

# 2020 swing states

An overview of battleground states in recent presidential elections including recent trends and a 2020 look ahead

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**Producer**

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# Roadmap



Overview



2020 look ahead

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# Gaining electoral votes in swing states is crucial to winning a presidential election



## Battleground states

- Battleground, or swing, states are states with electoral college votes that are not considered guarantees for either political party
- These states typically have a smaller popular vote margin between candidates in the general election and thus have the power to determine the outcome of the election
- Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wisconsin are all considered traditional swing states

## Impacting outcomes and candidate behavior



### Campaign visits

During the election cycle, a presidential candidate is likely to dedicate a considerable amount of their time on the trail in swing states. From mid-June to the November 2016 election, the Trump-Pence campaign visited Pennsylvania 30 times and the Clinton-Kaine campaign visited Pennsylvania 29 times.



### Spending

Candidates prioritize spending in swing states during presidential elections. In 2004, 52% of all ad money spent in the month leading up to the November election was spent in Ohio, Florida, and Pennsylvania. In late October 2016, Clinton's campaign invested \$6 million dollars in six swing states.



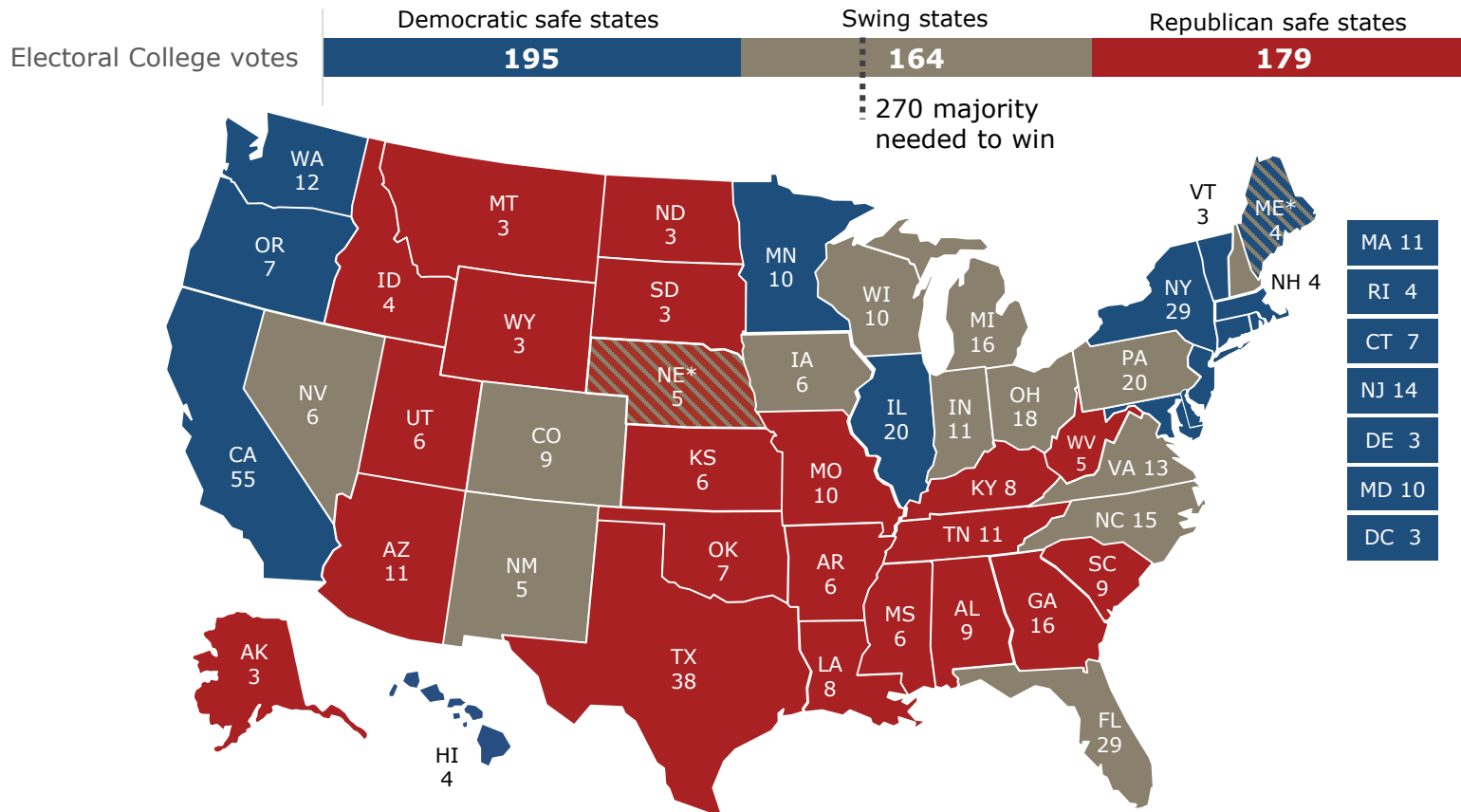
### Other resources

In addition to campaign visits and spending, other resources will also be dedicated to swing states. A candidate or party may choose to set up field offices in states that are expected to have close calls or contribute a high number of electoral votes. National attention is also directed to polling done with battleground state voters.

