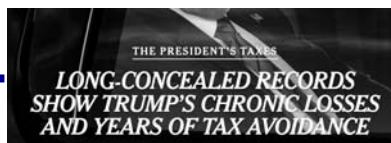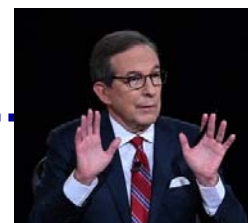# September & October 2020 surprises (so far)

9/18
Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg dies

9/23
Officers not charged in death of Breonna Taylor

9/27
NYT Trump Tax Story Breaks

9/29
Raucous Presidential Debate

10/2
President Tests Positive for COVID

10/5
President released from Reed Hospital

10/7
Vice Presidential Debate

10/9
Second Presidential Debate Cancelled

10/12
Amy Coney Barrett confirmation hearings begin

Assessing the 2020 Presidential Election – October 20, 2020

Right Direction/Wrong Track—U.S. Historical Trend
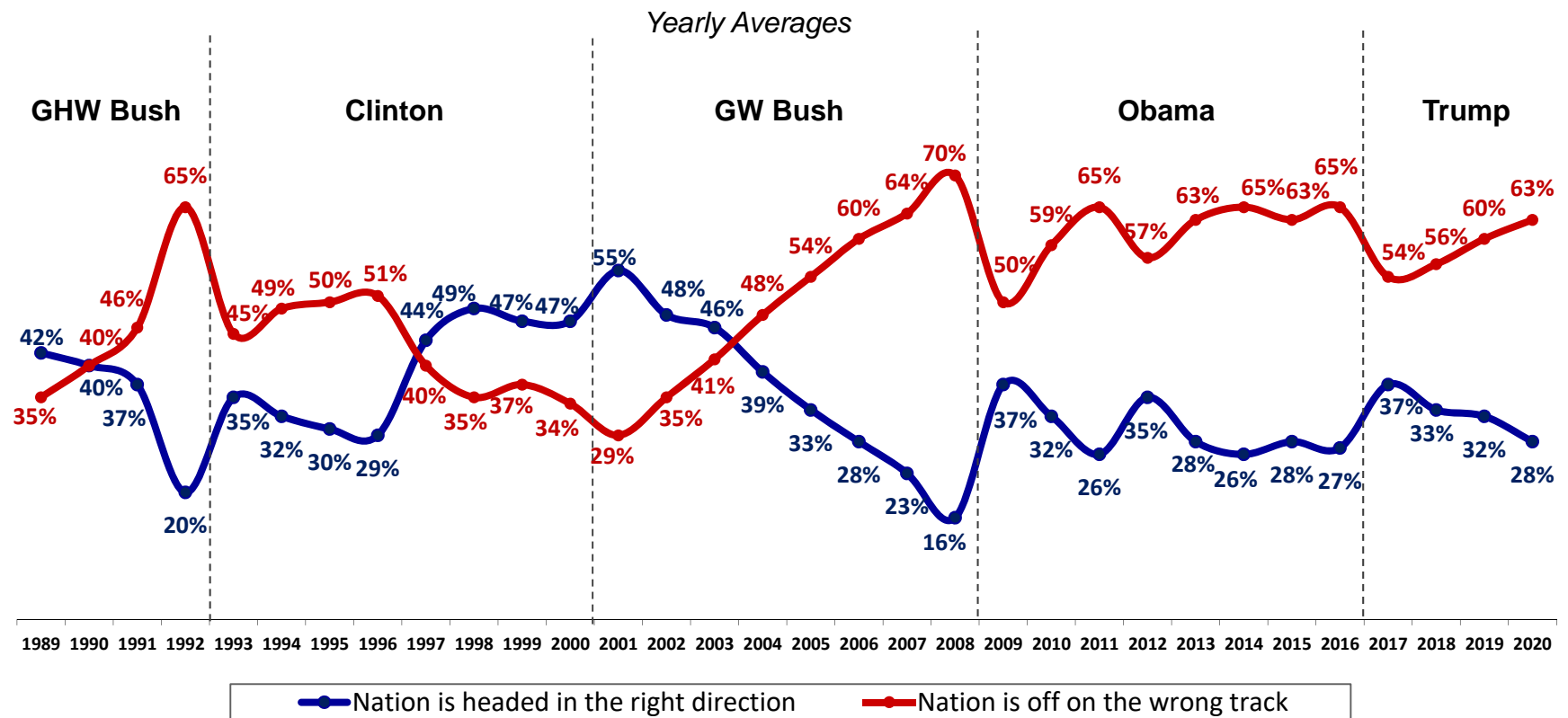
Yearly Averages

