

September 2020

Sun Belt Voices Project

A Collaboration Between KFF and The Cook Political Report

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Charlie Cook, Amy Walter; The Cook Political Report

Throughout the 2020 election, the Kaiser Family Foundation and Cook Political Report have collaborated on a series of projects examining the attitudes and experiences of voters in several key battleground states leading up to the 2020 presidential election. In November 2019, we released the [Blue Wall Voices Project](#), a survey of 3,222 voters in the four states constituting the “Democratic Blue Wall” – the area in the Upper Midwest that was previously considered a Democratic stronghold. The Sun Belt Voices Project is our newest collaboration and includes 3,479 interviews with voters in Arizona, Florida, and North Carolina – three states in which shifting population characteristics may give Democrats an advantage in the more traditionally Republican region of the U.S. Using an innovative probability-based approach of contacting registered voters and allowing poll respondents to participate online or over the telephone, KFF and The Cook Political Report interviewed 1,298 voters in Arizona, 1,009 voters in Florida, and 1,172 voters in North Carolina from August 29 to September 13, 2020. For more details, please see the methodology section of this report.

Key Findings

- **Most voters have made up their minds about how they will vote for president, with results suggesting very close elections in each of the three Sun Belt states included in this project.** With most voters in Arizona, Florida, and North Carolina reporting they have already made up their minds about which presidential candidate they plan to vote for in November, the poll, fielded August 29-September 13, finds former Vice President Biden with a slight lead in Arizona (Trump: 40%, Biden: 45%), and the results in Florida and North Carolina within the margin of sampling error; Florida (Trump: 42%, Biden: 43%), North Carolina (Trump: 43%, Biden: 45%).
- **About one in five voters are “swing voters” but that doesn’t mean all of these votes are up for grabs.** In all three states, nearly one-fourth of voters are swing voters. This includes about one in ten voters who say they are truly “undecided” and a similar share of voters who say they are “probably” going to vote for one candidate, but haven’t definitively made up their minds. Few of those who say they are “probably” going to vote for one candidate say there is a “chance” they would vote for the other candidate, suggesting that some of these “swing” voters just may not vote on election day.
- **Swing voters are younger, have more moderate views, and a larger share are Hispanic voters, and also give Biden higher approval ratings than Trump.** The crucial group of voters who have not yet decided who they plan to vote for in the 2020 election are younger, and larger shares identify as political moderates and independents. In addition, a larger share of swing voters than decided voters are Hispanic voters. They are also more likely to approve of former Vice President Biden than President Trump.

- **Half of swing voters prefer Biden’s leadership style but less than half see either candidate as a “strong leader.”** Half of swing voters say, regardless of who they plan to vote for, they prefer Biden’s leadership style over President Trump’s (39% say they prefer Trump’s leadership style). Yet, less than half of swing voters say *strong leader* describes either President Trump (46%) or Joe Biden (39%). In addition, nearly two-thirds (64%) of swing voters say President Trump is unpredictable and this is a bad thing including a majority of swing voters in Arizona, Florida, and North Carolina.
- **President Trump is a motivating force for both Trump voters and Biden voters.** Large majorities of voters who say they are going to vote for President Trump (either “definitely” or “probably”) say their vote is mainly a vote *for* Trump rather than a vote *against* Biden (86% v. 14%). On the other hand, more than half of Biden voters (53%) say their vote is mainly a vote *against* President Trump rather than a vote *for* Biden.
- **Trump voters report higher levels of enthusiasm than Biden voters.** President Trump’s voters have the enthusiasm advantage in each of the three Sun Belt states included in this poll with about three-fourths of Trump voters in Arizona (73%), Florida (74%), and North Carolina (75%) saying they are “very enthusiastic” to vote for him. Comparatively, about six in ten Biden voters in each of these states say the same (Arizona: 53%, Florida: 60%, N.C.: 57%).
- **The 2020 election is about different issues, depending on voters’ party identification.** Similar to national poll results, the economy is the top presidential election issue for Republican Sun Belt voters, while Democratic voters are prioritizing the coronavirus outbreak and race relations. On most issues, a larger share of voters trust Joe Biden to do a better job than President Trump. However, on the economy – voters’ top issue overall – more voters trust Trump than Biden (54% compared to 44%).

Top Issues for Sun Belt Voters

One-third of voters (32%) in Arizona, Florida, and North Carolina, three key states in the West and South's Sun Belt region, say the economy is going to be the most important issue in their 2020 vote choice. This is followed by, criminal justice and policing (17%), the coronavirus outbreak (16%) health care (12%), and race relations (12%). Few voters (5%) say immigration is their top issue. This is also consistent with a recent shift in [national polling](#) in which the economy and the coronavirus outbreak, a public health issue, has displaced health care more generally as the top issue for voters.

The Economy Is Top Issue For Sun Belt Voters In Arizona, Florida, And North Carolina

Percent who say each of the following issues will be the **most important** in deciding their vote for president:

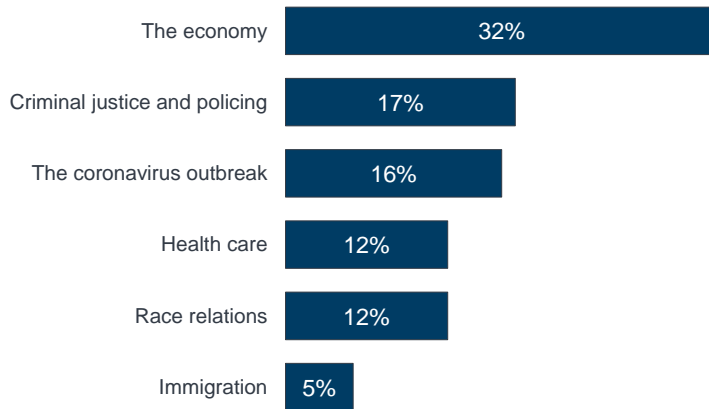


Figure 1

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



The economy is the top issue among voters in Arizona (32%), Florida (34%), and North Carolina (31%), followed by criminal justice and policing and the coronavirus outbreak, with both of these two issues ranking similarly among Arizona, Florida, and North Carolina voters.

Voters In Sun Belt Region Prioritize The Economy In Their 2020 Vote For President

Percent who say each of the following issues will be the **most important** in deciding their vote for president:

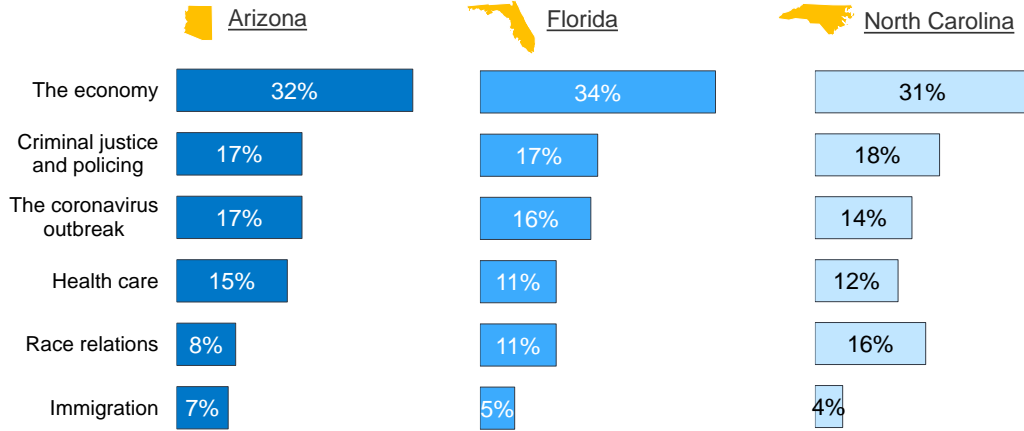


Figure 2

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



Partisan voters have very different priorities for the 2020 election when it comes to the top issues driving their votes. Overall, half of Republican voters in these 3 states (52%) say the economy is the most important issue in their 2020 vote choice, more than twice as many as say any other issue. One in five (22%) choose criminal justice and policing, an issue touted often by President Trump, as the most important issue. Democrats, on the other hand, are prioritizing the coronavirus outbreak in their 2020 vote choice with nearly three in ten saying it is the most important issue (28%), followed by race relations (23%) health care (18%), and the economy (14%). Three in ten independents (31%) say the economy is the most important issue followed by the coronavirus outbreak (17%).

Partisan Voters Have Different Views On Top Issues For 2020 Presidential Election

Percent who say each of the following issues will be the **most important** in deciding their vote for president:

<u>RANK</u>	<u>DEMOCRATS</u>	<u>INDEPENDENTS</u>	<u>REPUBLICANS</u>
1	The coronavirus outbreak (28%)	The economy (31%)	The economy (52%)
2	Race relations (23%)	The coronavirus outbreak (17%)	Criminal justice and policing (22%)
3	Health care (18%)	Criminal justice and policing (15%)	Immigration (8%)
4	The economy (14%)	Health care (13%)	Health care (6%)

Figure 3

NOTE: Top four issues shown

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.

