutely zero sense. They were all claiming to be supporters of Donald Trump.” - Derrick, ND



Trump Whipped up Hate and Confusion through Social Media and Bullying



"They were just shocked about Trump and how he handled things. That can be part of the embarrassment of having **a president that's like a dictator in a way, but just talks down to people.** In the press room, he was terrible, and he liked to have his press conferences to show that he was in charge, but he was just so dismissive of the press." - Joe. F/B

"It was the Pocahontas. Because my husband is of color, my husband's African American. That whole thing became, and I think that started the whole thing where **they were saying that he was racist, and it is, because it's like, again, we don't really need to call people character names...** it just seemed like it was easy for him to type it where you or I would be like, That could be very hurtful, and I don't want to represent myself or come across like that, because that's not who I am." - Deb, ND

"I think he spoke before, say, I guess the most recent stuff was the pandemic early in '20. And I think with the whole mask thing and the problem comes down I think where he really kind of alienated himself with most average say Republicans or working people or just average people, was **he couldn't just have a different opinion. He had to ridicule the person until it was so bad that they left in tears kind of thing. And he really just turned a lot of people off that way.**" - Adam, P/C

And made the US a laughing stock.

“I don't like that the leader of our country was meeting with people like Kim Jong-un... He was friends with freaking Putin. I mean, the guy who's genociding his own people. Come on! And he's not even as bad as Kim Jong-un... These are the people he was meeting with. He tried to cut ties with the EU and with the Paris Accord and I'm like, **‘This feels real third world country.’** Separating us from the rest of the world isn't ever a good idea... **He made us look like idiots.”**

- Krysti, ND



“We're the laughing stock of the world, like everyone is laughing at the United States because of how our president is acting and what he's saying. He wasn't a good representation of what the majority of the people in this country want or stand for.” - Stacy, F/B



“Trump messed up the international relationships with a lot of countries.” - Davi, ND

Worst of all, he Played with People's Lives.

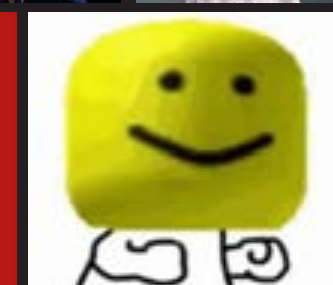
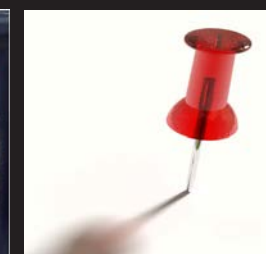
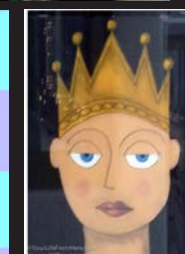
Often characterized as a toddler who threw his toys and screamed when he didn't get his way, participants were aghast by Trump's mishandling of the pandemic, and how he would risk so many lives with his reckless speech and actions.

"I'm thinking that Donald Trump had the world in his hands. America was his oyster. **He could have been great. He could have had eight years easy, and he blew it.** Imagine that the world was his oyster, he literally had the world in his hands, what did he do with that world? Did he continue holding it? What did he do with it where he blew it? **He played with it like it was a toy. He disrespected it.** He didn't acknowledge it for all of its very beauty and all the differences and for all the beauty that it expressed from the different people within it. He dishonored, he disrespected all the beauty that the country had to offer. He put in its place his vision of what he thought was beautiful." - Derrick, ND

TRUMP PERCEPTIONS

When asked to select images and archetypes that pointed to the type of leader that Trump has been for the country, **our participants notably selected images that referenced a split personality, chaos and anger, clownery, strength and self-dealing, and swamp creatures, as well as animals who scurried away.**

All of this points to perceptions of Trump as an agent of chaos, someone who is in it for himself, someone who will abandon you, and ultimately, is not working in the best interests of others.



“At times it made me feel angry, how is this guy still there?”

How is this guy allowed to be president, being irresponsible the way he has been? Nobody really stepping up to confront him on that, to hold a mirror up to his face and show him that what he's doing wasn't right and wasn't right for the country and for the livelihood, in the future of our kids here.

*If you were to hold up a mirror to Donald Trump, what would he see if he really looked in the mirror? Very **selfish, arrogant, pompous, spineless...ultimately just selfish, a person who only thinks about their own wellbeing.***”

- Israel, ND



**The irony was, the reasons they voted for Trump
were the same reasons they voted him out.
(And they're hoping Biden can get the job done,
but aren't sure he's up for the task)**

CONNECTION



They were looking to
bring the country
together...



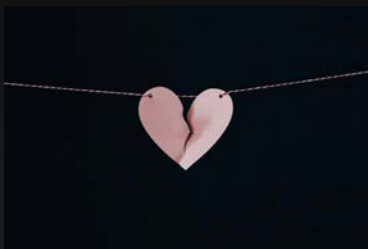
and instead saw
him tear it
apart.



“We were going to have **all people contributing** to the so called workings of our country. This was my hope where we were going to take the country. That people were going to... those **multiple people from multiple parts of our country helping to continue to help it work - collaboration.**”

- Duane, ND

“Trump did a lot of things to get people worked up. **When you’re the leader of the country, it should only be about all of us together, but he kept making it us vs. them** - the democratic party - and that’s a whole group of people - millions of people in this country.”
- Stacy, FB



RESTORATION



They were looking to restore America, domestically and on the global stage...



and instead saw him diminish it, inspiring chaos and hatred within and mockery internationally.



“Trump said he would make America great again, making it a godly filled nation that restores peace instead of chaos.”

- Osmara, ND



“People started seeing us as a joke, **we were like [the] punchline to people in other countries' jokes, and Trump didn't care** as long as he was president, it didn't matter to him.”

- Israel, ND



FREEDOM



They were looking
to be more free...



“When I was a child, we were taught **this is the greatest country in the world, this is home of the free, this great democracy** where anyone can seek asylum, can get help, where our military will defend us, where we're all just free...”

But between the pandemic and the fear and chaos Trump inspired, they felt trapped in their heads and in their homes.

“... and I feel like **Donald Trump kind of in a way took some of those freedoms.** I wanted to get them back.”- Stacy, F/B



TRANSFORMATION



They were looking to see the country transformed to a better version of itself - a better economy, better infrastructure, better healthcare, and thought Trump would transform as well once he assumed the office...

“I was hoping Trump was going to really push some of the strengths of our economy, our country, and help us lead to change.” -Duane, ND



But instead, they changed, realizing that Trump would not change the country or himself for the better.

“Trump turned out to be such a barracuda, I mean, such a "my way or the highway" kind of guy. I didn't know that about him when I voted for him the first time.” -Irene, ND



After everything – what Trump did (or didn't do), praised, influenced, or condemned – **the change they wanted so badly didn't happen.** In fact, the country and its people may have ended up in a worse place than where they started. **They wanted a shakeup, but what they got was a volatile, unpredictable, and unstable upheaval.**



BEFORE WE CONTINUE: A NOTE ON RELIGION

While Trump claimed he was a Christian, many saw it as performative – taking “strands that were designed to attract Evangelicals” that were ultimately hollow. Many felt that his words and actions were at odds with Christian principles, and couldn’t see how they were being lived out. In contrast, Biden lives morally, exhibiting the “fruits of the spirit.”



“[Trump] seemed like all **he wanted to do was represent Christian values. And I think he kind of hijacked that to his own benefit.** If we voted for him, he was going to bring people of this nation closer to God. And now he's been president, we all know he did the exact opposite of that...People like me only wanted other people to see that **God is about love, helping one another. He never came with a big entourage. It seemed like Trump just flaunted the riches he had. And flaunted his power. Jesus Christ was never like that.**”
- Osmara, ND

“[Biden] definitely has **a ton more character being a more Christian person,** - he's Catholic, but we're all looking to the same God - and **it's what his faith does, and how he walks the faith that makes it real, versus Trump.** He carried the Bible down, tore through protesters... and then just held it up. What is that? If you live by that, then you wouldn't be saying the things that you were saying. And so I just feel like Biden - **he does have the faith, he is sincere and he wants to bring people together.**”
- Kimberly, ND

A NOTE ON RELIGION

These voters represent a different type of Christian – those who aren't told who to vote for by a pastor and dutifully follow suit, but rather try to live by the values Jesus espoused and want to see those values held in high esteem by our president.



"I consider myself a bad Christian... **I try to use faith [as a] greater good, where cruelty is not part of my decision making.** If something's coming off as cruel to somebody else, that's where faith comes in, I think that there should be a degree of care and empathy involved." – Stephen, ND

"I think it's wrong because **if Trump wants to represent God in the Bible, God always says care for the oppressed, the widow, the orphan. He doesn't say care for those who are orphan in your country, or your city, or who look like you.**

He says care for **all orphans, all widows, all poor.** And I think that **Trump forgot about that.**"

