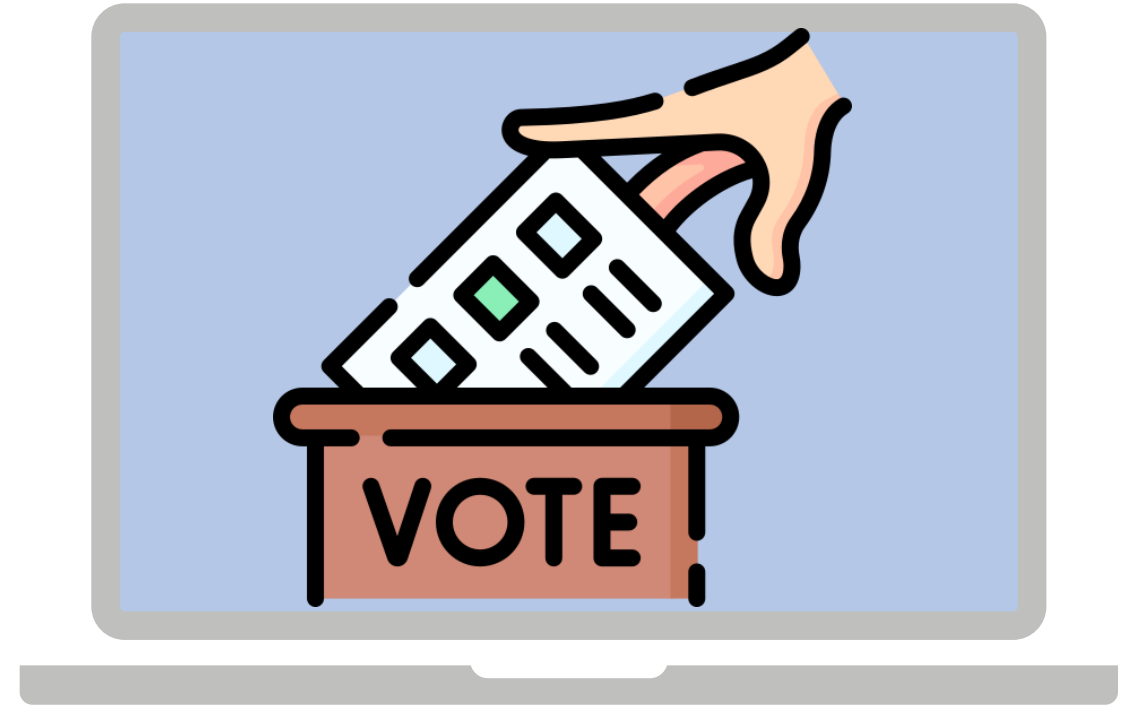


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FOCUS GROUP REPORT

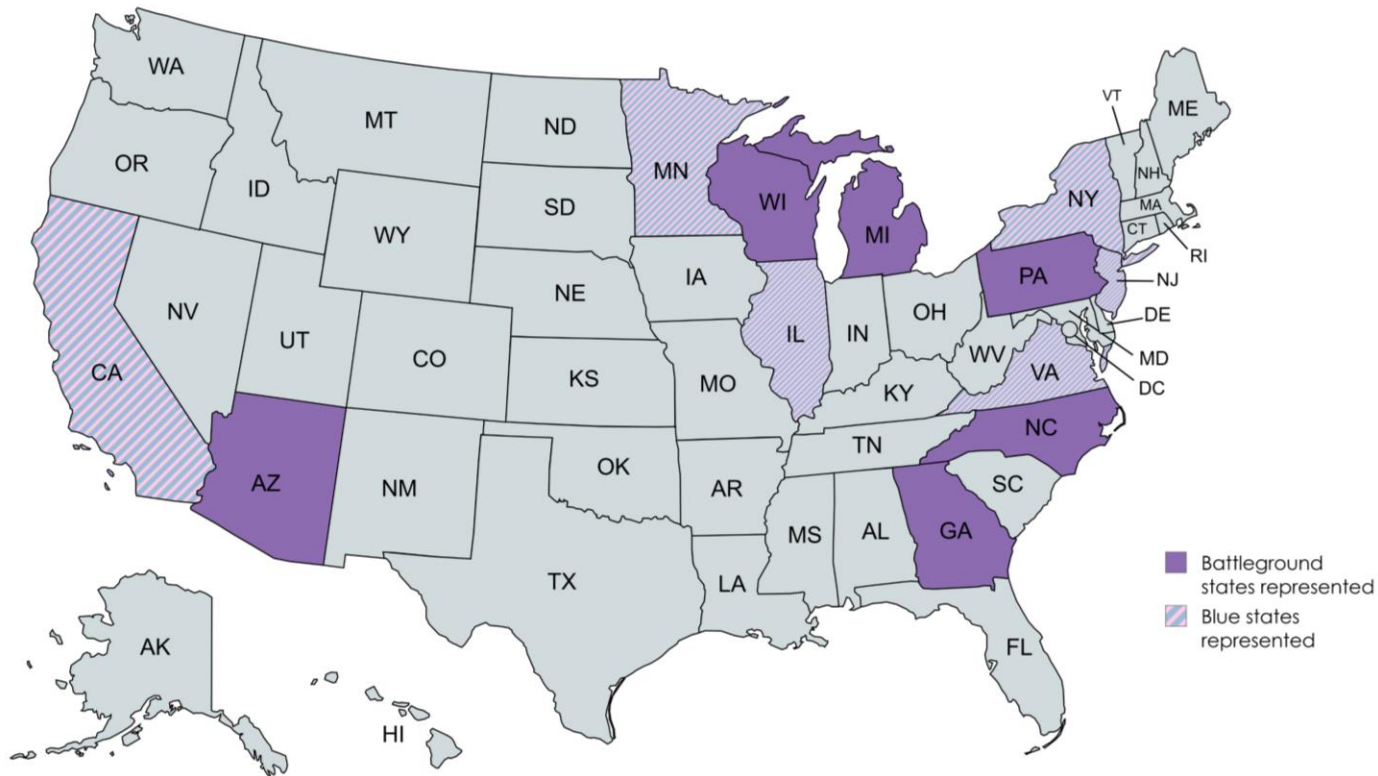
Wednesday, December 18, 2024

New Trump Voters and Non-voters
on the 2024 Election



Methodology

On December 11, 2024, GBAO conducted three online focus groups with 2024 general election voters and non-voters across various demographics—including a mix across education, gender, race.



- Group 1: Young men under 40 in battleground states, Biden in 2020/Trump in 2024
- Group 2: Biden or third-party voters in 2020/Trump in 2024
- Group 3: 2020 voters who did not vote in 2024 in battleground states

Key Takeaways

- After widespread Democratic losses, the party brand is weak, and Trump is strong.
- Participants have a wide range of complaints about Kamala Harris and the Party—issues, Biden’s records, leadership and competence, and celebrity endorsements.
- Trump’s win is viewed as a likely positive for the economy.
- However, there is at best, mixed support for mass deportations and tariffs.

There Are a Variety of Feelings About the Incoming Trump Administration

Moderator: Fill in the blank: I feel [BLANK] about the next Trump administration.

“Cautiously indifferent”

“Intrigued”

“On edge”

“Curious”

“Cautiously optimistic”

“Discouraged”

“Hopeful”

“Positive”

“Negative”

“We’re in trouble”

“Skeptical”

“Relieved”

“Excited”

“Anxious”

“Lacking confidence”

“Happy”

“Anticipating a shake up”

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Many Feel “Relieved” and “Cautiously Optimistic” About the Election and Trump’s Next Term

Moderator: What makes you feel this way about the next Trump administration?

“Cautiously optimistic... Well, I think I liked a lot of things Trump did the first time around. I liked that he cut taxes, I liked his foreign policy. I guess I’ll wait and see how he does this time around.” – GA man, weak Republican

“I’m optimistic about the fact that America is going to be prioritized. Obviously, foreign policy is important, but more money [is more important]. I voted for Trump. More money is going to be in my pocket and I’m looking forward to it.” – AZ man, independent

“I’m just glad that I don’t have to hear everyone’s political points all the time. So, [I feel] pretty indifferent I guess.” – IL man, weak Republican

“I am relieved that Trump won as well as that we’re no longer seeing all these commercials and talking about it so much, but even though I did vote for him, I don’t know what the future holds. I hope I made the right decision in voting for him.” – NY woman, weak Democrat

“I’m relieved because I feel he has strong game plans. He didn’t get to finish what he wanted to do the second time when he didn’t get in.” – NJ man, independent lean Republican

“I’m not even really concerned about [the direction of the country]. What’s going to happen is going to happen.” – PA man, non-voter, independent lean Democrat



There Is Hope Trump Can Help Fix the Economy and Improve Our Standing in the World

Moderator: What makes you feel positive about Trump's presidency?