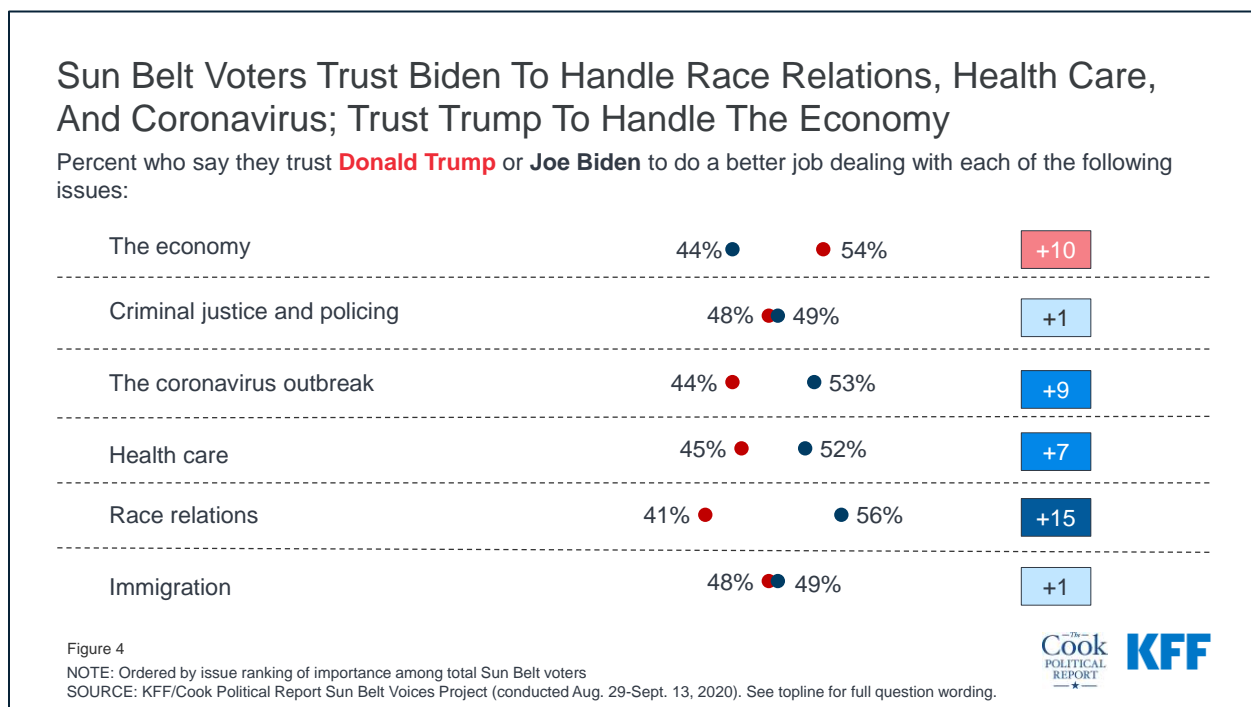


This partisan divide on the key issues in the 2020 election is consistent across each of the three states examined in this poll with large shares of Republican voters in Arizona, Florida, and N.C. saying the economy is the most important issue while Democratic voters in Arizona and Florida chose the coronavirus outbreak as their top issue. N.C. Democratic voters were divided between the coronavirus outbreak and race relations as their top issues. Few Republican voters in any of the three states chose either the coronavirus outbreak or race relations as their top issue. About three in ten independent voters chose the economy as their top issue.

Table 1: Partisans Across Key Sun Belt States Are Divided On Most Important Issue For 2020

Percent of voters who say each issue will be the most important in deciding their vote for president:		The economy	The coronavirus outbreak	Criminal justice and policing	Race relations
Democratic voters	AZ	15%	30%	7%	18%
	FL	14	31	13	22
	NC	15	22	15	27
Independent voters	AZ	31	20	16	8
	FL	32	17	16	8
	NC	30	16	13	14
Republican voters	AZ	47	7	26	<1%
	FL	54	4	20	3
	NC	50	4	24	3

With the economy topping the issues for voters heading into the 2020 election, the Sun Belt Voices Project finds that this is the one issue on which President Trump has a trust advantage over Joe Biden. Slightly more than half (54%) of voters in the Sun Belt states say they trust Donald Trump to do a better job dealing with the economy compared to 44% who say they trust Joe Biden. Joe Biden, on the other hand, has the advantage on other key issues such as health care, race relations, and the coronavirus outbreak. Voters were split between the two candidates on who they trust to do a better job handling immigration and criminal justice and policing.



Once again, this is consistent across all three states with only one variation; President Trump has the advantage when it comes to the economy while Biden holds an advantage on health care, race relations, and the coronavirus outbreak. On immigration and criminal justice and policing, voters are more divided on which candidate they think will do a better job.

Table 2: Who Do Voters Trust To Handle Key Issues?			
Percent of voters who say they trust... will do a better job dealing with each of the following issues:	Arizona	Florida	North Carolina
Race relations			
Trump	40%	41%	42%
Biden	57	56	55
	Biden +17	Biden +15	Biden +13

The coronavirus outbreak			
Trump	43	45	43
Biden	54	52	54
	Biden +11	Biden +7	Biden +11
Health care			
Trump	44	45	45
Biden	53	52	53
	Biden +9	Biden +7	Biden +8
Criminal justice and policing			
Trump	47	49	48
Biden	50	48	50
	Biden +3	Trump +1	Biden +2
Immigration			
Trump	47	48	49
Biden	51	49	49
	Biden +4	Biden +1	--
The economy			
Trump	52	55	53
Biden	45	43	45
	Trump +7	Trump +12	Trump +8

The Current State Of Races In Key Sun Belt States

President Trump and former Vice President Biden have slightly fewer than four in ten voters in each of the three states saying they are “definitely” going to vote for them. Thirty-eight percent of Arizona voters as well as 37% of Florida voters and 39% of N.C voters say they are “definitely going to vote for Joe Biden.” This is similar to the share of voters who say they are “definitely going to vote for President Trump” in Arizona (35%), Florida (37%), and North Carolina (37%). One in ten voters say they are “probably going to vote for President Trump” (AZ: 5%; FL: 5%; N.C: 6%), or “probably going to vote for Joe Biden” (AZ: 7%; FL: 6%; N.C: 6%); while another one in ten say they are undecided (AZ: 11%; FL: 11%; N.C: 9%),

Most Sun Belt Voters Say They Have Already Made Up Their Mind About Which Candidate They Are Voting For In 2020

Thinking about the upcoming presidential election in 2020, do you think you are...?

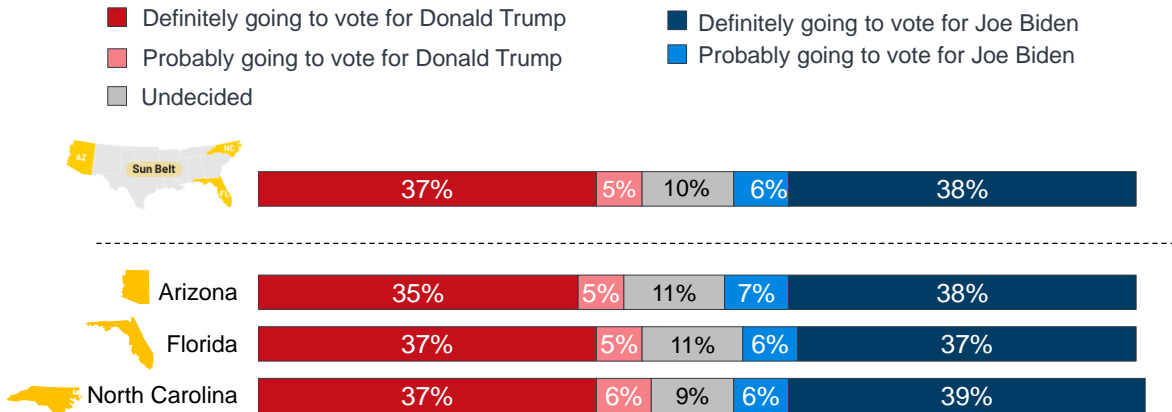


Figure 5

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



Putting together “definitely” and “probably” groups, these results indicate that, with less than two months before the 2020 November election, the presidential race in each of these three Sun Belt states is very close with Biden having a slight edge in Arizona (Trump: 40%, Biden: 45%), and within the margin of sampling error in Florida (Trump: 42%, Biden: 43%) and North Carolina (Trump: 43%, Biden: 45%).