# Thirty seven states have been won by the same political party in the past four presidential elections

## Presidential election map since 2000

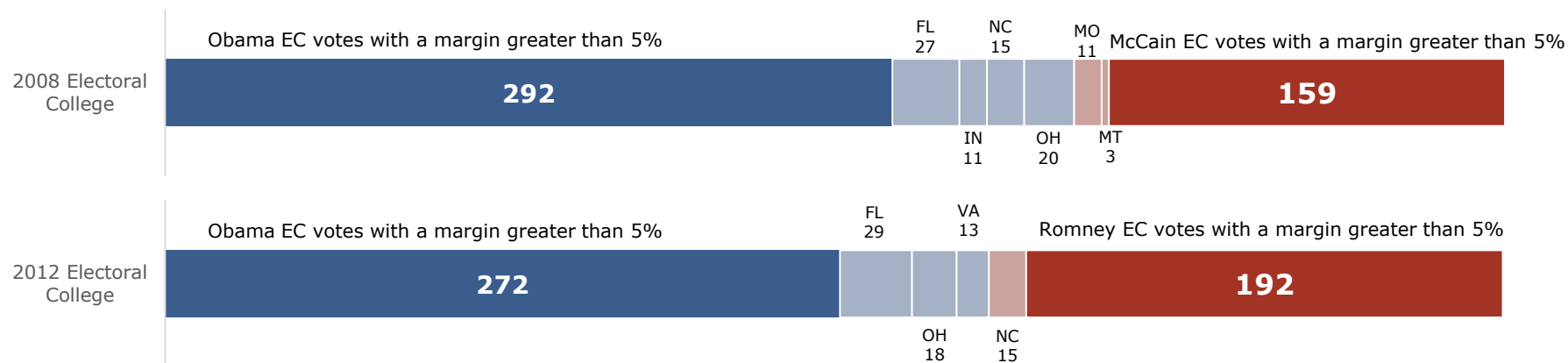
■ Consistent Democratic win ■ Won by both parties in presidential elections ■ Consistent Republican win



\*Nebraska and Maine award two electors each to the winner of their state's popular vote and one elector to the winner of each of their congressional districts

Sources: 270towin.

# In both of Obama's elections, there were only a few states decided by margins of less than 5%



## Safely securing states

In 2008, only six states ended up with less than a five-point margin, compared to the 11 states with less than a five-point margin in the 2004 election. In 2012, only four states were decided by a margin of less than 5 points. During both elections, Obama prioritized visits to swing states.



## Success in the Midwest

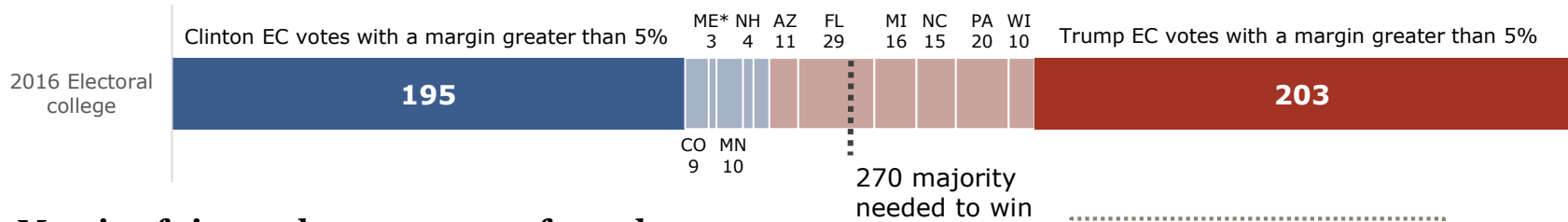
In both 2008 and 2012, Obama secured electoral votes in the Midwest. Heading into the 2012 election, the recession was predicted to have a negative impact on Obama's re-election. Despite this, Obama was leading Romney in Ohio ahead of November 2012. This is partially attributed to Obama's successful automobile rescue and a declining unemployment rate.