– Osmara, ND



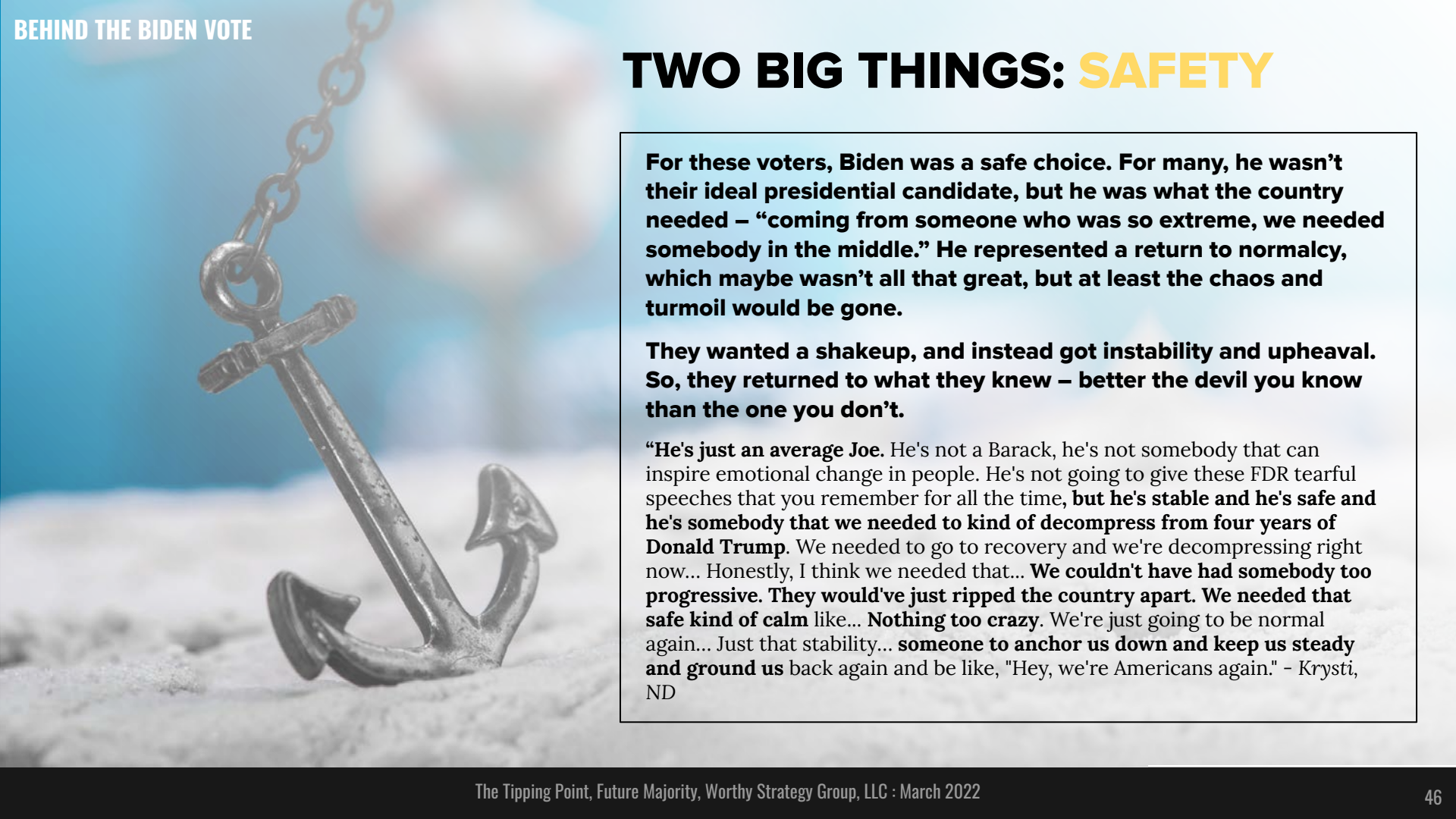


“Even though things don't align with the value system you may have in a political sense, you don't just take a knee jerk approach towards something like, “We have illegal immigration, and illegal immigrants are here, so let's pull them apart and throw their kids over here and their parents here because that'll keep them coming back. Well, that's real mighty Christian of you, isn't it? Look, I try not to be judgy, but that right there, pretty sure that's not what Jesus was teaching.” - Stephen, ND

A dramatic image showing a hand in a dark suit and white cuff reaching down from the top left towards a hand emerging from the ocean. The hand from the ocean is splashing water, and the background is a cloudy sky over the sea.

SO, HOW DID WE GET TO JOE BIDEN?





TWO BIG THINGS: SAFETY

For these voters, Biden was a safe choice. For many, he wasn't their ideal presidential candidate, but he was what the country needed – "coming from someone who was so extreme, we needed somebody in the middle." He represented a return to normalcy, which maybe wasn't all that great, but at least the chaos and turmoil would be gone.

They wanted a shakeup, and instead got instability and upheaval. So, they returned to what they knew – better the devil you know than the one you don't.

"He's just an average Joe. He's not a Barack, he's not somebody that can inspire emotional change in people. He's not going to give these FDR tearful speeches that you remember for all the time, but he's stable and he's safe and he's somebody that we needed to kind of decompress from four years of Donald Trump. We needed to go to recovery and we're decompressing right now... Honestly, I think we needed that... We couldn't have had somebody too progressive. They would've just ripped the country apart. We needed that safe kind of calm like... Nothing too crazy. We're just going to be normal again... Just that stability... someone to anchor us down and keep us steady and ground us back again and be like, "Hey, we're Americans again." – Krysti, ND

TWO BIG THINGS: HOPE

Additionally, there was the hope that they would be taken care of and the things that they wanted to see or happen during Trump's term might happen during Biden's.

Biden represented hope that their needs, and the needs of the nation, would be attended to, not played with and then discarded like a toy.

“He's looking at that airplane, **dreaming**... And we have the sun that I would say more like a sunset, than sunrise. **The airplane [is] going, leaving, taking off.** So I see that with Joe Biden – **I didn't want to vote for him. Trump didn't really fulfill things I was expecting.** So it's a mix of sadness and **[the] need for Joe Biden to work...**

Things have been happening [for] the best and currently, [there] is hope [for] something towards the future... Expecting seeing a light on the end of the tunnel. That would be the sun that's representing the light on the end of the tunnel... I'm just seeing the flight taking off and **hoping I'm inside of the flight, on the next flight, when it takes off. Hoping that I am part of Joe Biden's administration, [and] the population is in that plane.**” – *Davi, ND*



“Biden was a much more humble man, much less drama... **I was tired of the drama and I wanted peace, unity,** no more drama... **Biden was the guy who was going to come to the office and there would be no drama...** The person who's holding their hands and looking at the sun, the serene, that would be representative of it, because **I knew that every day I wouldn't have to hear something crazy being said or being done. Those days were over.** We had peace at least coming from my TV.” - *Derrick, ND*

CALMNESS, STABILITY, & PEACE

After the volatility and turmoil that characterized Trump's presidency, Biden brings a more level-headed demeanor to the White House and with that, a sense of stability, calmness, and peace. Free from a president who brought drama, behaved erratically, and exacerbated tensions at every turn, Biden's even-keeled temperament is refreshing.

“**I don't have to think about or worry about what he's going to say...** and what he's going to do to jeopardize our situation in our country and our relationship with other countries. **With Trump, I had to see what he was saying in his press conference, because you never knew what he was going to say...** With Biden now, it's more... **I know you're going to take good care of us. You're going to take good care of this country. You're going to do what it has to be done and civil and professional presidential manner. I think that's what gives me the sense of the structure and stability,** that we're not going to teeter back and forth. One day we're feeling the one way, the next day we're feeling this way, just being erratic.” - *Israel, ND*

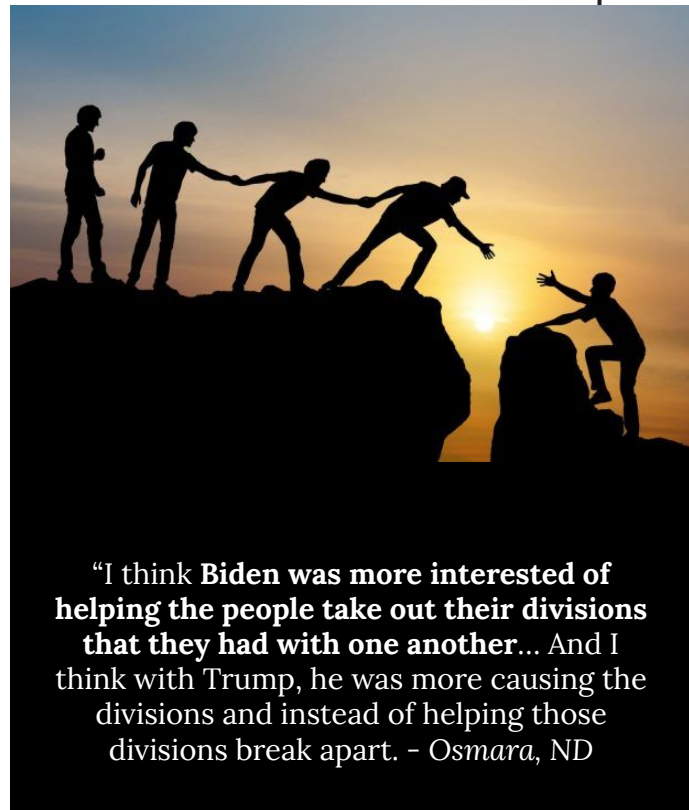
“I do think **we're in a calmer place.** And I think **things had gotten so volatile and so argumentative that I don't know how we were going to get out of that without somebody like Biden, who could bring that calmness** and that demeanor to the White House and country.” - *Irene, ND*

TRYING TO BRING US BACK TOGETHER, NOT DIVIDE US

Where Trump was dividing us, they saw Biden as wanting and trying to bring us back together. Whether he succeeds or not is another story, but his efforts to mitigate and reduce racial tensions, be inclusive of all regardless of race or gender, and generally advocate for connection are a much appreciated change from the Trump administration's words and actions.

"Biden gave me the feeling of being more **inclusive**... That everyone was welcome. **You're not shutting people out for religion, or what their work is, or what the color of their skin, is or where they were born**, or that type of thing. You're not drawing the line and shutting people out, [and] basically **being a good human** being." - Cristy, ND

"At least from what he was saying in campaigns, **it felt like Biden was more inclusive - that he wanted more people of color in his government and in his party, in his Congress** and things like that, in the Senate. And I think it felt like **he wanted more diversity and equality**, which is I think what all of us want... I just did not feel that way about Trump." - Katie, F/B



"I think Biden was more interested of helping the people take out their divisions that they had with one another... And I think with Trump, he was more causing the divisions and instead of helping those divisions break apart. - Osmara, ND

Bennett Chattanooga Times Free Press



DIPLOMATIC & BETTER ON INTERNATIONAL POLICY

Instead of cozying up to contentious leaders (e.g. Trump with Kim Jong-un and Putin), Biden is condemning and keeping them at arm's length. His tactful diplomacy and ability to coordinate world leaders carries weight for these voters who want him to restore our international reputation. They are also watching what Biden does around Ukraine carefully.