Overwhelmingly, President Trump and Vice President Joe Biden are garnering support from their key “bases,” the groups that tend to support one party’s candidate over another and are predicted to vote in favor of the candidate. President Trump has majority support among conservative voters, rural voters, as well as white voters with lower levels of education. In addition, nine in ten (89%) voters who voted for him in 2016 say they plan to vote for him in 2020 while 5% of these voters say they are going to vote for Biden and 5% are still undecided.

Majorities Of Rural, Conservative, And Lower Educated Voters In Sun Belt States Say They Are Voting For President Trump

Percent who say they are probably or definitely going to **vote for Donald Trump** in November:

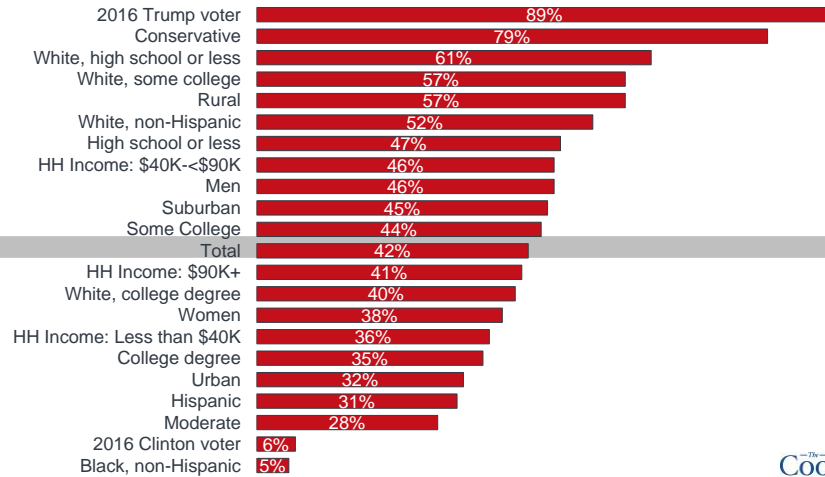


Figure 6

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



Biden, on the other hand, garners majority support from black voters, liberal voters, voters who voted for Secretary Clinton in 2016. More than half of moderate voters (56%) also say they are going to vote for Biden in November.

Large Majorities of Black Voters, Liberal And Moderate Voters Say They Are Voting For Joe Biden

Percent who say they are probably or definitely going to **vote for Joe Biden** in November:

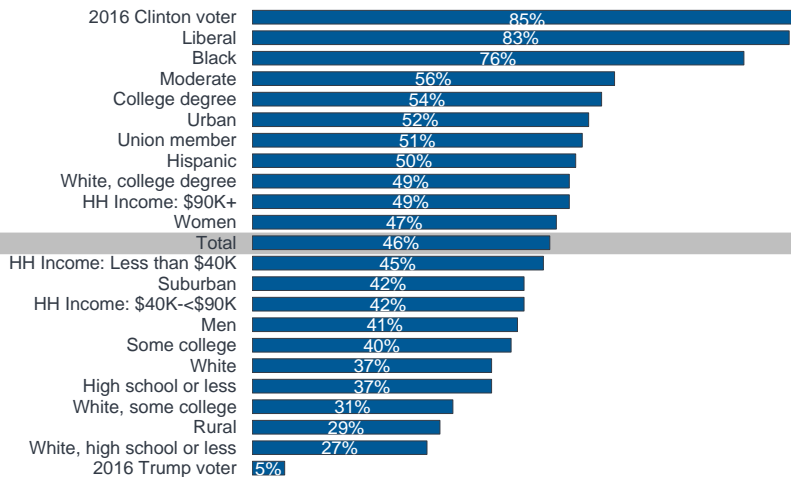


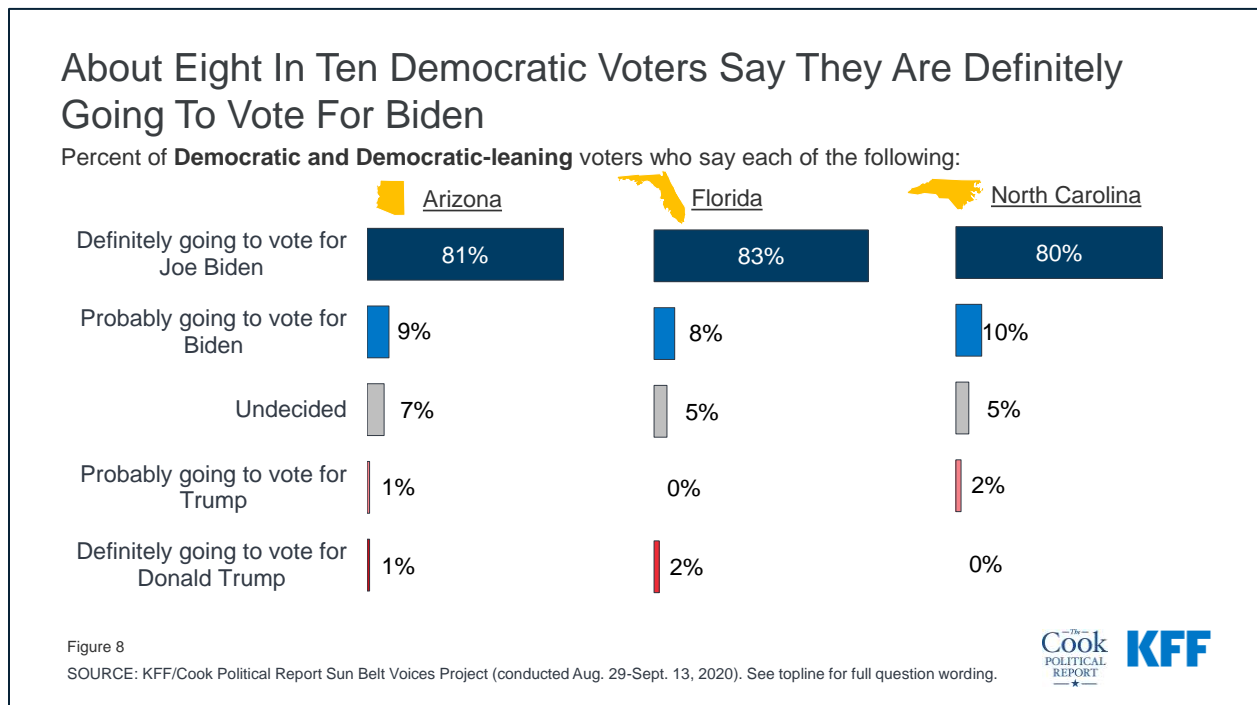
Figure 7

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



WHO ARE THE DECIDED VOTERS AND SWING VOTERS?

Three-fourths of voters in Arizona, Florida, and North Carolina say they have already made up their minds about which candidate they plan to vote for in the 2020 presidential election and the results indicate a very close election in these states. A majority of Democratic voters and Republican voters in each state say they aren't going to cast a vote for the other party's candidate. About eight in ten Democratic and Democratic-leaning independent voters in Arizona (81%), Florida (83%) and North Carolina (80%) say they are definitely going to vote for Joe Biden.



Similar shares of Republican and Republican-leaning voters say they are “definitely going to vote for President Trump” including three-fourths of Arizona (73%), and eight in ten voters in Florida (79%), and N.C. (81%). There is a small but noticeable share of Republican and Republican-leaning voters who say they are “definitely” going to vote for Joe Biden, including 6% in Arizona.

Most Republican Voters Say They Are Voting For President Trump

Percent of **Republican and Republican-leaning** voters who say each of the following:

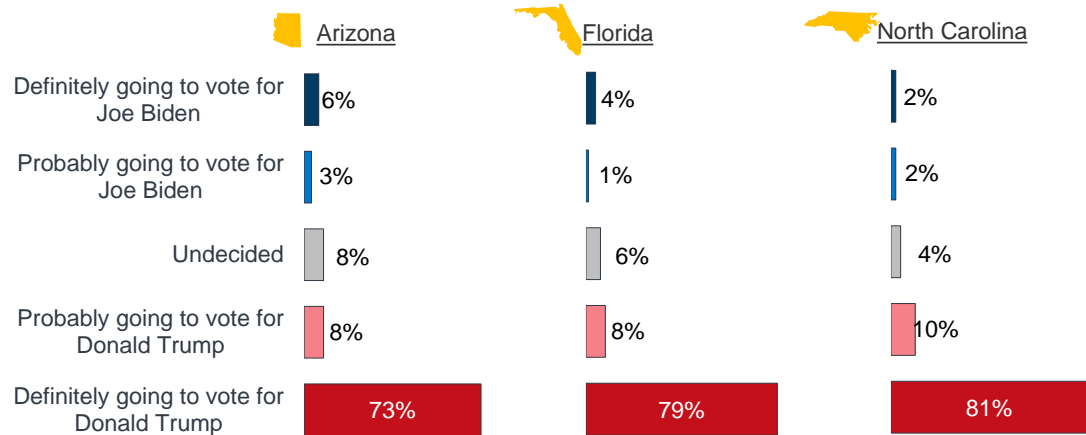


Figure 9

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



Nearly one-fourth of voters in each of the three states are “swing voters,” a crucial group of voters who have not yet made up their minds about which candidate they plan to vote for. There are not significant differences on the share of voters who are “swing voters” across these Sun Belt states, with similar shares of voters in Arizona (23%), Florida (22%), and North Carolina (21%) saying they are either “probably” going to vote for a candidate or are “undecided.” This is also consistent with our [national KFF Health Tracking Poll](#) data which also finds about one-fourth of voters are “swing voters.”