## Voter support

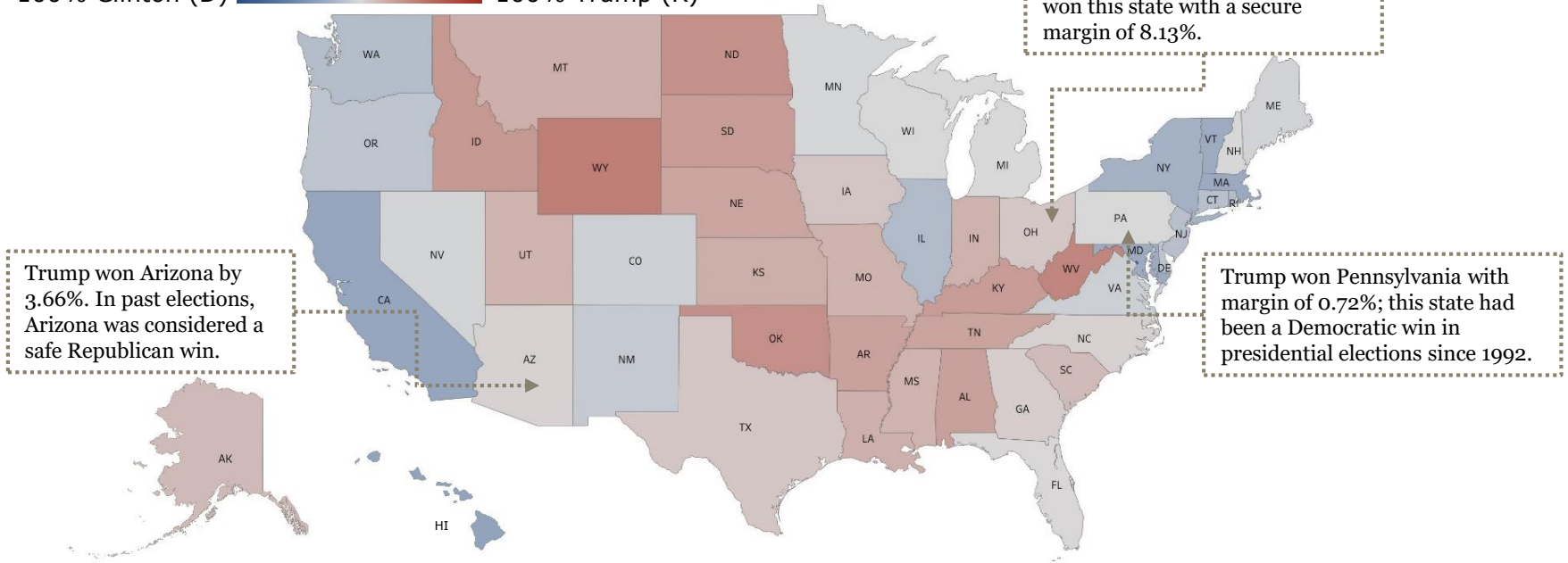
In 2008 and 2012, Obama received a significant amount of support from young adults, minorities, and lower income families. In 2012, he was able to secure liberal voters, whose share of the electorate grew. 2008 also marked a 40-year high in election turnout with enthusiasm from Black and Democrat voters.

# In 2016, there were 11 states with a margin of victory of less than five points



## Margin of victory, by percentage of popular vote

100% Clinton (D) 100% Trump (R)



\*Nebraska and Maine award two electors each to the winner of their state's popular vote and one elector to the winner of each of their congressional districts, Clinton won Maine's popular vote and 1<sup>st</sup> District, Trump won Maine's 2<sup>nd</sup> district; Trump won Nebraska's popular vote and all three congressional districts