"It comes down to diplomacy... foreign policy. I think that people in different countries weren't taking us seriously anymore. They wouldn't speak to Trump and he would alienate them all. And so having somebody like Joe Biden, he's reopened the channels and communication between different countries."
- Chris, ND

"Looking at our current situation with the war in Ukraine. I said that it's awesome to see Joe Biden reaching across party lines and reaching across the aisle. And I guess the counter argument could be like, **"Well, Trump was doing the same thing. That's why he's holding that meeting with President Putin of Russia."** But to me, there's a difference between having a dialogue and also aligning yourself with Russia. **I don't get the sense that President Joe Biden is for Russia, whatsoever. You hear in the State of the Union address, condemning Russia and condemning the actions that took place."**

- Claudio, ND

PROFESSIONAL, RELATABLE, EXPERIENCED, & KIND.

Biden represented a return to a familiar, comfortable place. As an experienced politician, they trusted him to not only know how to get things done, but get them done. They could also tell his heart was (and is) in the right place – that, coupled with his down to earth personality, makes him seem like a real person, in contrast to Trump's elitism.

"I liked that he had served four years under Obama. Plus, he served in the Senate, so I knew he had leadership skills... **I trusted Joe Biden because he had a proven record in the Senate and as vice president."** - Derrick, ND

"I always say this to my friends. **If you wanted to go to a picnic, who would you choose to go to a picnic with?** I mean, **you saw Joe Biden** in, I don't know whether it was Ukraine or Poland **eating pizza with people. You saw him hugging a child.** With Trump, I felt like it was a photo op." - Leslie, ND



"I think he's compassionate with the people. When he speaks, it's a level that you and I would understand more than somebody that owns 5 million things, which is shiny and nice, but we can't really relate to that nor can they relate back... **When he speaks to us, it's like you can understand that he understands...** I would think that he would have the best interest of the people in mind, more so than the bottom line with money. I think that **he genuinely cares about people."** - Deb, ND



“The fact with the **student loans, that he's talking about it.** I know my husband recently told me, ‘With the state of economy and everything going on, well, Biden says he can't eliminate all of the student loans, but he said he would at least like to **eliminate at least \$10,000 from that person's loans.**’ So I thought, something is better than nothing because **in the past, those talks have really been ignored.** Nobody has really talked about them as direct[ly] as Biden has.” - Osmara, ND

HOPE FOR WHAT?

When they voted for Biden in 2020, they did so with the hope that certain things would happen or come to fruition, such as cancelling student loan debt, inspiring more respect for women, and a calm, unifying energy to settle over the country, replacing the frenzied one that preceded it.

“Unfortunately **I saw a lot of men have this mentality that they have this power over women and they can treat women a certain way. And that really, really came out when Trump came into office.** There were some things that the media showed of Trump, some of the stuff that he said that I'm not going to say on here, but I'm sure you know what I'm talking about, when he was talking about women. And I think a lot of that has a lot to do with how men started to treat women when Trump was in office... And so **that's why I voted for Biden, hoping things would get better.**” - Meaghan, ND

“Obviously this is more of like a business office or an operation and everything is everywhere. We're picking up, we're running, we're everywhere. It's just chaos. **That is absolutely one of my guiding factors for the hope and voting for Joe Biden was hopefully we can get these papers together. People are not frantically in a craze on top of the desk type of thing. We're not at each other's throats we're not reaching for things that are too high. But we can all work as a unit together.**” - Susan, ND

HOPE FOR WHAT?

They also hoped for an improvement to our healthcare system that reduces costs for individuals and families; for families, ideologically divided under Trump, to come together and love again; and ultimately, for something better – this was a fragile hope that the past four years weren't for nothing, and that there was something brighter and better ahead.

"I was hoping to see some improvement with the healthcare. I don't think this one is easy and don't think anyone really has a very good answer for it. **Ultimately, I'd really like to see some free healthcare in this country because paying \$5,000 for an ambulance is kind of ridiculous.**" – Michelle, ND

"What I hope to see with Biden as president is **to see our country become stronger and more unified and I hope to see more people love each other**, instead of being split... Even with my family, I've just seen a lot of people just hate on one another just because of, they didn't vote for Biden or they did vote for Biden. I have family that stopped talking to people who voted for Trump and vice versa. And so it's just, **with Biden being in office, I hope to see people come together again.**" – Meaghan, ND



"It symbolizes hope, **like out of all the garbage, the heaping garbage like grows a flower. So the hope that there has to be something better than what we're currently living amongst.** Something has to come out of this. There must be something better." – Cristy, ND



HOW IT'S GOING WITH BIDEN



HOW IS BIDEN DOING?

In the eyes of our participants, **Biden was both a vehicle to escape Trump and an agent of hope to achieve what they had hoped Trump would achieve** - infrastructure, better healthcare, a stronger, more unified nation, and a restoration of the United States' global status.

And yet, while our participants appreciated the sense of calm they felt with Biden, **they wondered if he had done anything at all, they worried about his age and frailty, and they wanted to know how he was going to be able to take on the tough challenges of the day**, walking the tightrope of domestic and international politics.

"I wouldn't want his job. I think he's done a good job. **He's held everything together. He's kept people as calm as he can, especially now. We got all these ping pong balls.** Here's a pandemic, here's a war, here's this. I think **we've all stayed pretty steady regardless** of what's going on." - Deb, ND

"He's trying to do this **tightrope walk that pleases both progressive Democrats as well as moderate Democrats.** I think he has accepted that Republicans aren't going to work with him too much, but **he's trying not to lose anybody. He's trying to do something.**" - Brian, ND



HOW IS BIDEN DOING?

When asked to select images and archetypes that pointed to the type of leader that Biden has been for the country, our participants notably selected images that were soft, comforting, flexible, non-offensive, old(er), and passive.

Describing Biden as everything from a floppy noodle to an old PC, **these ideas suggested that Biden is viewed as weak, non-offensive, old, safe, and soft, all while navigating immensely challenging situations. This was in stark contrast to how Trump was characterized.**

Ultimately, Biden was described as a passive agent, letting things happen vs. making them happen.



WHAT TO DO BEFORE HIS TERM IS UP?

When asked what they'd like to see Biden do before his term ends, participants provided a clear list of desired actions. At the top: getting inflation under control. Feeling the squeeze of increasing prices across the board and the burden of seemingly unfair taxation, they want a concrete plan to ease the strain of their pocketbooks, and then to see that plan executed.



Prevent Inflation

"Let's talk about **ways that we can prevent inflation**...where we can ensure that employees are given opportunities to grow and earn in line with inflation. Most people do not make as much to be able to afford things in line with inflation." - Polina, F/B



Fix Unfair Taxation

"**Manage the finances of the country** a little bit better... **make sure the burden isn't laid upon the middle class...there are very, very wealthy people that get away without paying any taxes,** and I pay a lot of taxes and I don't think that's fair." - Derrick, ND



Make a Plan

"I'd like to **hear more about what they're doing**... I'd like to see him go on TV and lay out some of his plans on..." "Hey, look, this is the way it is, but we're going to try to whatever to work this [out]." - Adam, P/C

WHAT TO DO BEFORE HIS TERM IS UP?

Additionally, they want to see bold ideas to lead us into the future, for Biden to listen to the people and take their perspective into account, and for him to mean what he says – no retractions.



Listen & Be Transparent

"I would tell them to **listen to the people a little bit more closely**... Sometimes he retracts from what he says. I would say **stay the course and double down on what you say**. Because he does this sometimes where he said something, and then they try to spin it in another way where, "No, he actually meant this." He needs to speak up for himself and say it clear." – *Israel, ND*


Be Bold

"It's time for him to **be a little bit bolder, more dramatic action**. Republicans probably aren't going to go along with it anyway, but show the people that you're going to try for some new things, and for some real change and be bold and just go for it...Environmentally, come out with some bold new objectives. "Hey, I know car companies don't like it, but by 2028, we got to be at this point. And we're going to put even more money into solar and wind power, and we're not going to give the big subsidies to coal anymore."
– *Brian, ND*



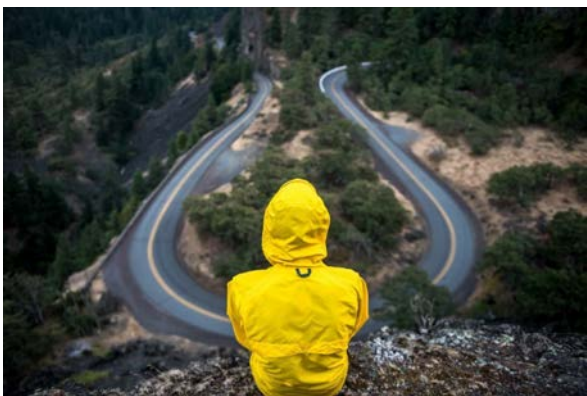
WHERE IS THE COUNTRY NOW?

SLOWLY COOLING DOWN




“What's happening is that there is a cooling of the fire, a fire that erupted in the past, hopefully there is some very important knowledge that has been thrown into that fire, and different actions to cool the fire, but **there's still coals**. I don't feel like people are together in this country.” - Kimberly, ND

A BETTER PATH OR MAYBE THE SAME AS BEFORE



“It's making that U and goes back to where it was before... **And so I was thinking it's going to be the same with Trump or Biden**. In the end, the rich are going keep being richer and the poor are going to be struggling to make [it] through the months... **The ones who have the most power, the most money, they will have the most influence and they will dictate how part of society, a neighborhood, a city, a state, a country, how the world will be run and laws will be made around them [as] to favors themselves**. So that's it. In the end, we common folks, common mortal people, are going to be under them. And even with Democrats, left wing, they are all kind of... They're part of lobbies with companies. They kind of pretend to be pro-population, but the things that evolve for us common folks are really mild, while the richer are richer, richer, and richer.” - Davi, ND

A close-up photograph of four hands of different skin tones (light, medium, and dark brown) stacked together in a circular, interlocking fashion, symbolizing unity and teamwork. The hands are set against a light gray, textured background.