Data Source: NBC-WSJ poll, Mid-October 2020

Assessing the 2020 Presidential Election – October 20, 2020

Mood of the Country's Impact on Presidential Elections

Year	Right Direction	Party Change in White House
1980*	20%	Yes
1992	20%	Yes
2008	16%	Yes
2020	28%	?

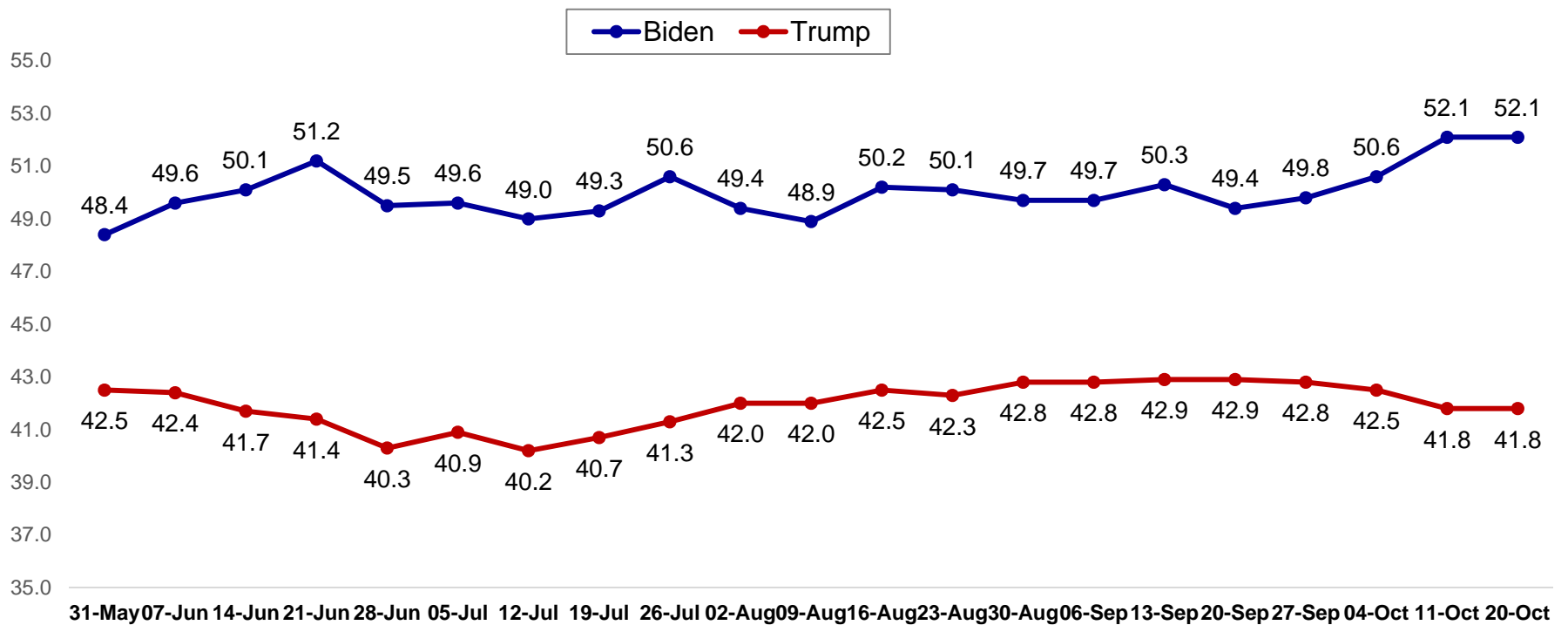Data Source: NBC-WSJ poll, Mid-October 2020   *1980 Data From The Roper Organization, February 1980

Assessing the 2020 Presidential Election – October 20, 2020

National polls show Biden's lead growing.