Sources: FEC

# Roadmap



Overview



2020 look ahead

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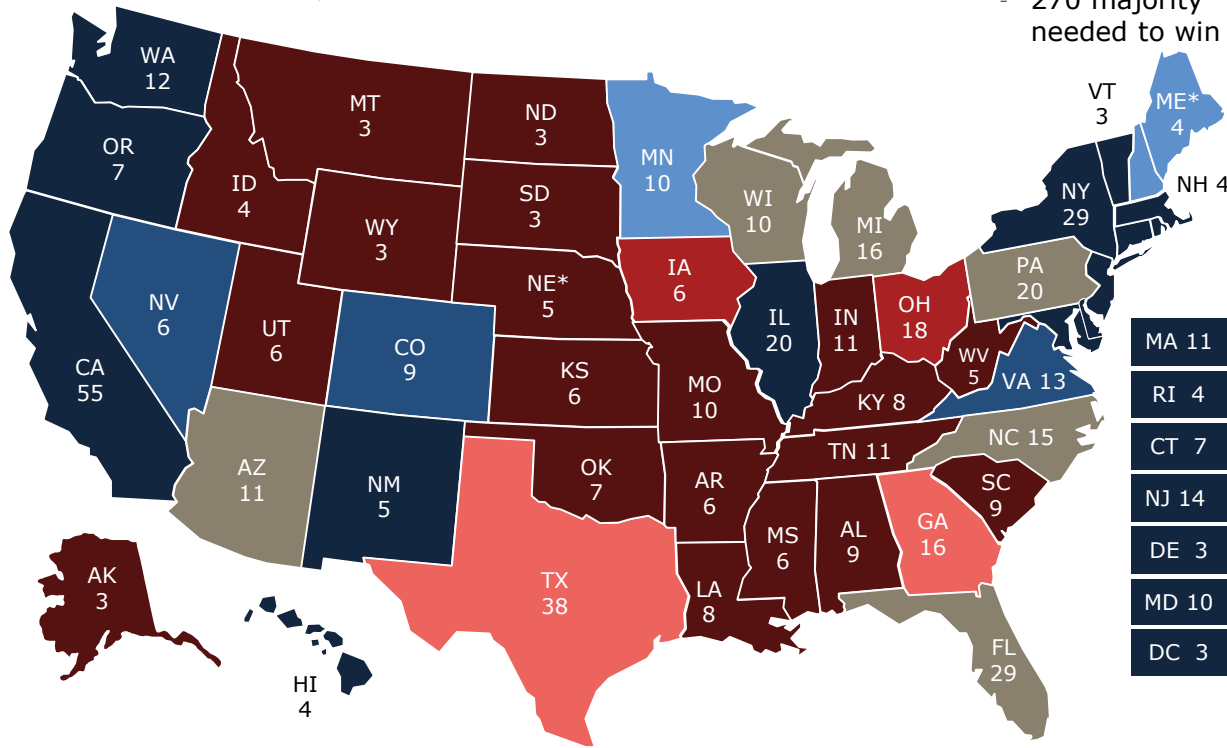
# 102 electoral votes are considered toss ups for the 2020 presidential election

## Cook Political Report: 2020 Electoral College ratings

■ Solid D 
 ■ Likely D 
 ■ Lean D 
 ■ Toss Up 
 ■ Lean R 
 ■ Likely R 
 ■ Solid R



270 majority needed to win



### Split electoral votes

State	District		
	1	2	3
Nebraska	Solid R	Solid R	Toss Up
Maine	Solid D	Likely R	

\*Nebraska and Maine award two electors each to the winner of their state's popular vote and one elector to the winner of each of their congressional districts

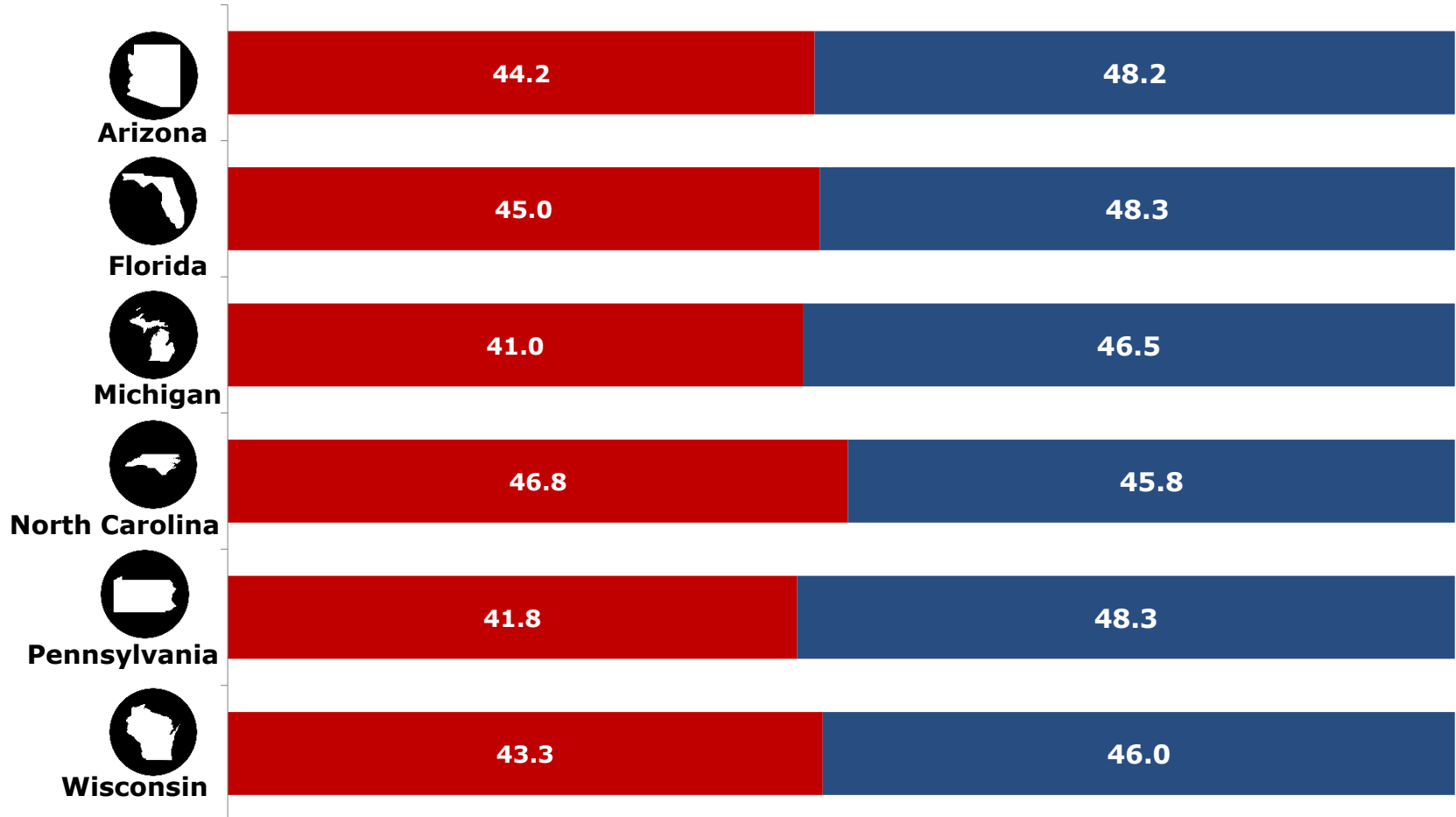
Sources: Cook Political Report.