WHERE THEY WANT AMERICA TO HEAD

SEEKING THE GREATER GOOD

“You have an angelic figure and an arena of demons... I would put **the characters on the left as liberals and the right as a conservative...** and I think that **angelic figure's the greater good - the more heavenly being in the middle**, and that would be the thing that's at risk. In the middle, I think it would go back to where not everything's perfect, but **both sides feel like they're being adequately heard, served, and accounted for...** and **everybody feels like they're at least having some of their concerns have been addressed...** You're always going to have things in a system, where **not everybody's getting what they want at all times. That's almost a given with compromise.** People don't like to hear that.” - Stephen, ND

“That one is... It's rough, I'll be honest. It's prickly. There's a softness in the soil, but **the trees themselves are somewhat prickly until you get to the middle, and the middle's where I want to be.** I want to be in that place of **softness and yet intention.** It really represents **compromise** in regard to our political realm, if you will. I mean, it represents that coming together, that **growth on both sides**, because those prickly trees haven't blossomed yet. And so **there's a blossoming that happens** there, and **that's where we potentially are going to make progress** and change things up, so that we can really hear each other and then come to some kind of an agreement.” - Irene, ND



COEXISTING AS INDIVIDUALS, GROWING FORWARD

"It's about acceptance and unification. Acceptance for people's' differences, as well as coming together. **We may not like everything, but we're willing to support it. With this, I think we continue to move forward.** I think we continue to **grow and adapt.** I think we're focused on not just ourselves. So, there's selflessness aspects of this. *Where's America in this image?* I think it's the grass and prairie. It's funny, as I look closer at the picture, I can see all those windmills in the background. I do think we are now trying to make sure we're leading, trying to save the planet. Things that we've for granted for long time, we're now not. And **trying to make the right changes to continue to preserve what we have for ourselves... To me, I think it's also about legacy. What's the legacy we want to leave our kids or grandkids or descendants.** I think that's, at this point in my life, one of the most important things I'm trying to figure is, **what is my small part of the legacy of this world?"** – Duane, ND





COMING BACK TOGETHER AS AMERICANS FIRST

“It makes me proud to be an American... the picture of World War II that comes to mind – the Battle of Iwo Jima, where a bunch of **soldiers are carrying the American flag and they're helping each other**... It's not the fact that they're carrying or putting up the flag, but it's cool and awesome that they're **working together**. What I find interesting... is it's black and white... I can't tell the race. I can't tell who's in there... There could be an Asian American there... It could be myself, a Hispanic American. And **when we work all as a team, we can make this country take that leap forward.**” – Claudio, ND

“When the second world war ended and the image... in Iwo Jima when the soldiers held up the American flag. I think **even though they were in the war, that represented more of peace... Even though Donald Trump said, 'Make America great,'** this right here represents, well, **America was great when people came together** and defended the rights of the poor, the oppressed.” – Osmara, ND

CREATING A BOUNDLESS FUTURE WHERE EVERYONE MATTERS

“This image represents when you have more than what you need, to **build a longer table versus building a higher fence**. That really resonates with me. So the thought behind that was **in a country that feels like you have more than what you need, why not share that and open**, be open to others versus kind of shutting them out. **The table is never ending**. You can't optically really see the end of it and **so there's room for everybody there and if there's not scooch over...** With Trump, it felt like you kind of had to check a box to be able to sit at the table versus you can sit with us mentality.” – Cristy, ND

“Because it's who we are. **That is the core of America right there. We are a blended nation and that's our strength but it's only our strength when we're united**. It can be a detrimental thing when we're separated and we are, have been kind of separated and we're seen as detrimental in different ways. **We're coming together a little bit more, I think** in certain ways.” – Stephen, ND





WHAT KIND OF LEADER CAN GET US THERE?

- 01 | A leader with a plan who can take action, execute that plan, and fulfill promises
- 02 | Able to reduce the division & disconnection amongst people and unify us as a country
- 03 | Reaches across the aisle and can broker compromise
- 04 | A moderate and straddles the middle of the road politically
- 05 | Is not selfish and will listen to others, both advisors and voters
- 06 | Will work in the best interest of all citizens
- 07 | Has a calming, yet commanding presence

“They would have to have **knowledge and wisdom**... kind hearted... Experience in politics... Somebody **like Lady Liberty**. Somebody who has **strength, knowledge, wisdom, is a light to others**. Some beliefs – **if they're spiritual, that's awesome** – but just **beliefs in humanity**... somebody that has a lot of ethical integrity... And someone to **bring everyone together**.” – Adam, P/C

WE NEED A LEADER LIKE...



“**The eagle**. It takes care of its young until they're like 10 days [old]. And after that, they push them out of the nest and they[re] on their own... **They encourage them to be independent, and yet take care of them...** It's representative of what I want in a leader - somebody who's **regal, determined, dignified, & yet caring & nurturing...**

I want that **nurturing person who's fiercely independent and yet understands we need each other**, and we need help, and surrounds themselves [with] people that... have the greater expertise than they do in whatever area.” - Irene, ND



“There's a show called Chicago Med. There's **a lady who runs the hospital and has to deal with all kind of issues...** She's dealing with doctors who are sometimes doing the right thing, sometimes not.

She's dealing with staff, patients, all these different personalities, and **yet she handles them with grace, dignity, and she's always calm and calculating in her response** to all things. She normally **addresses and fixes all the problems...**

Why does America need a calming force right now?

There are so many people flying off their seat about everything, getting upset about everything, that **we need an example of how to be calm and how to make everything work with others, how to work with others.**” - Derrick, ND

THE IDEAL LEADER COMPARED TO TRUMP & BIDEN

These voters spoke in contrasts:

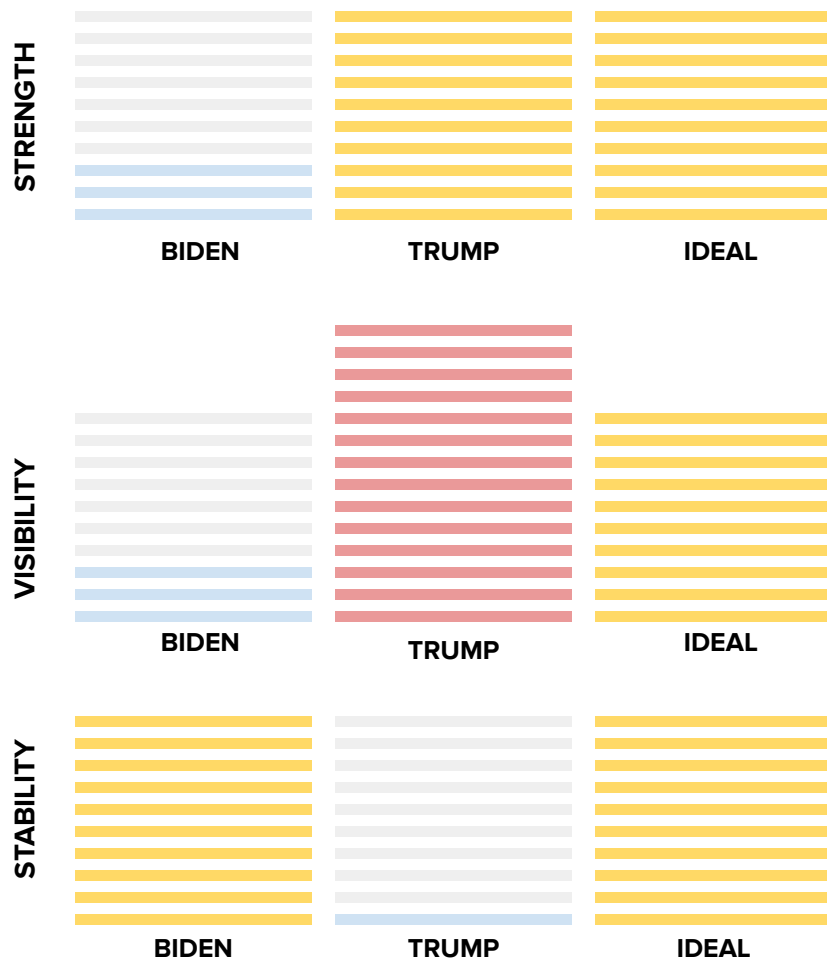
Trump appeared **strong**, Biden can appear **weak**.

Trump was **volatile**, Biden offers **stability**.

Trump was **hyper-visible**, Biden **invisible**.

Neither quite struck the balance of strength, visibility, and stability they desired.

“The ideal leader for the country would almost need to be a mix of Trump and Biden. With Trump, he’s rigid and there are some strengths there, but if it gets to having to bend too much, it’s going to snap. On the other end with Biden, you cook and boil it, it’s going to be soft. It’s spaghetti. It’s going to wiggle around. And **there are pros to both sides, but it would be good to split the difference.**” – Stephen, ND



SO, WHAT ABOUT 2024?

Whether in hindsight or a hypothetical re-match taking place in 2024 that puts Joe Biden against Donald Trump again, for these voters, Joe Biden wins out *nearly* every time despite concerns about his age and mental acuity.