It is important to note that not all “swing voters” could potentially change their vote to support the other party’s candidate. One-third of those who say they are probably going to vote for President Trump say there is “a chance” they will vote for Joe Biden (2% of all voters) and one-fifth of those who say they are probably going to vote for Joe Biden say there is “a chance” they are going to vote for President Trump (1% of all voters); most “probably” voters, on the other side of the ballot, say there is “no chance” they will vote for the other party’s candidate (67% of voters probably voting for President Trump or 4% overall, 80% of voters probably voting for Joe Biden or 5% overall). This is similar across Arizona, Florida, and North Carolina with few voters saying they are “probably” going to vote for one candidate but there is “a chance” they would vote for the other candidate.

About One In Five Sun Belt Voters Haven't Made Up Their Minds About Who They Are Voting For

Thinking about the upcoming presidential election in November, do you think you are...?

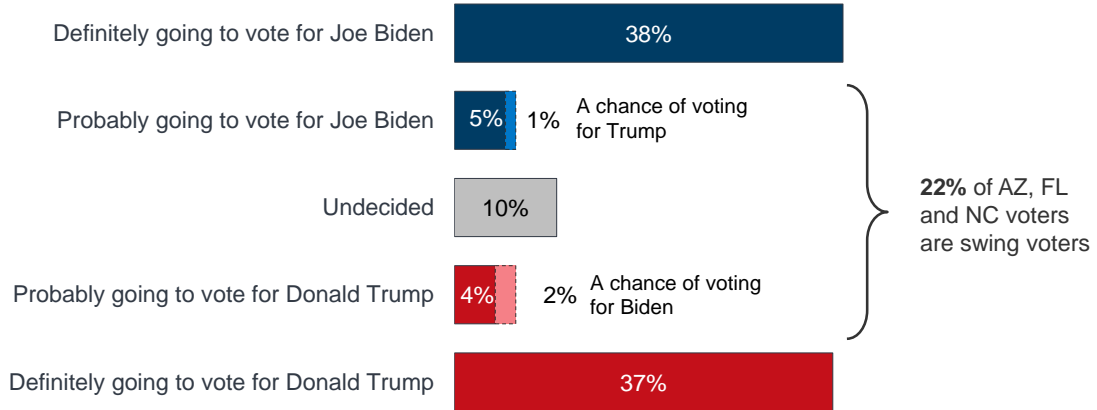


Figure 10

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



On most demographics, swing voters look very similar to their counterparts (voters who say they have already decided who they are going to vote for in the 2020 election), but they differ on three key variables: age, party identification, and ideology. Swing voters generally are more likely to say they are moderate in terms of their ideology (61%) and a larger share identify as political independents (43%) than their decided counterparts (10%). In addition, swing voters are slightly younger as a whole with about six in ten under the age of 50. In addition, nearly one in four swing voters are Hispanic voters (22%) compared to 13% of decided voters.

Demographic Differences Among Swing Voters And Decided Voters

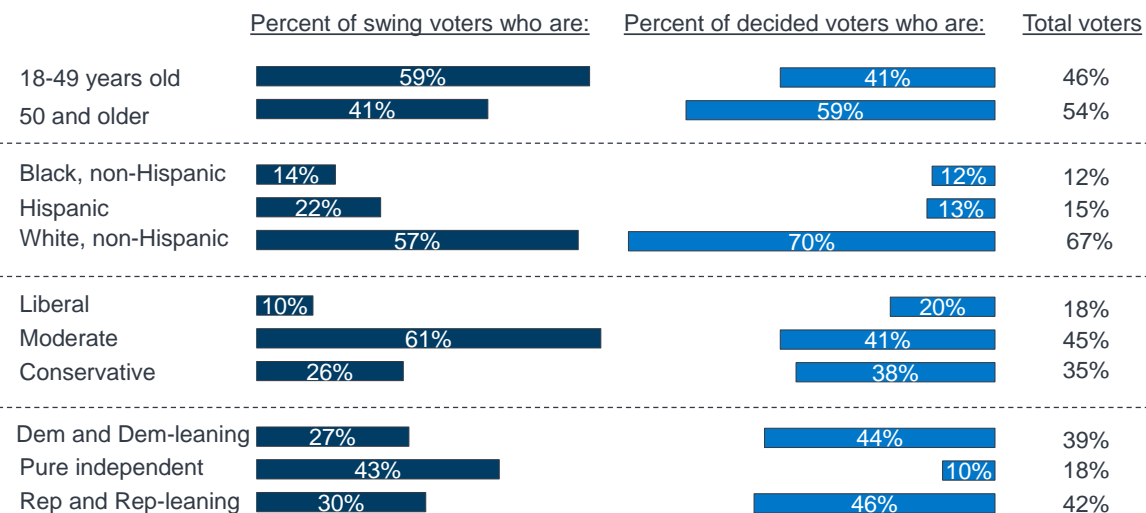


Figure 11

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



While a similar share of swing voters say they are Democrats or Democratic-leaning independents (27%) as say they are Republicans or Republican-leaning independents (30%), their top issue for their vote choice is more like the priorities of Republicans than Democrats. Large shares of swing voters in each of the three states (AZ: 38%, FL: 37%, N.C.: 32%) say the economy is going to be the most important issue in deciding their vote for president while significantly fewer say the same about any other issue – including the coronavirus outbreak (AZ: 9%, FL: 13%, N.C.: 13%).

The Economy Is Top Issue For Swing Voters In Arizona, Florida, And N.C.

AMONG SWING VOTERS: Percent who say each of the following issues will be the **most important** in deciding their vote for president:

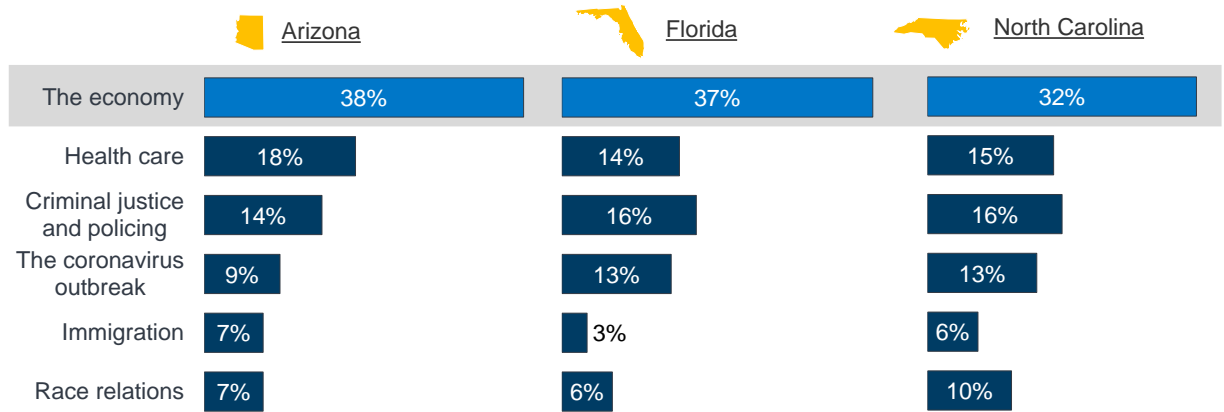


Figure 12

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



JOB APPROVAL

Throughout President Trump’s presidency, his overall net approval as remained largely stable except for a short dip over the summer – perhaps in response to his [handling of the coronavirus outbreak](#). More recently, his overall job approval has been around 45% in national polling. President Trump has similar job approval among voters in these Sun Belt states – with one notable exception. Arizona voters are more disapproving than approving of the job Trump is doing as president, resulting in a negative net approval of – 8 percentage points.

