



### Dead Heat in Swing State Presidential Polling

There are now less than two weeks until Election Day, and the latest polls continue to show a razor-tight race for the White House. With only days left to make their cases to the American people, Vice President Kamala Harris and Former President Donald Trump are each making their final pushes. Both campaigns have been embarking on near nonstop visits and media appearances in crucial battleground states. Harris continues to frame her campaign as one for all Americans and has attempted to form a broad coalition which includes many of the “Never Trump” Republicans such as Former U.S. Representative Liz Cheney as well as a few major celebrity endorsements like Taylor Swift and recently, rapper Eminem. On the other hand, Trump is encouraging voters to remember that Harris is the incumbent VP under Biden, and that she is the one tied to the current administration. Trump is seeking to appeal to Americans that are disgruntled with President Biden’s handling of the economy, foreign policy, and immigration, and in doing so link Biden with Harris.

The latest polls have the race between Harris and Trump as neck and neck. For national polls in the preceding days, FiveThirtyEight gives Harris a +1.7 lead, and 270toWin shows an even tighter +1.4 lead for the incumbent vice president. While national polls have their value, providing a countrywide picture, the real battleground is in the critical swing states. Given that the Electoral College will decide the winner instead of the national popular vote, the polling in these states is rightfully dominating the headlines. The circumstances in these states are even more of a dead heat. As previously mentioned, FiveThirtyEight has Harris with a narrow lead nationally. However, out of 100 election simulations, they have Trump winning the electoral college 52 times and Harris winning in 48 of them – with a less than 1-in-a-100 chance of a 269-269 tie. The seven key states garnering the majority of the upcoming election’s focus are Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Pennsylvania is receiving the most attention of all, as it has 19 electoral votes – more than any other battleground state – and is showing a near tie in polling. The state is viewed as being of utmost importance for both campaign’s respective paths to potential victory. Trump won the state in 2016, and then Biden flipped it in 2020. For the Democratic Party, their last candidate to win the presidential election without Pennsylvania was Harry S. Truman all the way back in 1948.

Across the swing states, Trump is leading by 0.4% in Michigan according to 270toWin, while Harris is leading by 0.1% according to FiveThirtyEight. Polling shows more of the same extremely tight margins in the rest of the battleground states as well. When averaging FiveThirtyEight and 270toWin together, Harris is shown winning in Wisconsin by 0.45% and in Nevada by 0.25%. The polls then have Trump winning North Carolina by 0.7%, Arizona and Georgia by 1.8%, and Pennsylvania by 0.35%. If these predictions are perfectly accurate, unlikely as this might be, this would give Trump 296 electoral votes and the Electoral College win, with Harris falling short at 242. However, we know from Trump's shocking win in 2016 and the Democrats' surprising success in the 2022 midterms, that we cannot rely so heavily on polling – especially considering that these all fall well within the margin of error. What the numbers ultimately tell us is that the election will most certainly be decided by which campaign can better mobilize voters in the seven main swing states where only a few thousand votes will determine the outcome.

The issues weighing most on citizens' minds will also be extremely significant for both turnout and which campaign can win over vital independent voters. As it is in most elections, the state of the economy and inflation are issues of high importance, along with others such as healthcare, immigration, and U.S. policy regarding the Gaza War. Recent surveys show Democrats having the edge in voter confidence in areas like social equality, climate change/environment, education, and healthcare; while Republicans do so on the issues of employment, immigration, law & order, and national security. The single biggest issue to most voters appears to be the economy. Trump has vowed to return the nation to the economic success seen during the early part of his presidency prior to the pandemic, while Harris has promised to tackle high prices by taking on corporate greed and, at the same time, offer opportunities to grow and strengthen the middle class by providing loans to entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses. In the end, it may come down to whether or not most voters see Harris as her own candidate who will fulfill her promises or as a continuation of the Biden administration. One thing that is definite is that on November 5th, all eyes will be fixated on the seven essential swing states that will win the presidency for either Harris or Trump.