# Biden is slightly ahead in all swing states except NC

## Average of head-to-head general election polls

REALCLEARPOLITICS, AS OF MAY 22, 2020



Sources: RealClearPolitics

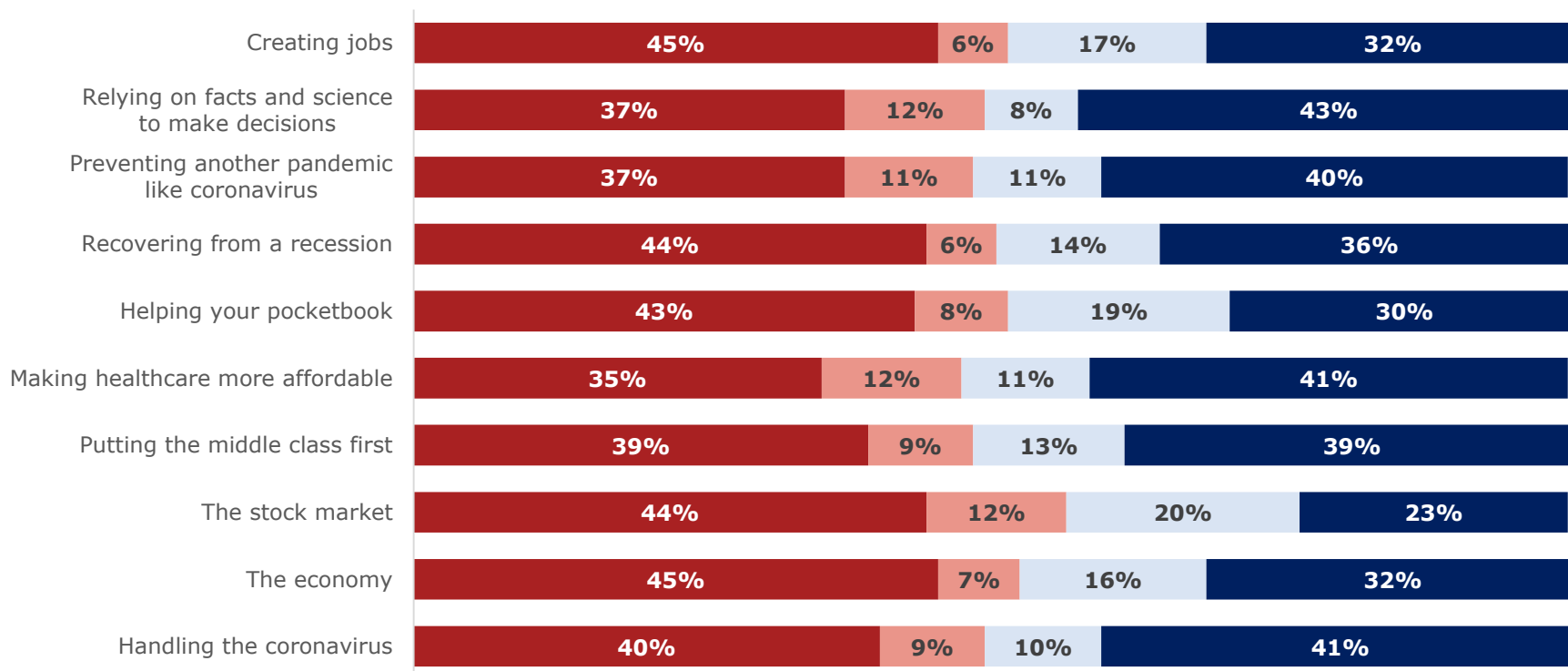
Slide last updated on: May 22, 2020

# Adults in swing states are more likely to believe that President Trump and Republicans will do a better job handling the economy

## Poll: Who do you think would do a better job handling each of the following: Donald Trump and Republicans or Joe Biden and Democrats?

CNBC/CHANGE RESEARCH CONDUCTED APRIL 17-18 IN AZ, FL, MI, NC, PA, AND WI

- Trump & GOP much more
- Trump & GOP somewhat more
- Biden & Dem somewhat more
- Biden & Dem much more



Sources: CNBC/Change Research

# 2020 swing state: North Carolina (15 electoral college votes)



COOK ELECTORAL COLLEGE RATING

**Toss Up**

## Key factors in North Carolina

### Suburban voters



- Changing demographics in the state have led to an influx of Democratic-leaning professionals in the Charlotte and Raleigh suburbs
- For Democrats to carry the suburbs, they have to gain votes in both the inner suburbs and the exurbs, or the outer suburbs
- The inner suburban vote and exurb vote make up about one fourth of votes cast in North Carolina

### Black voter turnout



- Black voters make up almost a quarter of registered voters in North Carolina
- Some experts attribute part of Clinton's loss in this state to decreased voter turnout, from 22% in 2012 to 18% in 2016
- In the 2020 Democratic primary, black voters had a turnout only slightly less than white voters, 30% to 33% respectively

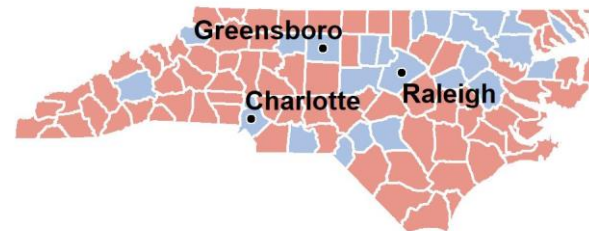
### Republican Convention



- The Republican convention is set to take place in Charlotte in August
- North Carolina is a crucial state for a GOP win and the electoral college loss of North Carolina could make amassing 270 votes much harder