President Trump Has Higher Negative Net Approval Among Arizona Voters

Percentage point net approval of **President Trump** and **Joe Biden** (approval-disapproval)

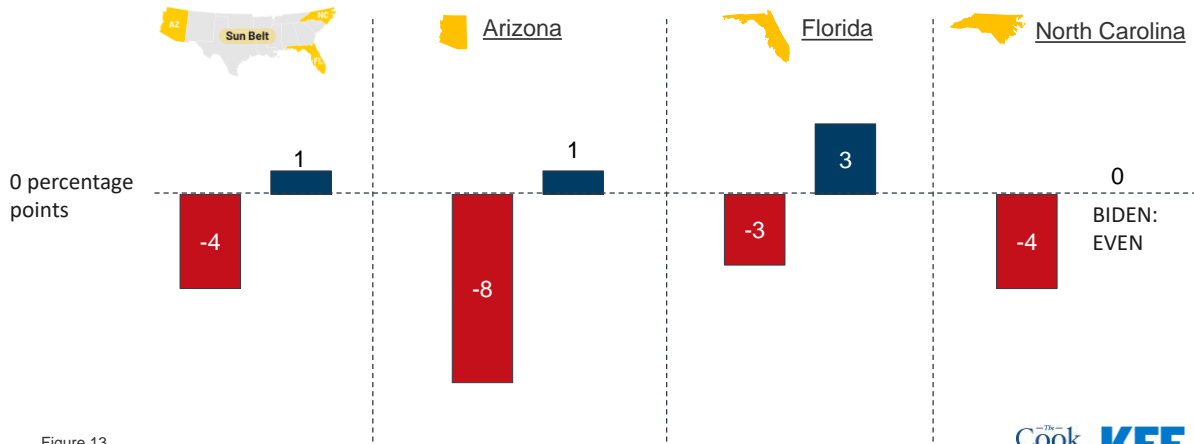


Figure 13

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



Among the small share of voters who haven't made up their minds about which candidate to vote for, these swing voters are divided on their views of both President Trump and former Vice President Biden with a slightly larger share saying they approve of Biden. Overall, about half of swing voters approve, which is about as many as disapprove, of both the job Donald Trump is doing as president (Approve: 45%; Disapprove: 54%) and of Joe Biden generally (Approve: 56%; Disapprove: 42%), with slight variations within states. To see the full percentages for job approval for both President Trump and Biden in each of the three states, see the appendix Table 1.

Swing Voters Give Trump Negative Ratings While Biden Receives Slightly More Positive Ratings

AMONG SWING VOTERS: Percentage point net approval of **President Trump** and **Joe Biden** (approval-disapproval)

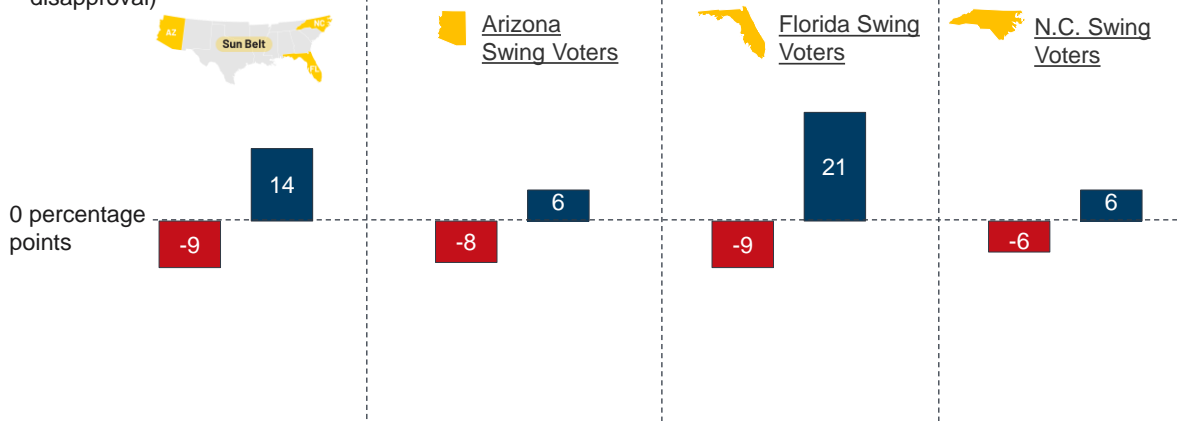


Figure 14

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.

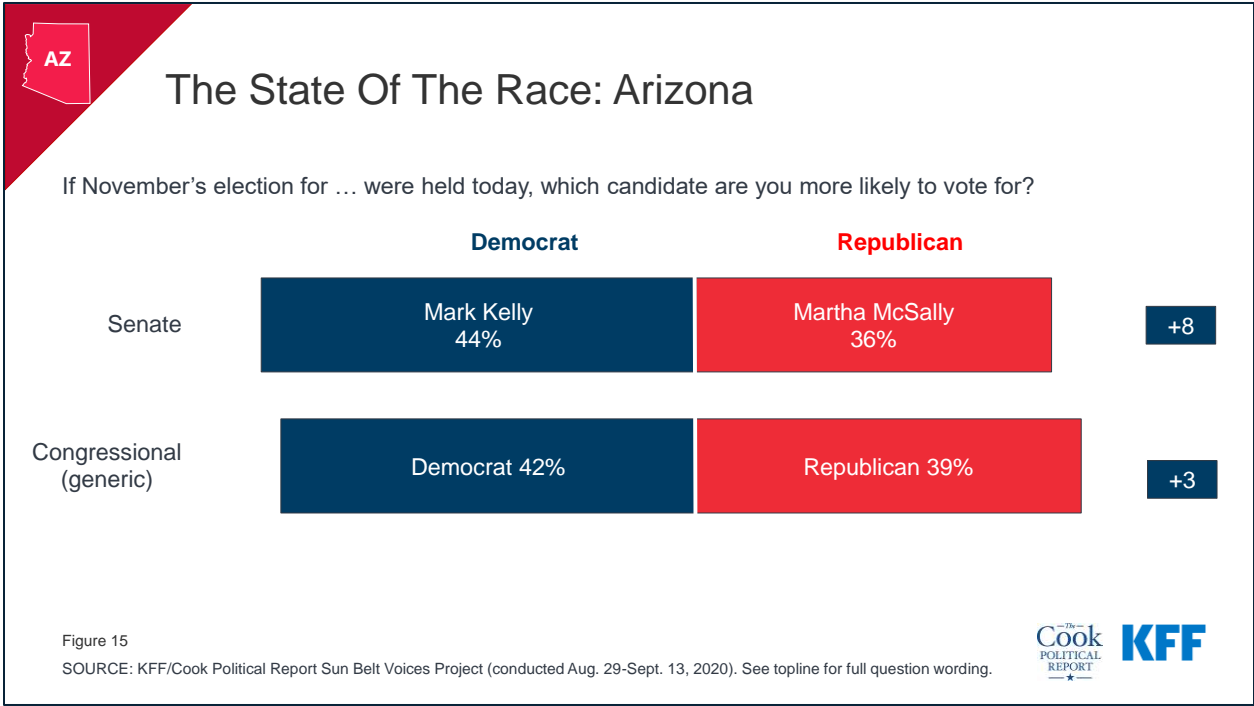


The connection between voters' overall approval of both candidates and their ultimate choice in which candidate to vote for has been illustrated by [others](#), especially in light of President Trump's relatively stable overall job approval numbers throughout his presidency. Despite the twists and turns of the campaign and the various national issues that have captured voters' attention, voters' approval of the candidates continues to be one of the strongest predictors of vote choice. Our analysis of these Sun Belt states finds there is a small share of voters (5%) who say they "approve" of both former Vice President Biden and the job Donald Trump is doing as president (5% of voters in Arizona, 6% of voters in Florida, and 3% of voters in North Carolina). Overall, these voters tend to be less partisan, are more likely to identify as independents and moderates, and more than half are swing voters with 53% saying they are currently undecided about which candidate they plan to vote for while 9% say they are probably going to vote for President Trump and 7% say they are going to vote for Biden.