Real Clear Politics Poll Average - General Election 2020

Where the Race Will Be Decided: the battleground states of 2016 will be determinative in 2020.

270 to Win: Trump can lose 36 electoral votes & still win

CLINTON	270 TO WIN	TRUMP
232		**306**
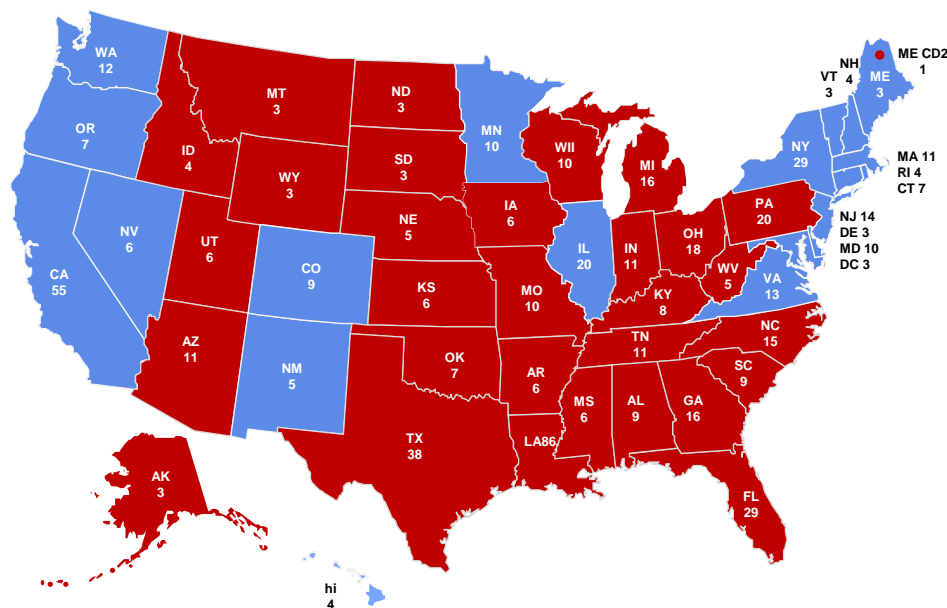
STATE	NET Trump in 2016	EVs	RCP* AVG as of 10/14
ME	-2.96%	3	+12.8
NV	-2.42%	6	+6.0
MN	-1.52%	10	+9.0
NH	-.37%	4	+8.7
MI	.23%	16	+7.0
PA	.72%	20	+7.1
WI	.77%	10	+6.1
FL	1.20%	29	+3.7
AZ	3.55%	11	+2.7
NC	3.68%	15	+1.4

*538/Real Clear Politics average

Trump appears to be losing momentum among key voting blocs.