- Although convention cities are seen as strategic party choices, recent elections reveal that they may not assist with election outcomes in those states

## 2016 election by county

■ Trump ■ Clinton



## Previous elections

Year	GOP	DEM
2016	Trump (+3.6%)	Clinton
2012	Romney (+2%)	Obama
2008	McCain	Obama (+0.3%)
2004	Bush (+12.5%)	Kerry
2000	Bush (+12.8%)	Gore

Sources: Associated Press, The Hill, PBS, Cook Political Report, Politico, 270toWin.

# 2020 swing state: Wisconsin (10 electoral college votes)



COOK ELECTORAL COLLEGE RATING

**Toss Up**

## Key factors in Wisconsin

### Demographic make-up



- Wisconsin is frequently grouped with Michigan and Pennsylvania as the former 'blue-wall' states that Trump won in 2016
- Compared to the other two states, Wisconsin has a whiter electorate; white voters with no college degrees made up about 55% of the electorate in the 2018 midterms (about 10% more than in PA and MI)

### Suburban voters



- Three counties to the west of Milwaukee (Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington, or the WOW counties) that typically lean conservative are a key area to watch in 2020
- Republicans have won these counties and the suburban counties around Green Bay (Brown, Outagamie, and Winnebago) by increasingly smaller margins in recent elections

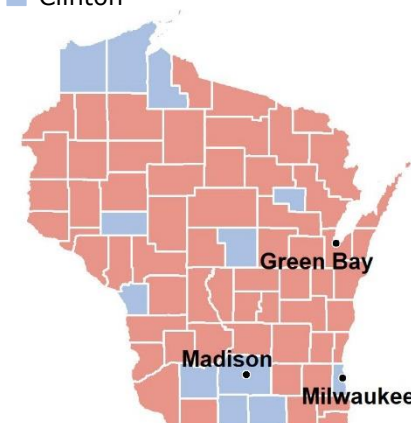
### Indications from recent elections



- Amidst a blue wave in the 2018 midterms, Tony Evers (D) beat incumbent Gov. Scott Walker (R) by less than 30,000 votes while Michigan and Pennsylvania had wider margins in Democratic victories
- In mid-April 2020, liberal challenger Jill Karofsky defeated a conservative incumbent for a Wisconsin Supreme Court seat
- Strategists say it would be risky to draw conclusions for 2020 because of the coronavirus' impact and increased Democratic turnout, as turnout was likely raised because a presidential primary was on the ballot