“I cannot go back to the dark side. **I would absolutely vote for Biden again and hope that he continued to step up a little bit more than now.** There's one meme or video out there about.. How **[Biden's] security is leading him to where he needs to go.** And the security guard just pointed, there's no way he can miss his mark **and he completely missed it...** I don't want to be judgemental because **he's getting older...** but it is reality. As you get older, you get less careful, you get more nonchalant maybe. I just hope that does not happen. *Let's say even if it does, is that a better choice than voting for Donald Trump again?* Yes, ma'am. Yes. Because **I fear that if Trump were to win again, it would be this chaos and this divide... 'we're not going to come back from this,'** type of thing.” - Susan, ND



“I definitely vote for Biden... I would never vote for Trump again... [He was] just too divisive, too argumentative, too angry, too racist, [a] misogynist, the list goes on. - Irene, ND

“Joe Biden. I've seen the best that Trump can do... I still don't know what Biden will do, but it's got to be better than him.” - Chris, ND

THAT SAID, **THIS COHORT IS A VULNERABLE ONE.**

A not insignificant number of our respondents attributed Trump's chaos to his supporters (not so much Trump), often likening Trump to a toddler, describing him as "someone who would throw you out of his sandbox," and saying that "racism got pinned on him."

The point - a nicer version of Trump could come along and win their vote.

Another take - because these tipped evangelicals can't stand Trump's supporters, **it may be wise to message more broadly against Trumpism and his supporters, and the cruelty and chaos they associate with them while also being sure to provide a home for these politically homeless voters.**

"Would you vote for Donald Trump again?"

If somehow he could prove between now and 2024 that he changed, I would.

How would he need to show you that he'd changed?

By demonstrating by what he says by what he says. Come out and take a stance on positions by what you say... He needs to acknowledge what he made mistakes and say what he would do differently.

So, if Joe Biden and Donald Trump were running in 2024, and completely hypothetical matchup, who would you vote for if Donald Trump did make amends and did apologize?

If Donald Trump convinced my heart that he was different, I would vote for him. If he didn't, I would vote for Joe Biden." - Derrick, ND

SUMMARY

How to Hold Those Who Tipped

- 1 Not all evangelicals are the cut from the same cloth. The ones who tipped are more about the teachings of Jesus than toeing the line, and **often feel like they don't belong in the evangelical community (or in the Democratic Party or with Trump Republicans). They need a home.**
- 2 **This is a vulnerable cohort - they tipped because they felt abandoned by Trump** and saw the disconnection, dysfunction, chaos, and cruelty he wrought. While they're pleased with the current calm, **they miss Trump's economy, they're not aware of what Biden has done, and they worry Biden is too old** and frail to wrangle our split nation back together.
- 3 These voters are **looking for a leader who feels strong, stable, and visible (e.g. Zelensky)**, and who acknowledges, appreciates, and attends to them.
- 4 More than anything, **they want the country to come back together by meeting in the middle, and believe people should identify as Americans first.** They value freedom and want to live unbothered in a country that thrives economically, restoring America as the bright, shining city on a hill.
- 5 **Democrats who want to hold these voters need to welcome them**, they need to message **pride in America and being American** and show how they're bringing the country forward and together. They need to talk about infrastructure and getting things done, and **talk about spiritual values in an authentic way that embraces kindness and strength.**

THE RESEARCH TEAM



GRETCHEN BARTON is the Research Director for Future Majority and Principal at Worthy Strategy Group, LLC. With a special interest in the psychology underpinning behavior change, Gretchen has designed and delivered a number of initiatives in the policy space, including hazing behavior and how to stop it, and most recently, poverty in America for the Gates Foundation.

She has led research and served as a behavioral science strategist for major organizations and campaigns (e.g. the NFL, NextGen, New Moral Majority, Ideas 42, Way to Win and others), uncovering key messaging insights to turn out the youth vote, revealing voters' deepest hopes and dreams for presidential campaigns, and unearthing deep insights for key organizers in the build up to the 2020 election. She recently researched and released "Winning the Future: A Deep Dive into the Unconscious Minds of Voters" in partnership with Wide Angle Research to help understand this strategic moment in American history for the Democratic Party.

Gretchen holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications and Planning Campaigns with distinction in research from Cornell University. She has written for the Journal of College Student Development and the American Journal of Health Behavior, and co-authored, "Prevalence and Profiling: Hazing Among College Students and Points of Intervention." She recently co-authored "The Science of Winning with Stories: Using Agency, Urgency, and Community," a reflection on the most effective messaging to engage and move a populace.

For more information and/or to get involved in future work, please email:

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LEADERS AS CHARACTERS



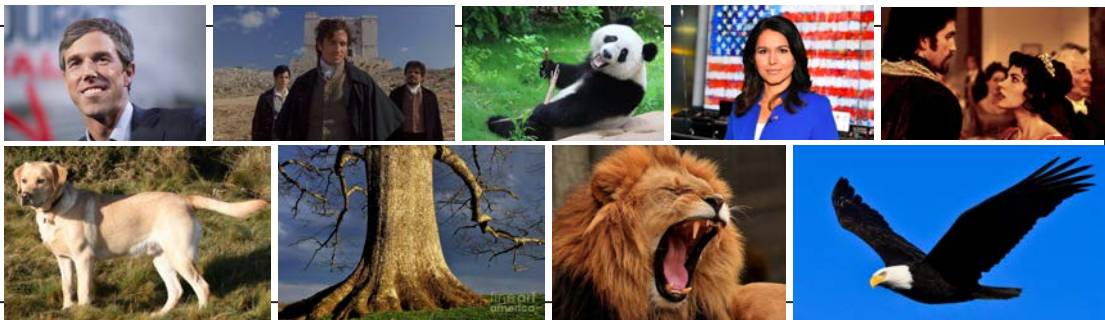
TRUMP



BIDEN



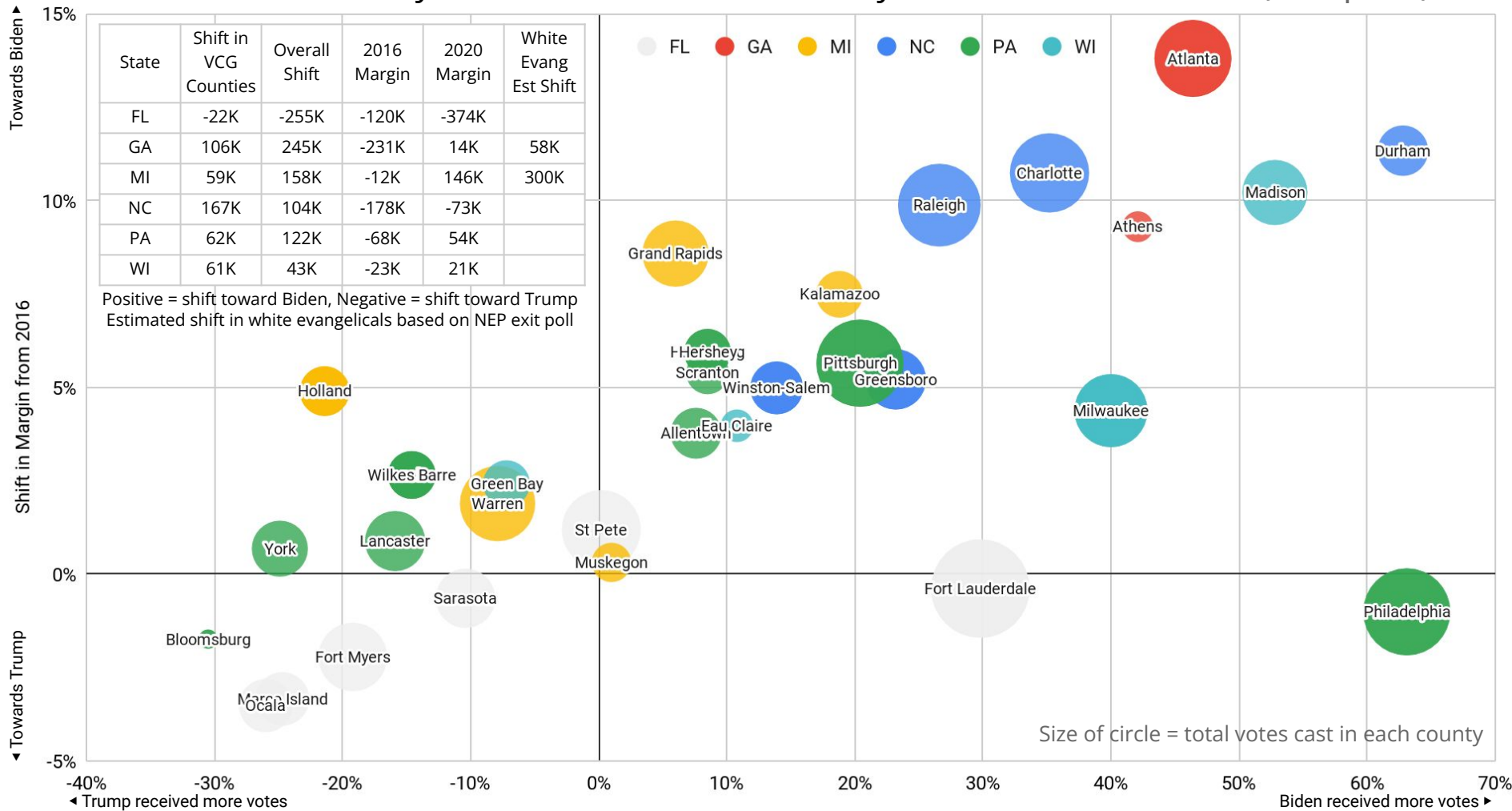
IDEAL



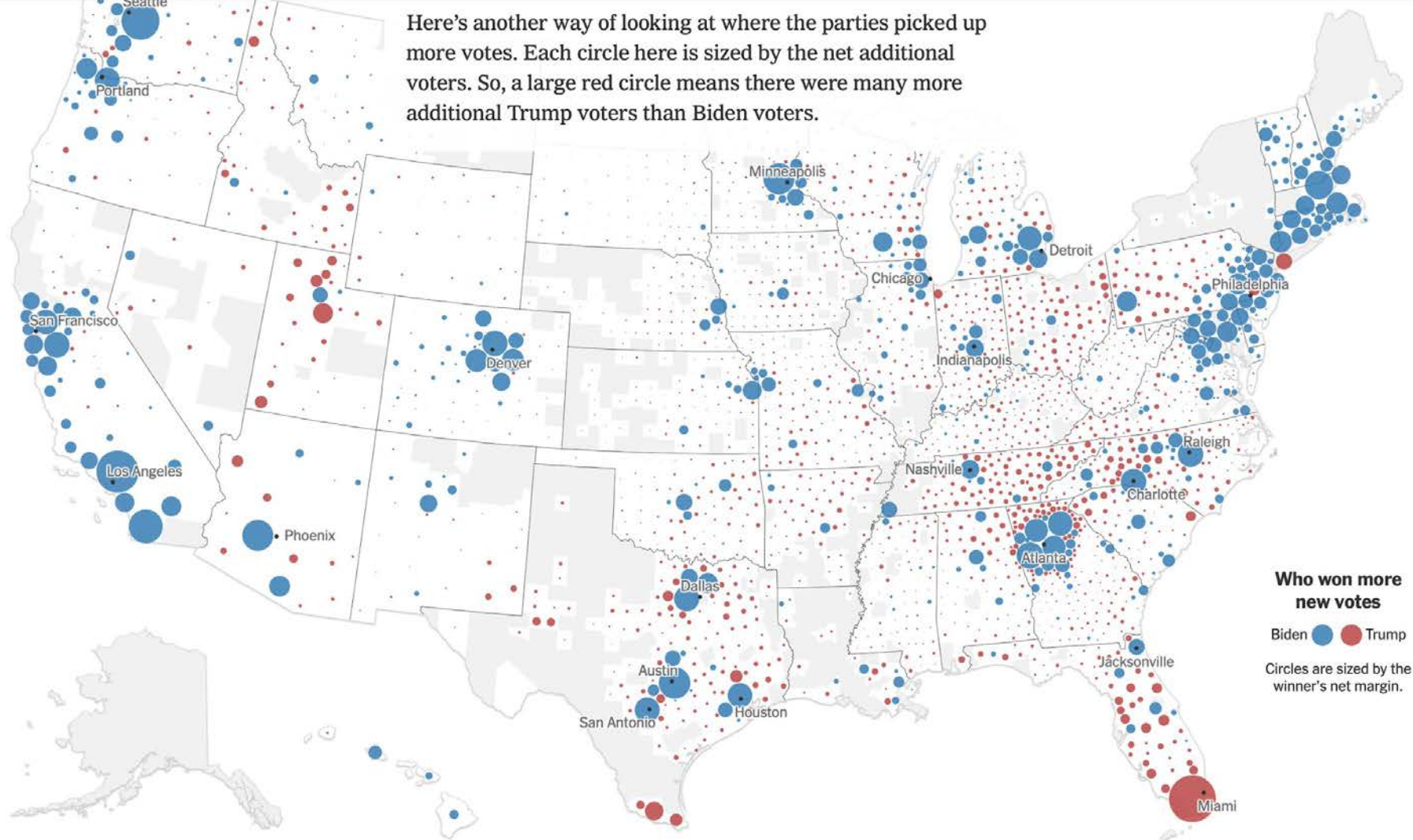


VOTE COMMON GOOD VOTE SHIFT ANALYSIS

Counties Visited by Vote Common Good broadly shifted towards Biden (except FL)



Here's another way of looking at where the parties picked up more votes. Each circle here is sized by the net additional voters. So, a large red circle means there were many more additional Trump voters than Biden voters.

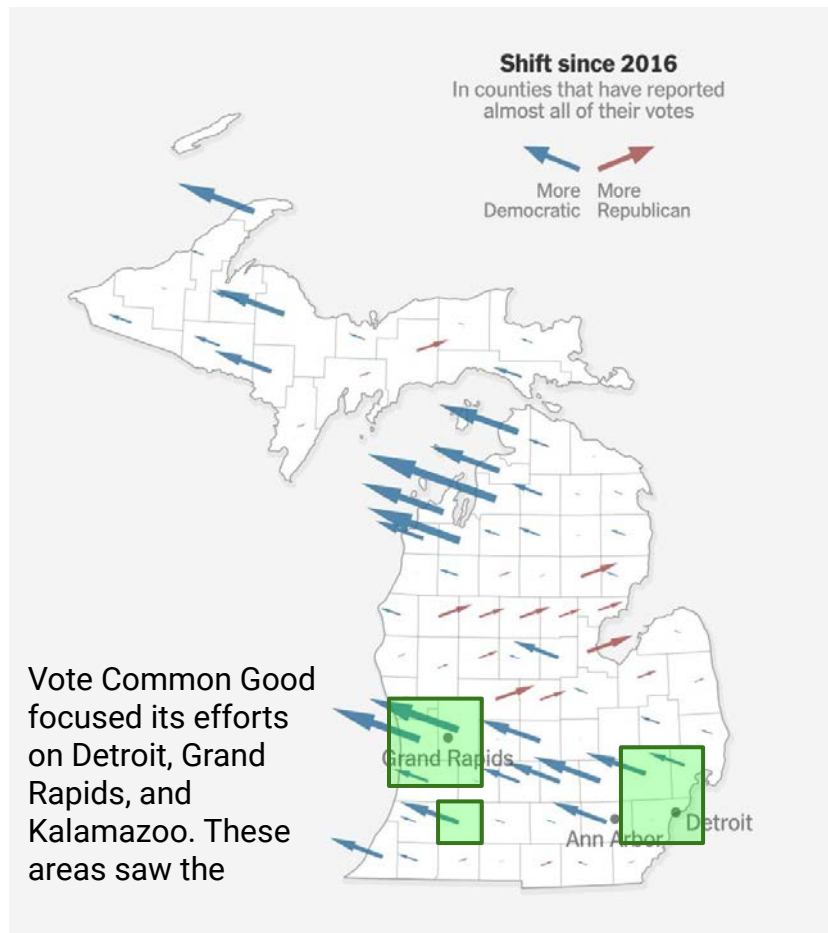


Michigan election results highlight the impact of Vote Common Good

Based on Michigan exit polls, white evangelical support for Trump decreased from 81% to 70% while support for Biden increased from 14% to 29%.

This equates to a **300k** shift in votes towards Biden from 2016 to 2020, compared to only a 157k total shift for the state.

Ottawa and Kent Counties were the focus of the VCG billboard campaign, and saw the **biggest shifts** in the entire state (39k votes together), including flipping Kent from 3% for Trump in 2016 to 6% for Biden in 2020.

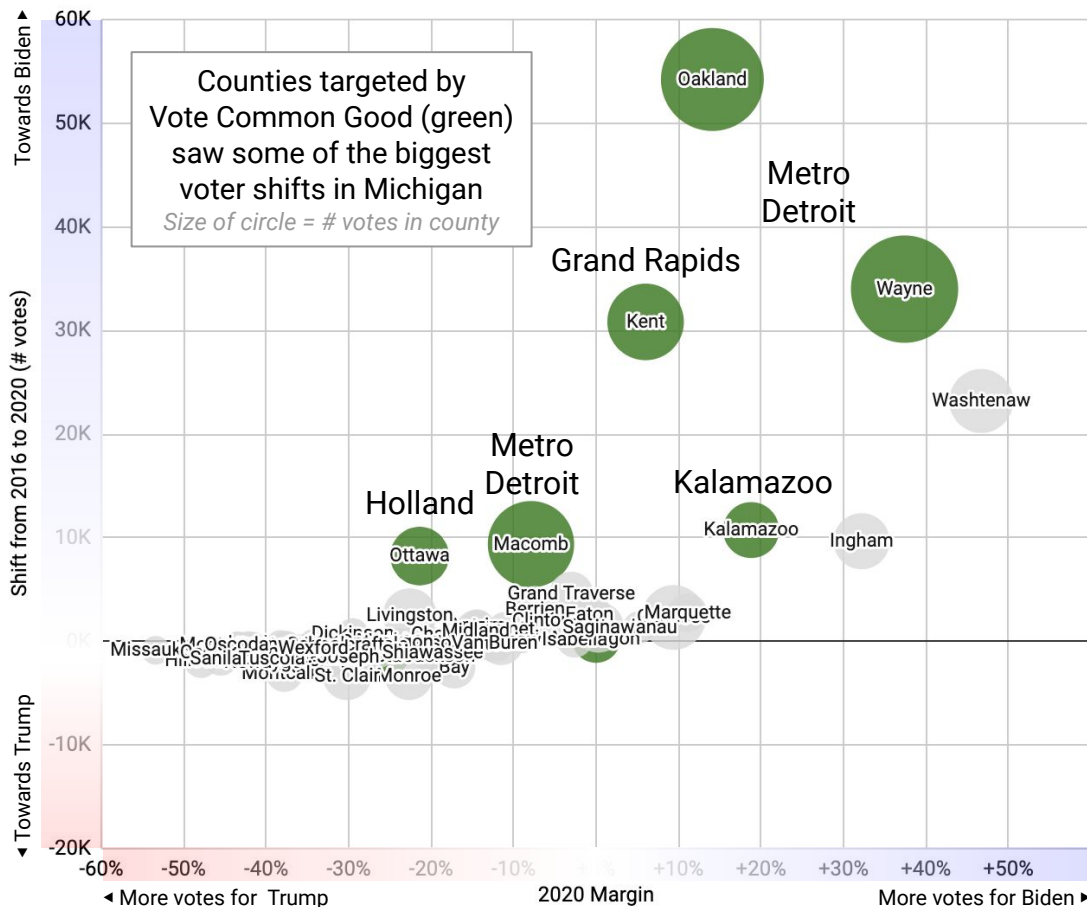


2020 election data demonstrates the impact of Vote Common Good in Michigan

Based on Michigan exit polls, white evangelical support for Trump decreased from 81% to 70% while support for Biden increased from 14% to 29%.

This equates to a **300k** shift in votes towards Biden from 2016 to 2020, compared to only a 158k total shift for the state.