■ Trump voters   ■ Biden voters

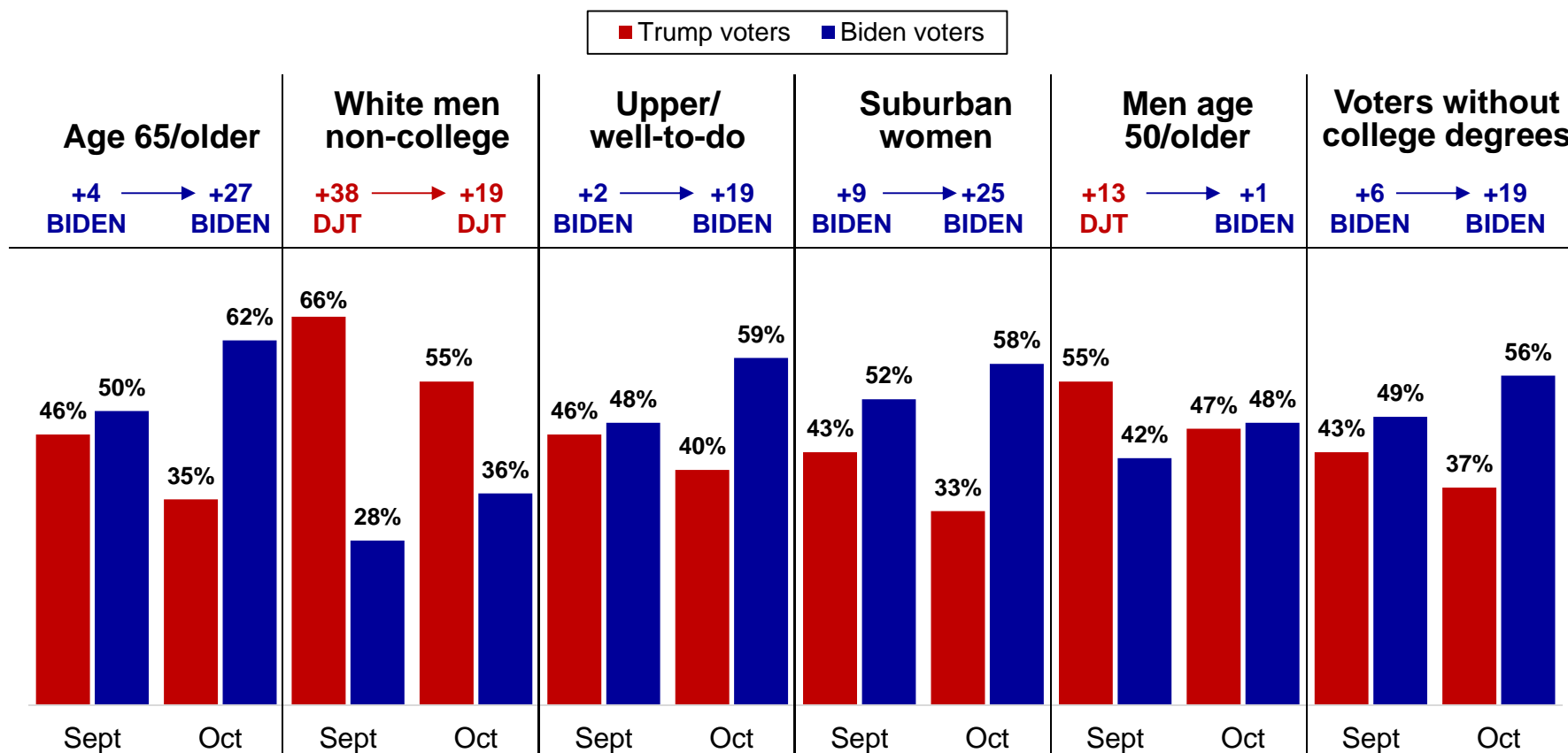| Age 65/older	White men non-college	Upper/ well-to-do	Suburban women	Men age 50/older	Voters without college degrees
+4 → +27 BIDEN BIDEN	+38 → +19 DJT DJT	+2 → +19 BIDEN BIDEN	+9 → +25 BIDEN BIDEN	+13 → +1 DJT BIDEN	+6 → +19 BIDEN BIDEN