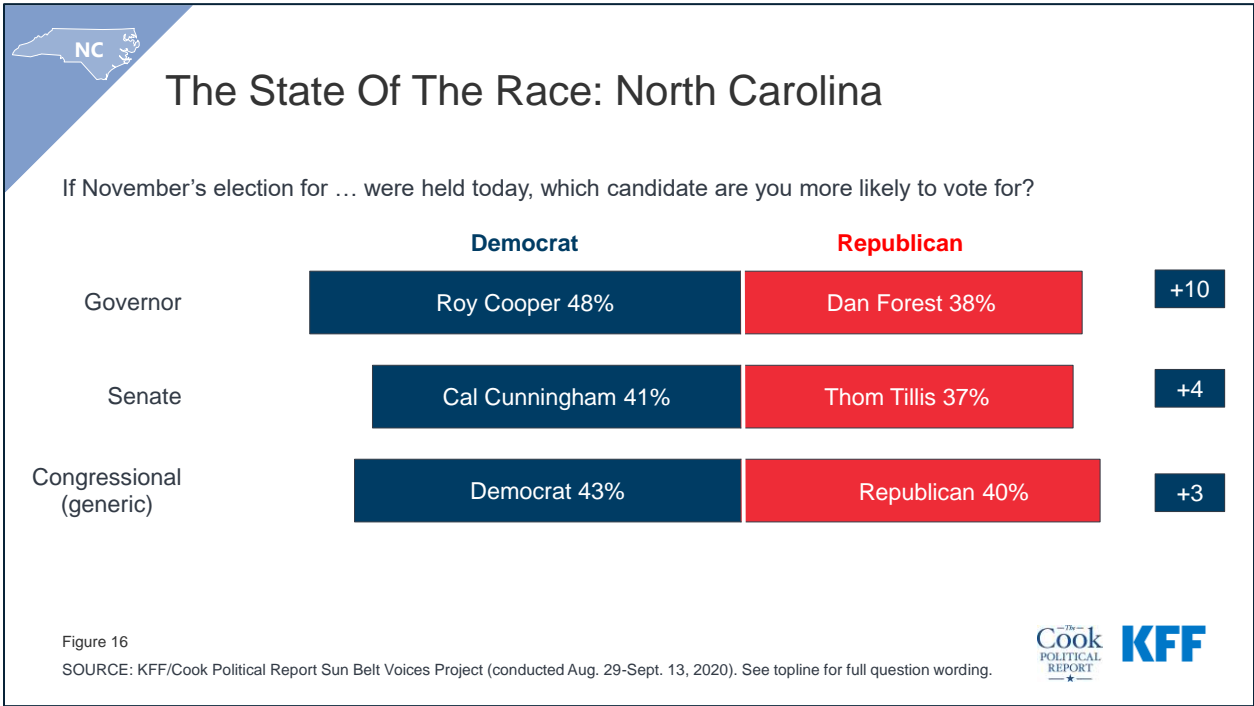
OTHER KEY RACES TO WATCH

In addition to the presidential election, there are other important Senate races in Arizona and North Carolina, a gubernatorial race in North Carolina, as well as congressional races throughout each of the three states. To see the views of voters across demographics within each state, check out our state interactives.

As of the second week of September, a larger share of voters in Arizona say they are voting for Mark Kelly, NASA astronaut than incumbent Sen. Martha McSally (44% compared to 36%).

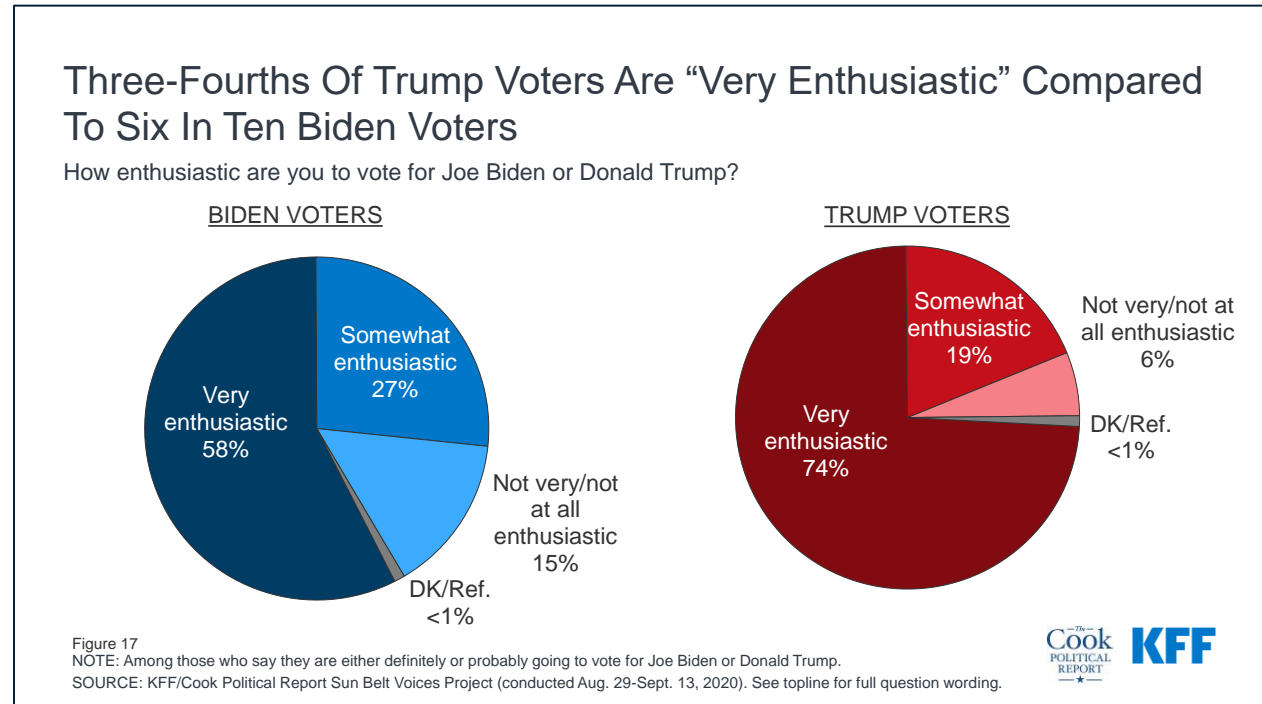


In North Carolina, Democratic Governor Roy Cooper (48%) has a lead over Republican Lt Governor Dan Forrest (38%), while the Senate election between Republican incumbent Thom Tillis and Cal Cunningham is within the margin of error.



Trump Voters Report Higher Enthusiasm In Key Sun Belt States, Motivation To Turnout Is Equal Across Partisans

Three-fourths of voters (74%) who say they are voting for President Trump report being “very enthusiastic” about their vote with an additional one-fifth (19%) saying they are “somewhat enthusiastic.” Voters who say they are voting for Joe Biden report lower levels of enthusiasm with six in ten (58%) saying they are “very enthusiastic” with an additional 27% saying they are “somewhat enthusiastic.” One in seven Biden voters (15%) say they are either “not very enthusiastic” or “not at all enthusiastic” about voting for him compared to 6% of Trump voters who report the same.



Six in ten (61%) Biden voters say that his choice of Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate makes them “more enthusiastic” about voting for him while one-third (34%) say “it does not make a difference.” Only 5% of Biden voters say the choice of Harris as the Vice President nominee makes them “less enthusiastic” about voting for the Democratic ticket.

President Trump’s voters have the enthusiasm advantage in each of the three Sun Belt states included in this poll with about three-fourths of Trump voters in Arizona (73%), Florida (74%), and North Carolina (75%) saying they are “very enthusiastic” to vote for him. Comparatively, about half of Biden voters in Arizona (53%) and about six in ten Biden voters in Florida (60%) and N.C. (57%) say they are “very enthusiastic” about their vote.

Larger Shares Of Trump Voters In Key Sun Belt States Report Being Very Enthusiastic To Vote In 2020

Percent who say they are “very enthusiastic” to vote in 2020:

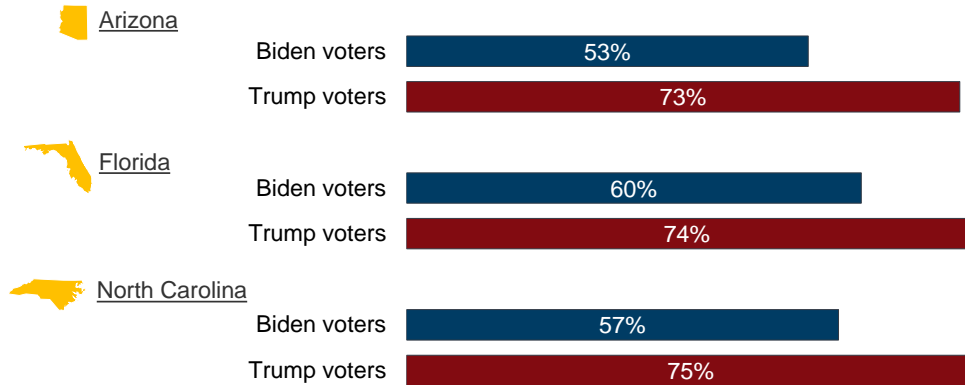


Figure 18

NOTE: Among those who say they are either definitely or probably going to vote for Joe Biden or Donald Trump.

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



Last year’s Blue Wall Voices Project found that a larger share of Democratic voters saying they were “more motivated” to vote in the 2020 election compared to the 2016 election. The latest polling in these Sun Belt states finds that majorities of both Democratic and Republican voters say they are “more motivated” to vote in this year’s election.