Ottawa and Kent Counties were the focus of the VCG billboard campaign, and saw the **biggest % shifts** in the entire state (9% swing - 39k votes together), including flipping Kent from 3% for Trump in 2016 to 6% for Biden in 2020.



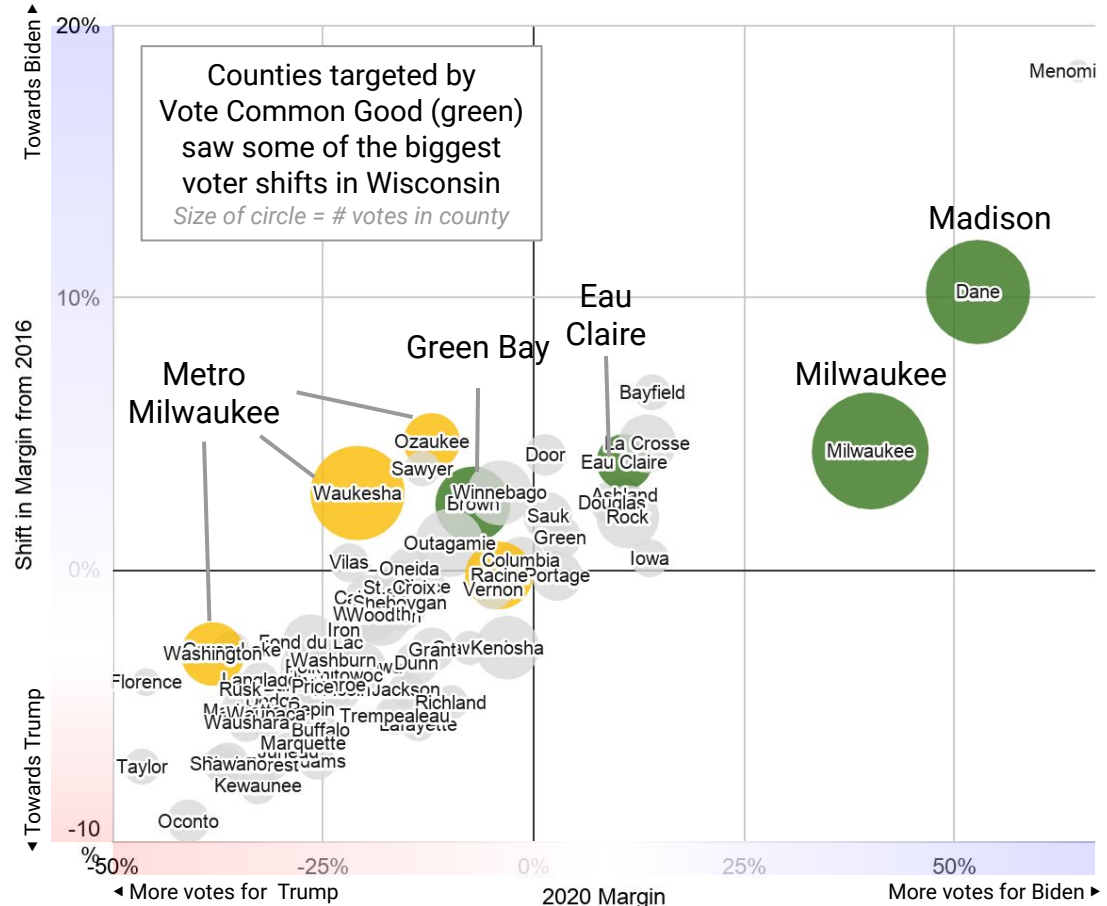
Vote Common Good Impact in Wisconsin

Wisconsin shifted by **43K** votes from 2016 (R+0.8) to 2020 (D+0.6)

In the four counties targeted by Vote Common Good, the margin shifted by **61K** towards Biden. In the rest of the state, the margin shifted by **18K** towards Trump.

Wisconsin has over 900K white evangelical voters, so only a 5% shift would have accounted for the 43K shift statewide.

Awaiting more data on Wisconsin faith voters.