Age 65/older: Sept — 46% / 50%; Oct — 35% / 62%

White men non-college: Sept — 66% / 28%; Oct — 55% / 36%

Upper/well-to-do: Sept — 46% / 48%; Oct — 40% / 59%

Suburban women: Sept — 43% / 52%; Oct — 33% / 58%

Men age 50/older: Sept — 55% / 42%; Oct — 47% / 48%

Voters without college degrees: Sept — 43% / 49%; Oct — 37% / 56%

Sept   Oct   Sept   Oct   Sept   Oct   Sept   Oct   Sept   Oct   Sept   Oct

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Voters' Assessment of Trump & Biden on Top Issues
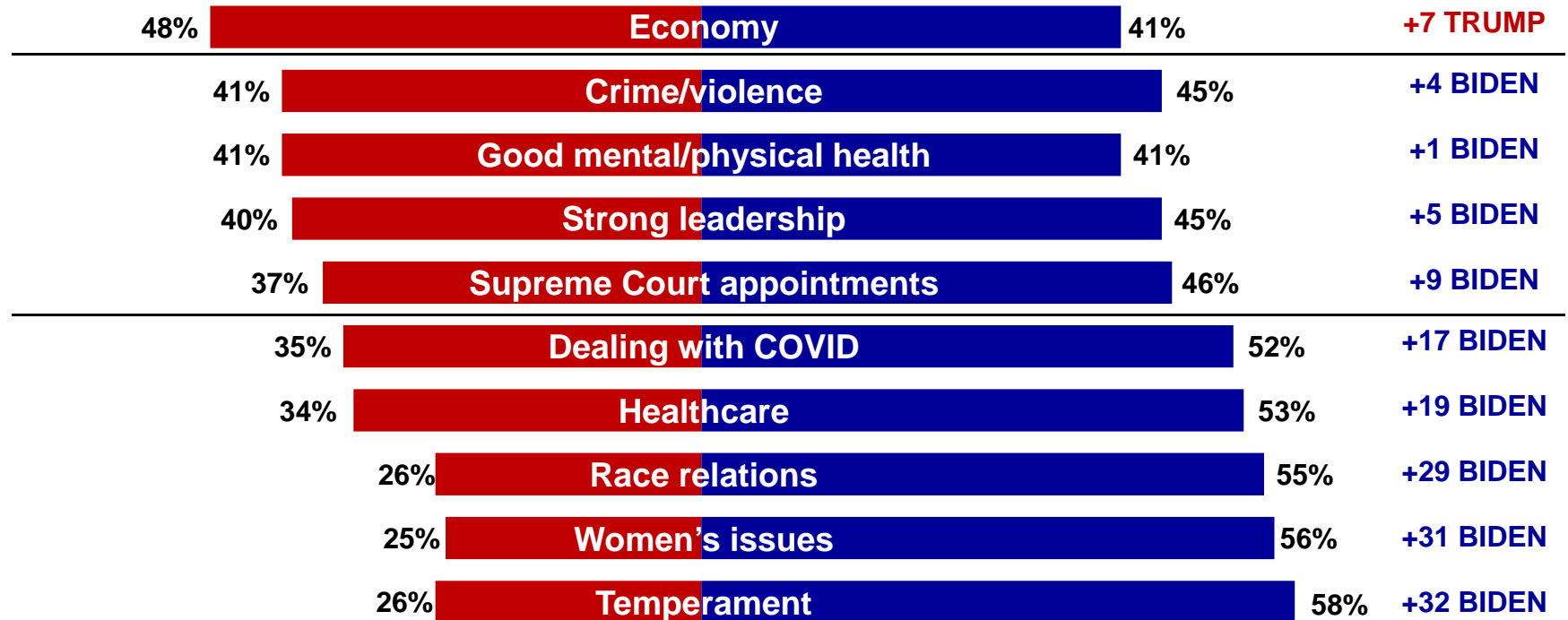
	Trump	Issue	Biden	
	48%	**Economy**	41%	**+7 TRUMP**
	41%	**Crime/violence**	45%	**+4 BIDEN**
	41%	**Good mental/physical health**	41%	**+1 BIDEN**
	40%	**Strong leadership**	45%	**+5 BIDEN**
	37%	**Supreme Court appointments**	46%	**+9 BIDEN**
	35%	**Dealing with COVID**	52%	**+17 BIDEN**
	34%	**Healthcare**	53%	**+19 BIDEN**
	26%	**Race relations**	55%	**+29 BIDEN**
	25%	**Women's issues**	56%	**+31 BIDEN**
	26%	**Temperament**	58%	**+32 BIDEN**

Data Source: NBC-WSJ poll, September-October 2020

Polarized America: Voters have different agendas for the country.

Top voting issue	All voters	Trump voters	Biden voters
The Economy	44%	68%	23%
Healthcare	29%	16%	38%
Coronavirus	27%	9%	42%
Race Relations	21%	7%	33%
Crime and Violence	17%	30%	6%
Climate Change	15%	1%	27%
Abortion	11%	18%	6%
Immigration	10%	16%	6%
Guns	10%	22%	2%

Data Source: NBC-WSJ poll, Mid-October 2020

Trump cannot afford for the election to center on coronavirus.