## 2016 election by county

■ Trump ■ Clinton



## Previous elections

Year	GOP	DEM
2016	Trump (+0.7%)	Clinton
2012	Romney	Obama (+6.9)
2008	McCain	Obama (+13.9%)
2004	Bush	Kerry (+0.4%)
2000	Bush	Gore (+0.2%)

Sources: Associated Press, 27otoWin, The Cook Political Report, US News, New York Times, The Philadelphia Inquirer, Madison Magazine, The Atlantic.

# 2020 swing state: Michigan (15 electoral college votes)



COOK ELECTORAL COLLEGE RATING

**Toss Up**

## Key factors in Michigan

### Suburban voters



- The Detroit suburbs are considered a key area to watch in 2020
- Macomb County flipped from Obama to Trump in 2016 by more than 30,000 votes, but supported Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D) in the 2018 election
- The county is considered blue-collar historically, but its growing diversity could favor the Democratic nominee in 2020

### Favorability among key groups



- Women voters in Michigan were a key part of Trump's 2016 success; however, one pollster noted that Trump's favorability among Republican women has decreased since 2016
- A reduced African American turnout in Detroit for Clinton in 2016, as compared to Obama in 2012, negatively affected her ability to win Michigan and could not counteract support for Trump in other counties

### Indications from recent elections



- Although President Trump won Michigan in 2016, the 2018 Senate election signaled a shift towards Democrats when incumbent Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) won against Army veteran John James (R) and two congressional seats flipped from Republican to Democrat
- However, the 'blue wave' was not strong enough for the state House and Senate: Republicans held the majority

## 2016 election by county

■ Trump ■ Clinton



## Previous elections

Year	GOP	DEM
2016	Trump (+.2%)	Clinton
2012	Romney	Obama (+9.5%)
2008	McCain	Obama (+16.4%)
2004	Bush	Kerry (+3.4%)
2000	Bush	Gore (+5.2%)

Sources: Associated Press, 270toWin, The Cook Political Report, USA Today, Mlive.

# 2020 swing state: Pennsylvania (20 electoral college votes)



COOK ELECTORAL COLLEGE RATING

**Toss Up**

## Key factors in Pennsylvania

### New voters and voters who flipped in 2016



- Trump's small margin victory in 2016 was the first time the Republican nominee had won the state since 1988; his victory is partially due to success with Republican voter registration efforts, capturing new voters and voters who flipped from Democrats to Republicans
- A 2020 victory for Trump is contingent on holding on to voters who flipped from Obama to Trump

### Rural and Southwestern Pennsylvania



- Trump was generally more successful with blue-collar and rural voters in PA than Clinton, especially around Pittsburgh
- However, in 2012 Obama captured about 26,000 more votes than Romney in these areas
- Trump also had support in 2016 from Luzerne (central PA outside of Scranton) and Erie (northwest PA) counties, which were former Democratic strongholds

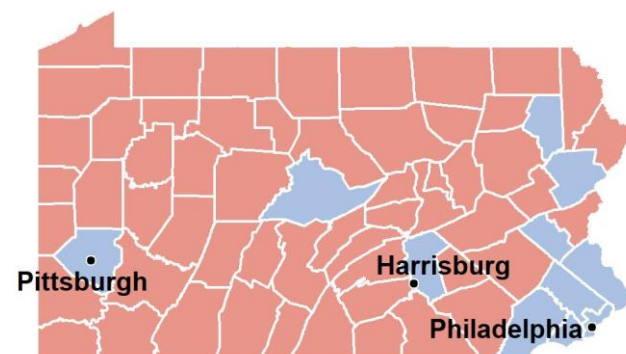
### Philadelphia suburbs



- Clinton's success in the Philadelphia suburbs was largely due to college-educated women, which she won by a larger margin than Obama
- This same voting bloc contributed to two congressional districts flipping from Republican to Democrat in 2018
- Democrats also had success in 2019 when they gained majorities on one county council and two Boards of Commissioners across three counties in the PA suburbs

## 2016 election by county

■ Trump ■ Clinton



## Previous elections

Year	GOP	DEM
2016	Trump (+0.7%)	Clinton
2012	Romney	Obama (+5.4%)
2008	McCain	Obama (+10.4%)
2004	Bush	Kerry (+2.5%)
2000	Bush	Gore (+4.2%)

Sources: USA Today, LA Times, Business Insider, 270 to Win, Associated Press.