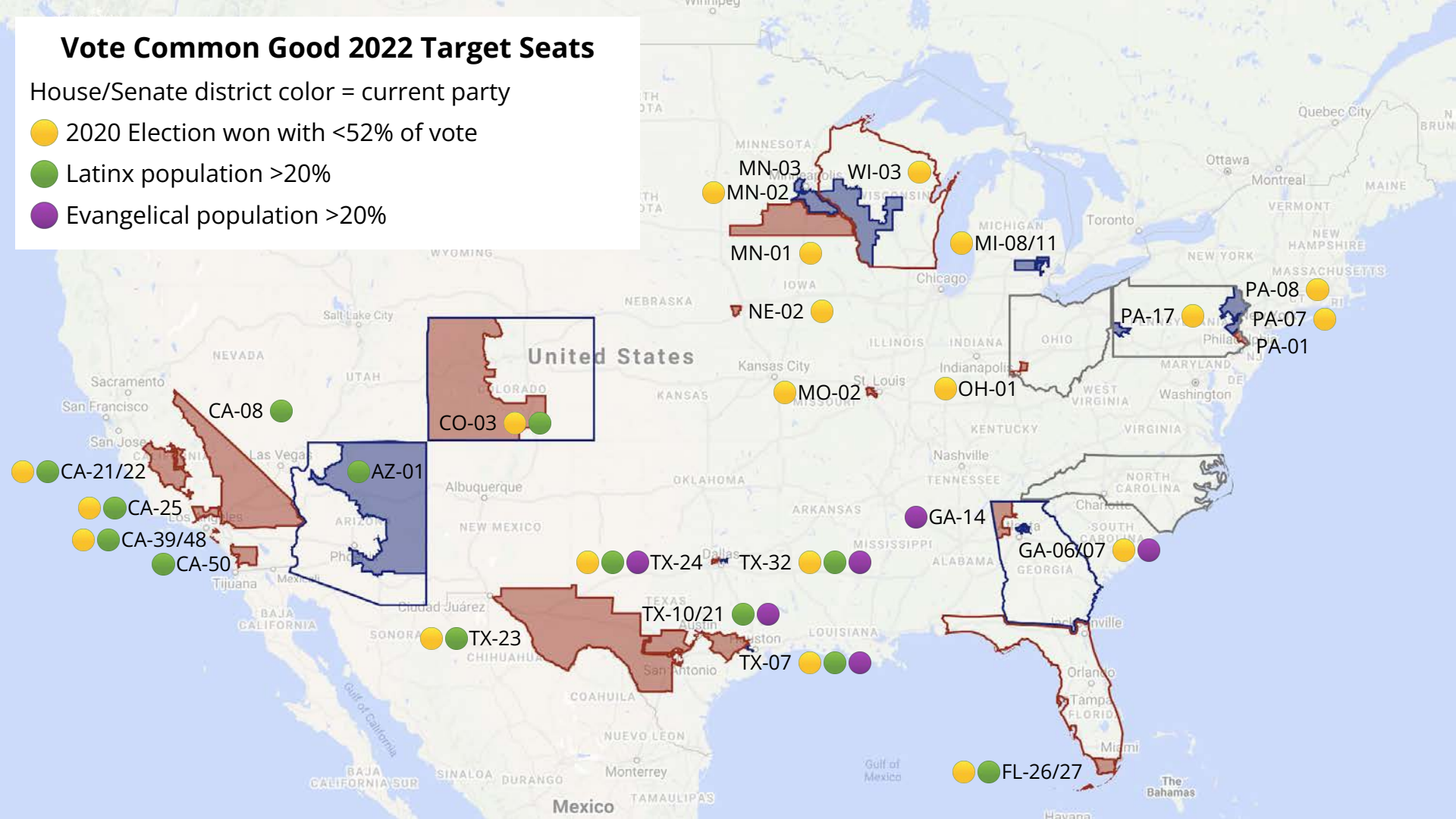
Vote Common Good 2022 Target Seats

House/Senate district color = current party

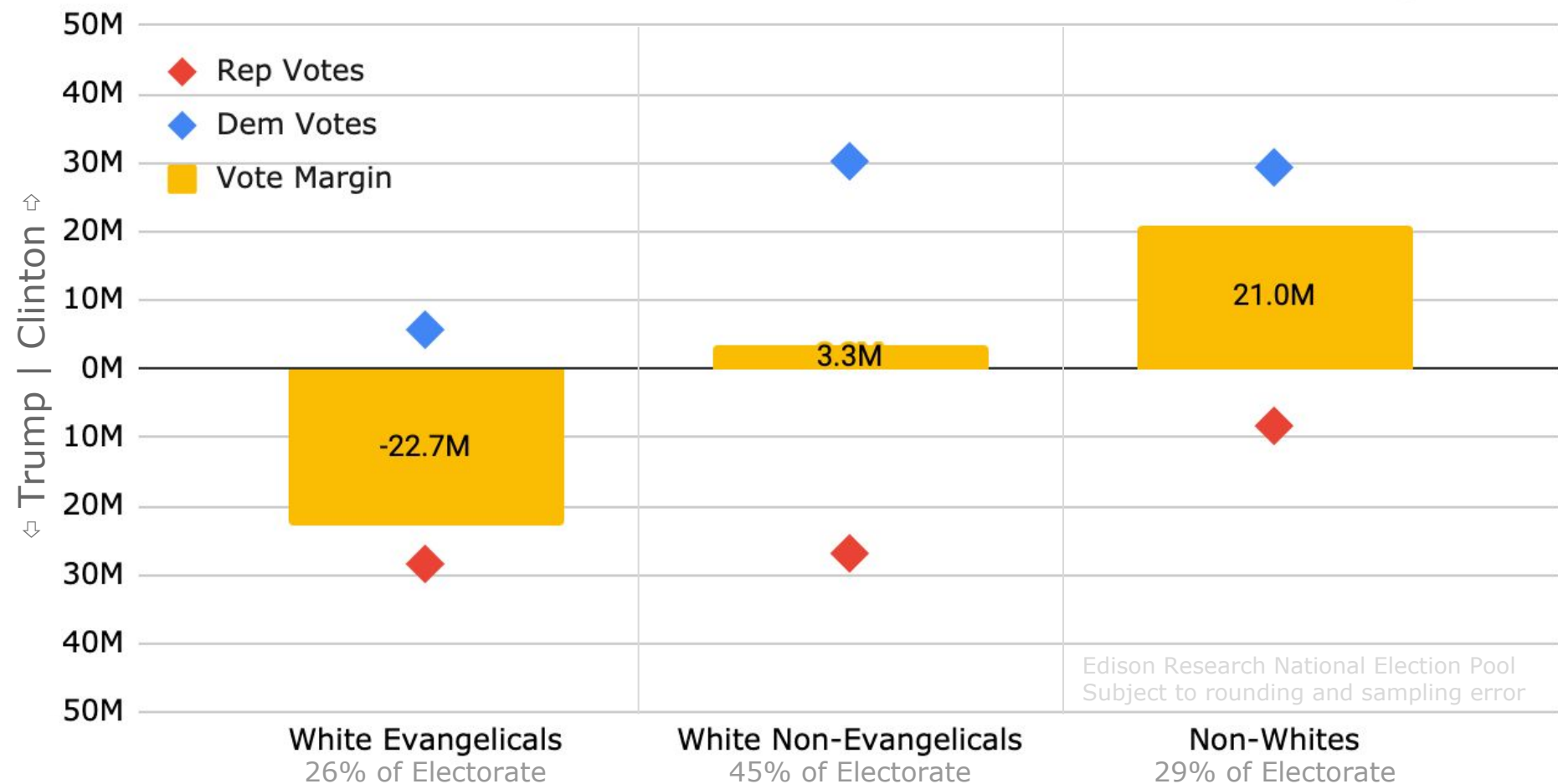
● 2020 Election won with <52% of vote

● Latinx population >20%

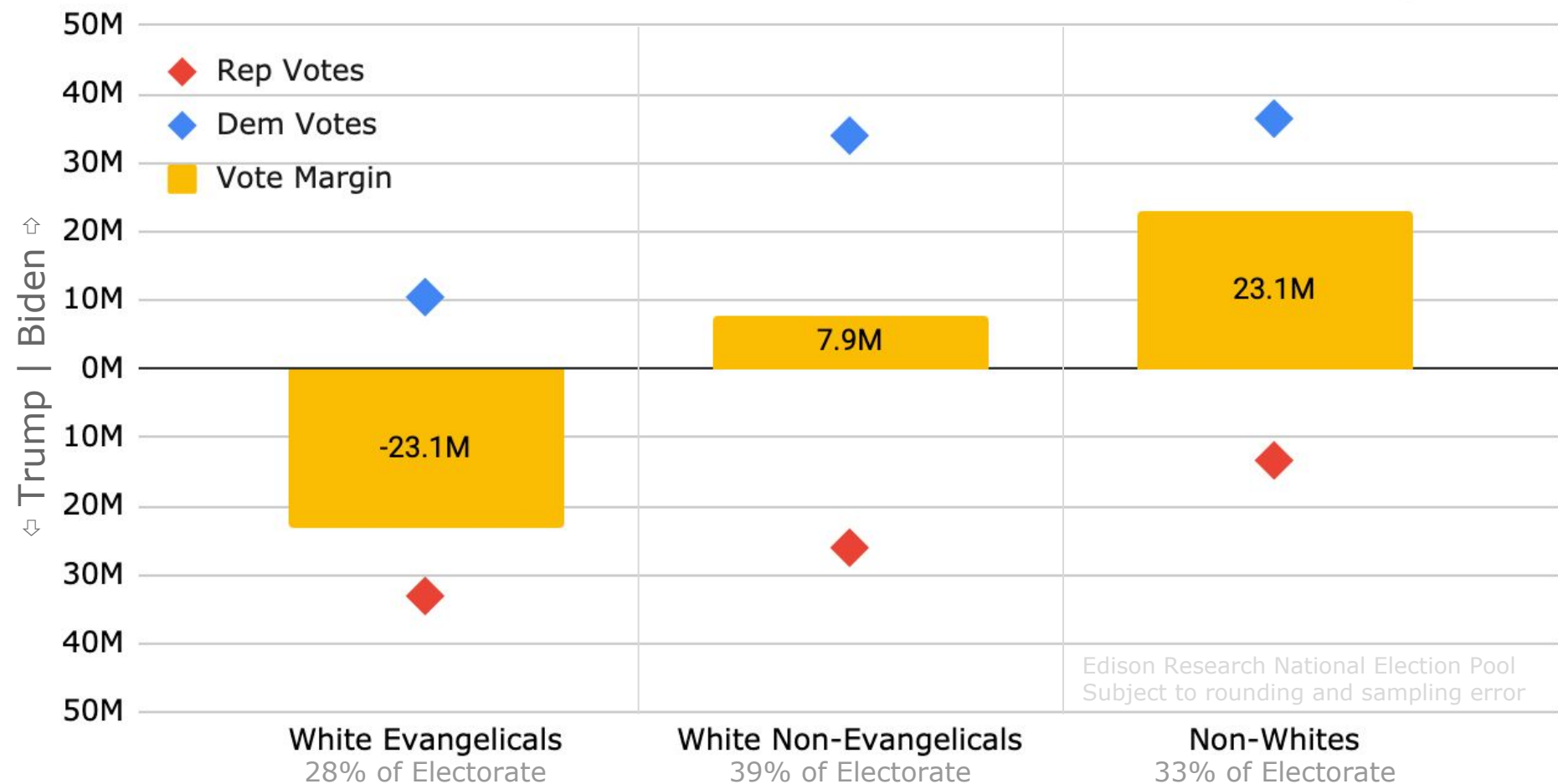
● Evangelical population >20%



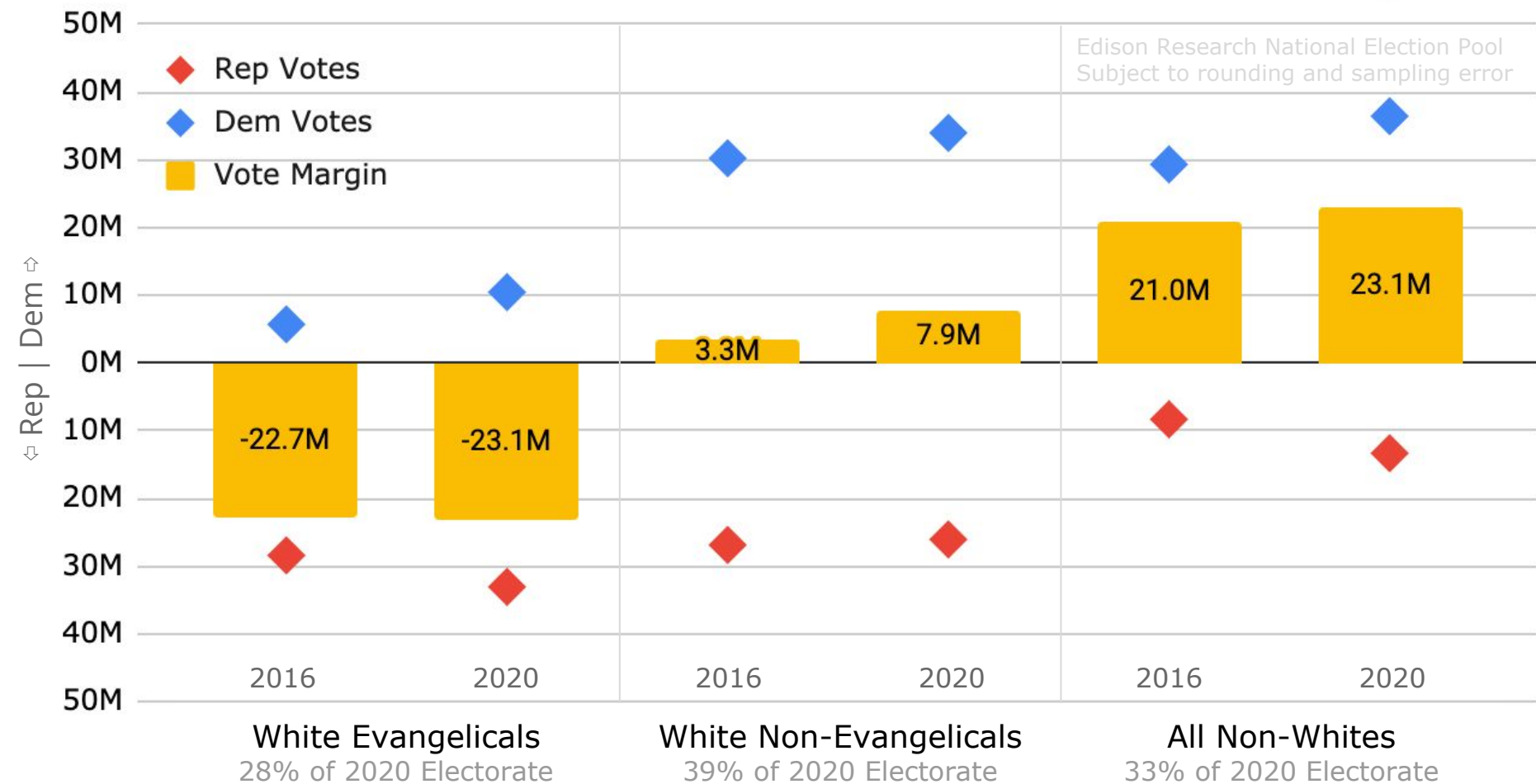
2016 US Presidential Election Estimated Vote Margin



2020 US Presidential Election Estimated Vote Margin



2016 US Presidential Election Estimated Vote Margin



US Presidential Vote Margin by Race - 2016 vs 2020