Trump's Handling of Coronavirus
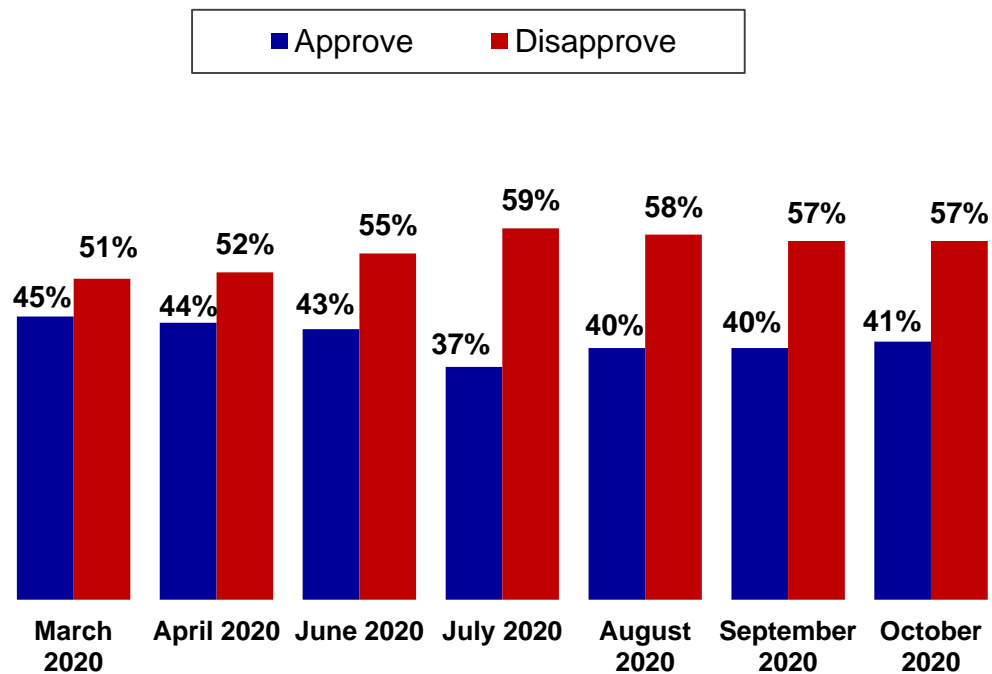
Approve ■ **Disapprove** ■

- Just 22% say the U.S. has coronavirus completely or mostly under control, 78% say it is somewhat or not at all under control.

- Almost half of voters (48%) say they don't trust at all what President Trump says about the coronavirus, just 19% trust him a great deal.

Data source: Washington Post poll, October 2020

	March 2020	April 2020	June 2020	July 2020	August 2020	September 2020	October 2020
Approve	45%	44%	43%	37%	40%	40%	41%
Disapprove	51%	52%	55%	59%	58%	57%	57%

Data Source: NBC-WSJ poll, Mid-October 2020

Assessing the 2020 Presidential Election – October 20, 2020

HART RESEARCH

Instead, a Trump victory depends on focusing on the economy.

Trump's Handling of the Economy

Legend: ◆ Approve ■ Disapprove

Approve line values:
- Apr. 2017: 44%
- Jun. 2017: 44%
- Sep. 2017: 41%
- Oct. 2017: 42%
- Jul. 2018: 50%
- Jan. 2019: 51%
- May 2019: 51%
- Aug. 2019: 49%
- Oct. 2019: 52%
- Feb. 2020: 53%
- Jul. 2020: 54%
- Sep. 2020*: 50%
- Oct. 2020*: 51%