# 2020 swing state: Florida (29 electoral college votes)



COOK ELECTORAL COLLEGE RATING

Toss Up

## Key factors in Florida

### Voters in I-4 corridor



- Success in the I-4 corridor, between Tampa and Orlando, is key to winning Florida's Electoral College votes
- Both Obama and Clinton lost the Orlando and Tampa media markets, but Clinton lost by about 190,000 more votes than Obama
- Although Clinton won the urban Orlando counties by more votes than Obama, Trump set the turnout record in the 14 counties in the I-4 markets

### Increasing & shifting voting population



- Florida's increasing Hispanic population would seemingly benefit Democrats; however, this bloc is divided between Cuban and non-Cuban voters, with Cuban Americans tending toward Republicans
- A constitutional amendment could allow 1.4 million felons (making up roughly 10% of Florida's voting pop.) to vote, which could have a large effect on election outcomes in a state typically won with thin margins
- Fast-growing exurbs and increasing population in The Villages, a retirement community located NW of Orlando, favor Trump

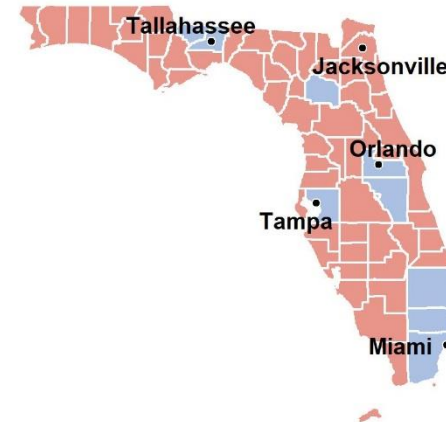
### Indications from recent elections



- Amidst the 2018 blue wave, Florida elected a Republican governor and flipped a Democratic Senate seat; both the gubernatorial and senate elections were decided by less than half a point
- In the 2018 House elections, two districts surrounding Miami flipped to Democrat

## 2016 election by county

Trump Clinton



## Previous elections

Year	GOP	DEM
2016	Trump (+1.2%)	Clinton
2012	Romney	Obama (+0.9%)
2008	McCain	Obama (+2.8%)
2004	Bush (+5.0%)	Kerry
2000	Bush (+0.0%)*	Gore

\* After razor thin margins and a recount, the Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision that was responsible for making Bush president.

Sources: 270 to Win, Associated Press, The Cook Political Report, USA Today, ABC News, New York Times.

# 2020 swing state: Arizona (11 electoral college votes)



COOK ELECTORAL COLLEGE RATING

**Toss Up**

## Key factors in Arizona

### Performance in previous elections



- Democrats have not won Arizona's electoral college votes since 1996; however, the margin of victory in 2016 was significantly slimmer than previous years and Trump was the first GOP nominee in 20 years to receive less than 50% of votes
- In the 2018 midterms, Democrats won a Senate seat and picked up state legislature seats in suburban areas

### Trends in the voting population



- Arizona's share of nonwhite voting-age citizens is growing at the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest rate in the country, which could favor Democrats if they turn out to vote
- A large migration of individuals moving from California to Arizona could also influence the election result and favor Democrats
- Currently, registered Republicans in the state outnumber registered Democrats by about 90,000 voters, putting the GOP at an advantage heading into 2020
- 32% of registered voters in AZ are not registered to either party, and capturing these voters could be crucial to winning the state

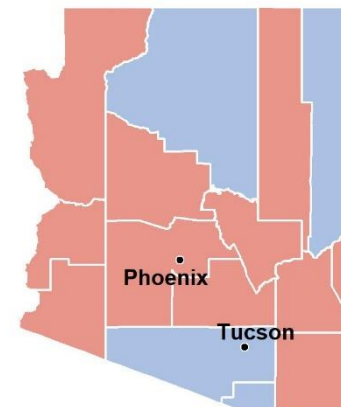
### Competitive Senate race



- The AZ Senate race between incumbent Sen. Martha McSally (R-AZ) and former astronaut Mark Kelly is rated as a Toss Up by the Cook Political Report
- The combination of a competitive Senate and presidential race will bring an influx of spending from both parties to win over voters

## 2016 election by county

■ Trump ■ Clinton



## Previous elections

Year	GOP	DEM
2016	Trump (+3.6%)	Clinton
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Sources: AP, New York Times, 270towin, Cook Political Report, Politico, Arizona Secretary of State, NPR.