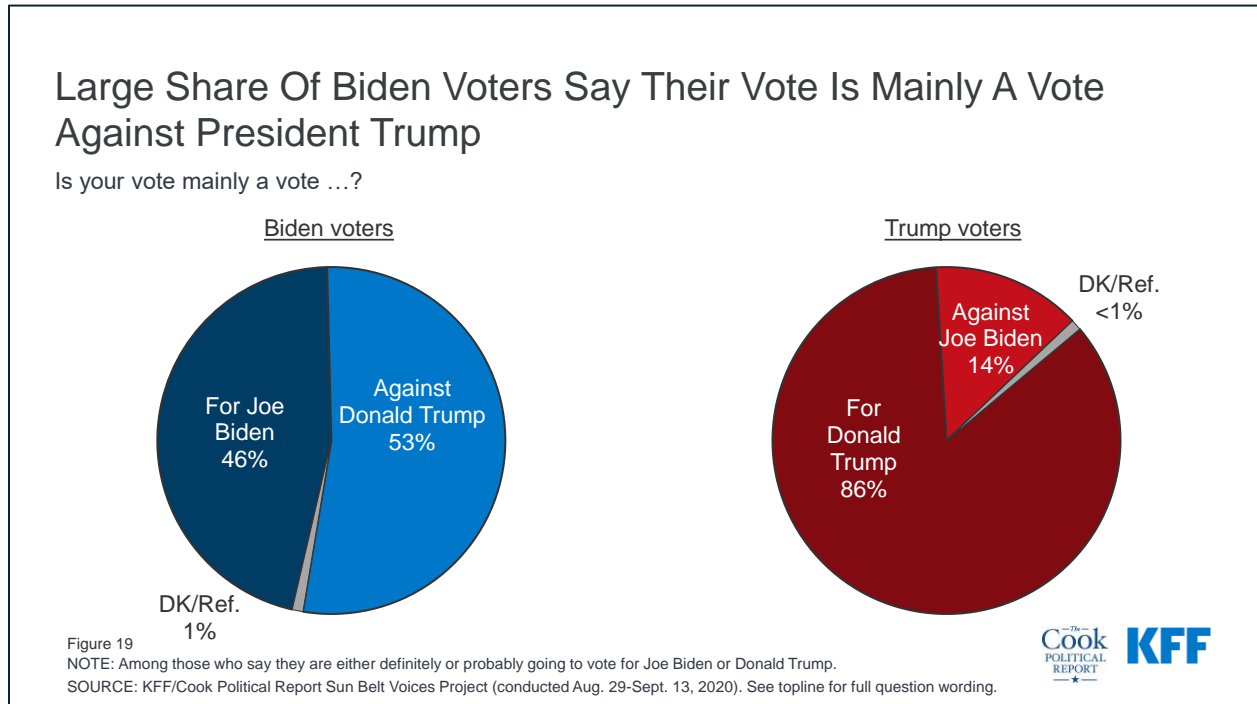
Table 3: Neither Party Has Advantage On Motivation

Percent who say they are more motivated to vote in the 2020 election than in the 2016 election:	Arizona	Florida	North Carolina
Total	58%	59%	66%
Democratic voters	64	63	71
Independent voters	50	55	63
Republican voters	65	67	71

Trump Is A Motivating Force For Voters

While Biden voters may not be as enthusiastic about their vote choice as Trump voters, this doesn't mean that they aren't motivated to vote. Instead, their motivation may be less for their vote choice, and more against President Trump.

Half of Biden voters (53%) in the Sun Belt states polled say their vote is mainly a vote "against Donald Trump" compared to 14% of Trump voters who say their vote is mainly one "against Joe Biden." Nearly nine in ten (86%) Trump voters say their vote is mainly one "for Donald Trump."



Biden voters who say their vote is mainly a vote "against Donald Trump" are younger and less partisan than their counterparts (those who say their vote is "for Joe Biden").

Voters Still See Trump As The Unconventional Candidate

President Trump has long touted his unconventional leadership style and in 2016, he ran as the candidate who was going to deliver a shock to business as usual in Washington, D.C. Perhaps unsurprisingly, vast majorities of Democrats say they prefer Biden's leadership style (96%) over President Trump's (3%), while most Republicans say they prefer President Trump's leadership style (92%). Independents in these three Sun Belt states slightly prefer Biden's leadership style as do a majority of swing voters. Half of swing voters say regardless of who they intend to vote for, they prefer Joe Biden's leadership style over President Trump's. Four in ten (39%) swing voters say they prefer Trump's leadership style while one in ten (11%) are unsure which style they prefer.

Half Of Swing Voters In Sun Belt States Say They Prefer Biden's Leadership Style

Regardless of political party or who you intend to vote for, which candidate's **leadership style** do you prefer?

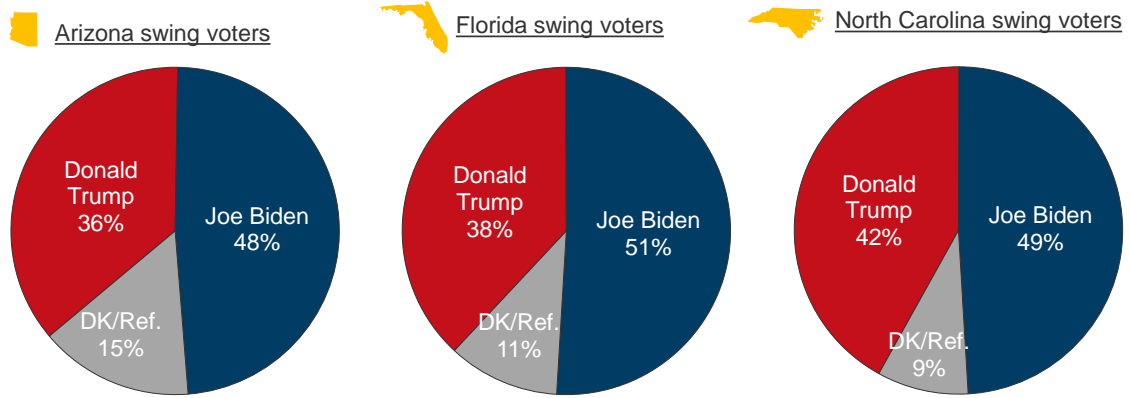


Figure 20

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



When given a list of characteristics that could describe President Trump, two-thirds of voters say *unpredictable* (68%) is a term that describes him while most voters say that *being too old to be president* (81%) and *part of the Washington establishment* (71%) are not terms to describe him. Most voters also say that *cares about people like me* is also not a description of President Trump (56%); however, 85% of Republican voters say this does describe him. Partisans are also divided on whether a *strong leader* is a good describer of President Trump with 92% of Republican voters saying it “does describe him” while 90% of Democratic voters and 53% of independent voters say it “does not describe him.”

Two-Thirds Of Voters Describe Trump As Unpredictable

Do you think each of the following describes **Donald Trump**, or does it not describe him?

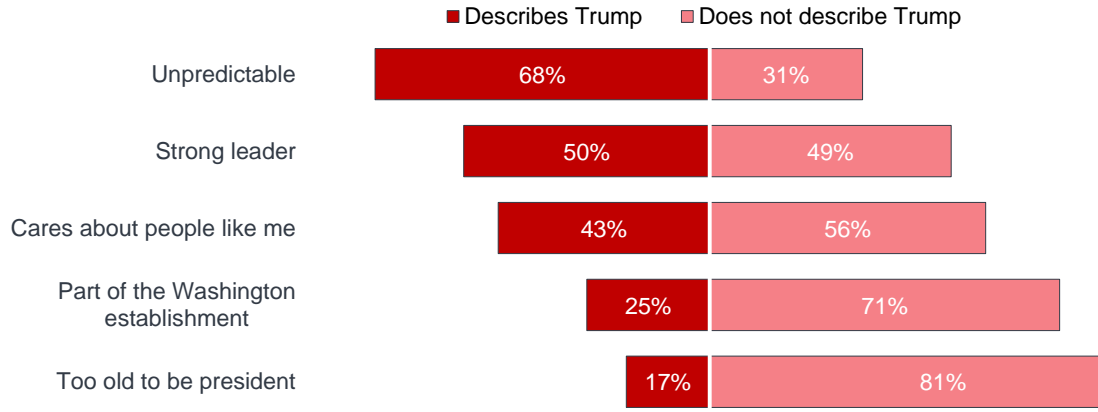


Figure 21

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



Two-thirds of voters say *unpredictable* is a characteristic that describes President Trump but whether that is a “good thing” or a “bad thing” depends on partisanship. Four in ten Republican voters (41%) say President Trump is unpredictable but 27% of them say being unpredictable is a “good thing” while the vast majority of Democrats (86%) as well as most independent voters (58%) say that Donald Trump is unpredictable and this is a “bad thing.”