Disapprove line values:
- Apr. 2017: 46%
- Jun. 2017: 48%
- Sep. 2017: 36%
- Oct. 2017: 37%
- Jul. 2018: 34%
- Jan. 2019: 45%
- May 2019: 41%
- Aug. 2019: 46%
- Oct. 2019: 43%
- Feb. 2020: 38%
- Jul. 2020: 42%
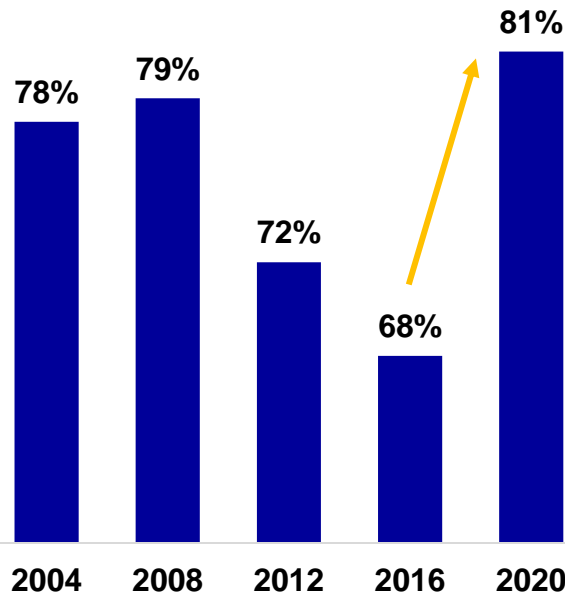- Sep. 2020*: 46%
- Oct. 2020*: 48%
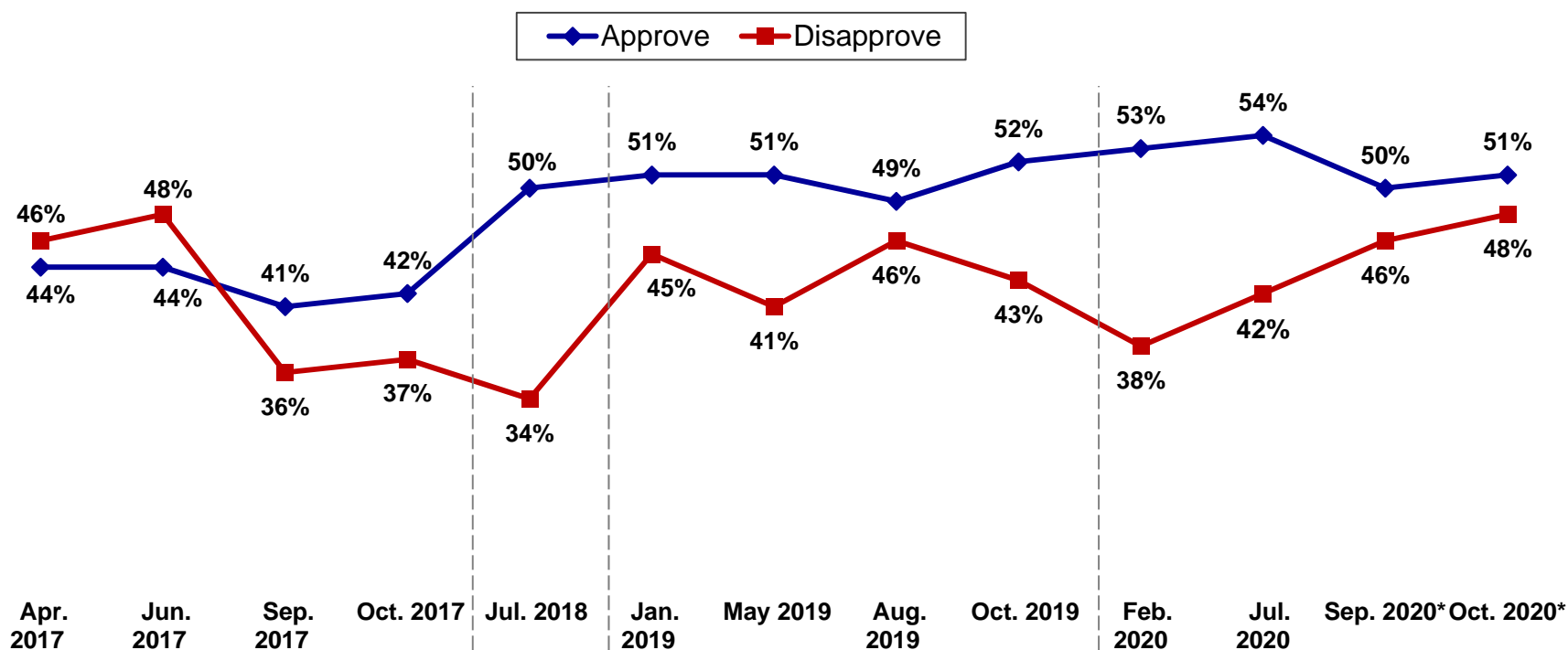
Data Source: NBC-WSJ poll, July 2020 *Real Clear Politics Poll Average: Trump Job Approval for Economy

Assessing the 2020 Presidential Election – October 20, 2020

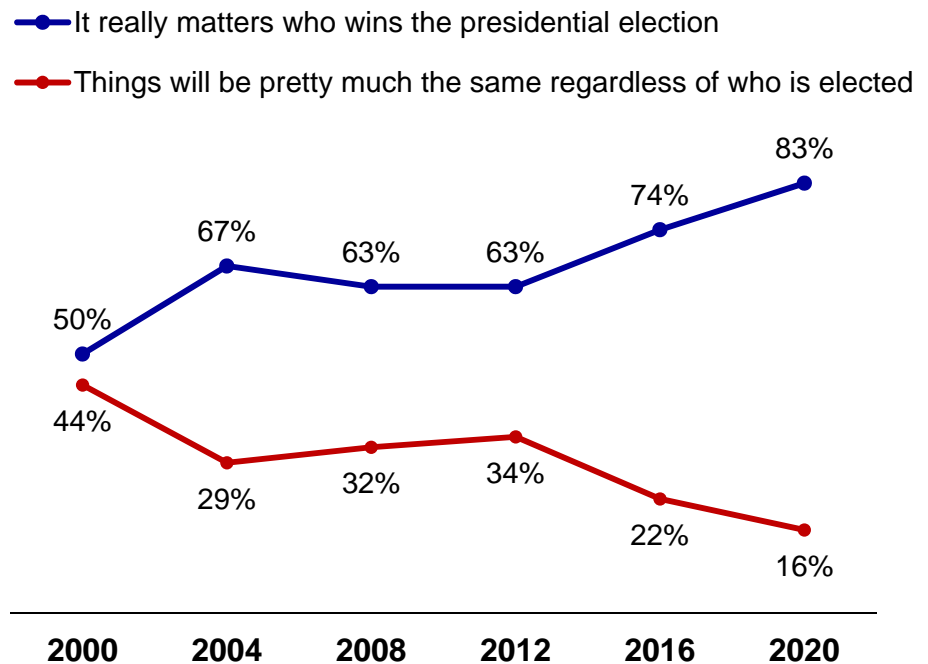# Engagement & perceived consequences are at all-time highs.

Interest in Election

High Interest September/October of Election Year*

- 2004: 78%
- 2008: 79%
- 2012: 72%
- 2016: 68%
- 2020: 81%

Data Source: NBC-WSJ poll, September-October 2020

% of registered voters who say…

- It really matters who wins the presidential election
- Things will be pretty much the same regardless of who is elected

It really matters who wins the presidential election:
- 2000: 50%
- 2004: 67%
- 2008: 63%
- 2012: 63%
- 2016: 74%
- 2020: 83%

Things will be pretty much the same regardless of who is elected:
- 2000: 44%
- 2004: 29%
- 2008: 32%
- 2012: 34%
- 2016: 22%
- 2020: 16%

Data Source: Pew Research poll, July-August 2020

What to Expect on Election Night

- More than 28 million early votes have already been cast (5x more than were cast early in 2016).

- In swing states with party registration (*e.g.* Fl, NC, Pa), preliminary counts show returns from Democrats outnumber Republicans by about 2:1. (But that is short of some Democrats' goals.)

- Some key states (*e.g.* Wisconsin, Pennsylvania) do not start counting absentee ballots until Election Day.

Data Source: Pew Research poll, September-October 2020

Plan to Vote in Person *on 11/3*	Plan to Vote in Person *Early*	Vote by Mail / Absentee
33% of Voters	**21% of Voters**	**39% of Voters**
50% of Trump supporters 20% of Biden supporters	20% of Trump supporters 22% of Biden supporters	25% of Trump supporters 51% of Biden supporters
TRUMP +32	**BIDEN +15**	**BIDEN +42**

As 2016 demonstrated, national polls are <u>not</u> determinative or predictive.

- State polls in key battleground states were scarce and often poor quality.

- Polls underestimated the turnout of white non-college-educated voters, especially in the Midwest.

- Undecided voters broke strongly for Trump in the final week of the campaign.

- The October surprise: The Comey letter

- There is an important difference between measuring and handicapping!