Partisans Divided On Whether Being “Unpredictable” Is A Good Or Bad Thing

ASKED OF THOSE WHO SAY DONALD TRUMP IS UNPREDICTABLE: Do you think Donald Trump being unpredictable is a good thing or a bad thing? (percentages based on total)

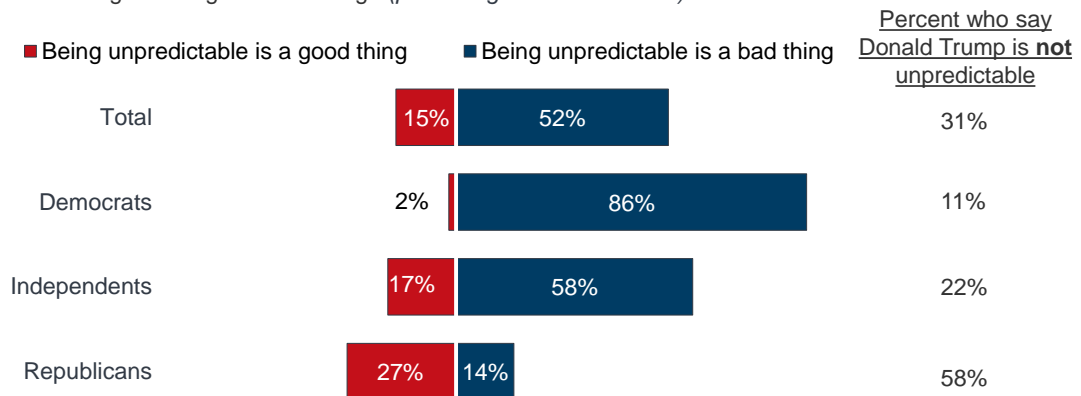


Figure 22

SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



Majorities of voters say that being *part of the Washington establishment* describes Joe Biden (72%) but once again, whether that is a “good thing” or a “bad thing” depends on partisanship. Two-thirds of Democratic voters say being part of the establishment describes Joe Biden but most (53% of all Democratic voters) say Biden being part of the Washington establishment is a “good thing,” while most Republicans (66%) and half of independent voters (41%) say Biden is part of the establishment and this is a “bad thing.”

Partisans Divided On Whether Biden Being “Part Of The Washington Establishment” Is A Good Or Bad Thing

ASKED OF THOSE WHO SAY JOE BIDEN IS PART OF THE WASHINGTON ESTABLISHMENT: Do you think Joe Biden being part of the **Washington establishment** is a good thing or a bad thing? (percentages based on total)

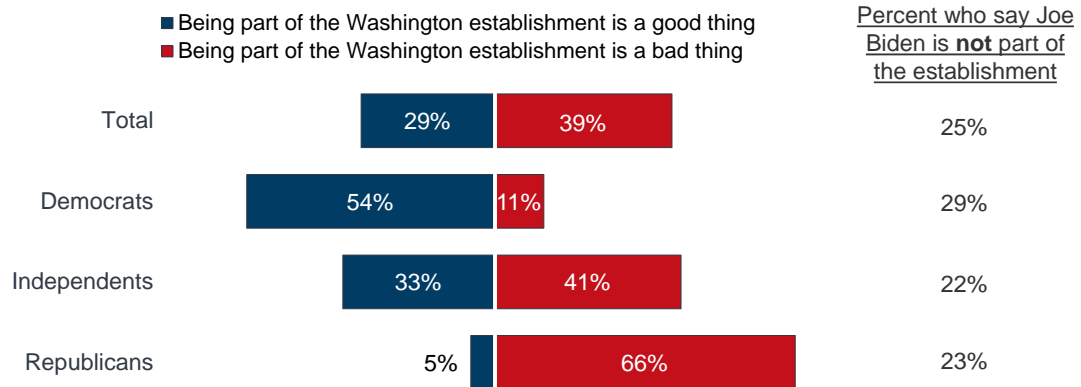


Figure 23
SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



Seven in ten voters say *being part of the Washington establishment* describe Biden, about half of voters say *cares about people like me* (53%), *very liberal* (53%), and *moderate* (52%) describes Biden. Slightly more than half of voters say being *too old to be president* and *strong leader* do not describe Biden (53% and 55%, respectively).

Seven In Ten Voters Describe Joe Biden As Being Part Of Washington Establishment

Do you think each of the following describes **Joe Biden**, or does it not describe him?

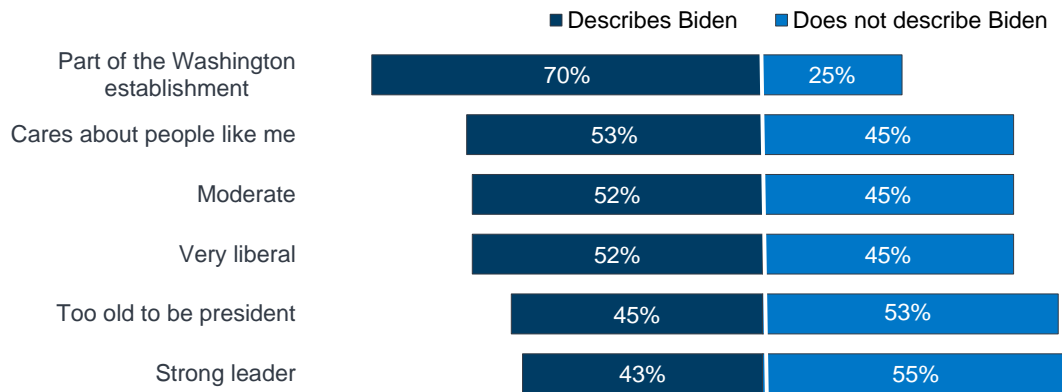


Figure 24
SOURCE: KFF/Cook Political Report Sun Belt Voices Project (conducted Aug. 29-Sept. 13, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



Views of what characteristics describe and do not describe Biden and Trump fall largely along party lines with majorities of Democratic voters saying *strong leader* describes Biden and most Republican voters say the same about President Trump.

Swing voters, on the other hand, may have their voting decisions impacted by such messages. Most swing voters say that *moderate* is a term that describes Biden well, with most of them and nearly half of voters overall saying this is a “good thing” (AZ: 44%, FL: 49%, N.C.: 46%). In addition, six in ten swing voters in Florida and N.C. say *cares about people like me* is something that describes Biden well.

Table 4. Swing Voters' Views Of Biden			
Percent of swing voters who say each of the following describes Joe Biden ...	Arizona swing voters	Florida swing voters	N.C. swing voters
Too old to be president	51%	42%	39%
Part of the Washington establishment	69	70	62
Is this a good thing?	25	35	25
Is this a bad thing?	41	32	35
Very liberal	52	42	45
Is this a good thing?	17	15	16
Is this a bad thing?	34	26	29
Moderate	59	62	54
Is this a good thing?	44	49	46
Is this a bad thing?	13	11	7
Cares about people like me	46	61	57
Strong leader	38	38	42

A majority of swing voters in Arizona (59%), Florida (66%), and North Carolina (61%) say President Trump is unpredictable and this is a bad thing. Less than half of this share say President Trump *cares about people like me* and no more than half say that being a *strong leader* describes him well.

Table 5. Swing Voters' Views Of Trump

Percent of swing voters who say each of the following describes Donald Trump...	Arizona swing voters	Florida swing voters	N.C. swing voters
Too old to be president	19%	16%	17%
Part of the Washington establishment	25	28	26
Is this a good thing?	9	13	12
Is this a bad thing?	15	15	12
Unpredictable	74	82	81
Is this a good thing?	14	14	18
Is this a bad thing?	59	66	61
Cares about people like me	25	30	34
Strong leader	45	46	46

Appendices

Appendix Table 1								
Percent who say they approve or disapprove of:	Total Voters				Swing Voters			
	Total Sun Belt Voters	Arizona	Florida	North Carolina	Total Sun Belt Swing Voters	Arizona Swing Voters	Florida Swing Voters	N.C. Swing Voters
Donald Trump								
Approve (NET)	48%	46%	48%	48%	45%	46%	45%	47%
Strongly approve	32	31	31	33	7	9	7	7
Somewhat approve	16	15	17	15	38	36	38	40
Disapprove (NET)	52	54	51	52	54	54	54	53
Somewhat disapprove	8	7	8	7	23	21	24	24
Strongly disapprove	44	46	43	45	30	32	30	29
<i>Net approval (percentage points)</i>	-4	-8	-3	-4	-9	-8	-9	-6
Joe Biden								
Approve (NET)	50%	50%	51%	50%	56%	52%	60%	52%
Strongly approve	25	22	25	26	7	5	7	7
Somewhat approve	26	28	26	24	50	47	53	44
Disapprove (NET)	49	49	48	50	42	46	39	46
Somewhat disapprove	13	13	13	12	27	30	26	27
Strongly disapprove	36	36	35	37	15	16	12	19
<i>Net approval (percentage points)</i>	+1	+1	+3	0	+14	+6	+21	+6
*Swing voters include those who said they will probably vote for Donald Trump, probably vote for Joe Biden, are undecided, or don't know who they will vote for in the upcoming election.								

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