"He mentioned specifically that he's going to reduce taxes. Taxes and tips on income and property taxes is one of the major issues here in New Jersey. So that's one. The economy as well. Inflation has been up mad from the last administration, so hopefully Trump can reduce prices on everyday needs." – NJ man, independent lean Democrat

"Our economy is horrible right now. Everybody's paying so much with inflation. And I was like, I feel like he's going to [bring prices] down. As soon as he got voted in stock went back up. That's crazy." – NJ man, independent lean Republican

"I think that Biden and the Dems for a long time have just been utterly bullied by the world's worst actors for decades now. And just the very promise of Trump has made a lot of people around the world shut up and look at America in a new way." – NY man, independent lean Republican

"I need[ed] to vote for somebody that I believe can actually lead the country. And I changed my perspective because of that. So, I think I'm optimistic that I think that [Trump is] the right leader for this moment in time with the economy and as a leader in the world." – MN woman, weak Republican

"I mean, in 2020 I voted for Biden, so I guess this go around I was just looking for something different. That was the economy and just trying to see if a different leader will have a different outcome." – WI man, weak Republican



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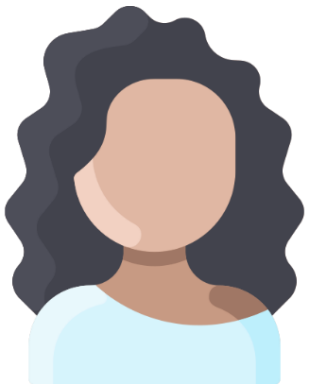
Participants Open Up About Their Wide Variety of Doubts About Harris

“Kamala Harris just did not seem competent to me. She just seemed like she just didn't know what she was talking about. She seemed like a very chameleonic politician...It just all seemed very dishonest, and she came across as just very dishonest and not competent.” – GA man, weak Republican



“For me, it just seemed like she would tailor her answers too much to whoever she was speaking to try to just win their vote or to say what she thought somebody would want to hear, and it never really seemed like she established firm enough things to back herself on that would really propel her in people's viewpoints in my opinion.” – PA man, independent

“It felt like Kamala didn't really have as well of an outlined economic plan, and what I did hear what she said she was going to do was stuff Trump already said he was going to do. It felt more like he was more focused on the economy, which is something I care about.” – MI man, independent lean Republican



“Harris was not saying one thing that was making me feel confident that they were going to make any changes.” – NY woman, weak Democrat

“I didn't feel like Kamala had our best interests at all. I did not feel like she was qualified.” – WI woman, non-voter, weak Republican

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Non-Voters Are Well-Informed, Citing Gaza, Lack of a Primary, Trump Convictions, and Disillusionment With Politics as Driving Their Choice

Moderator: What made you decide not to vote?

"I do remember seeing that Harris was, like, targeting different areas with different kinds of messaging about Gaza and Israel, and I was not impressed by that... Like, being pro-Israel where it's convenient, being exceedingly sympathetic to the people of Gaza and Palestine where it was convenient." – PA man, non-voter, independent lean Democrat

"[With] Donald Trump, I was on board financially and I knew socially, ethically he was going to take us down a dark road. So, I just said, 'I'm out.'" – WI woman, non-voter, weak Republican

"I considered when Joe was still running, but when they made the switch, I just didn't feel like she had enough time to really lay out what needed to be done. It was too crammed. It was too rushed. And it was just the same rhetoric with Trump. He's just always attacking people. So, [it] just didn't rub me the right way." – PA man, non-voter, independent lean Democrat

"That man is too much trouble. He's a scoundrel, whatever you want to call it. [Trump is] not right. In several different ways he's not right." – GA woman, non-voter, strong Democrat

"I used the word disillusioned before that plays a part in it. I keep using the phrase, 'Well, you can't blame me. I didn't vote. So, no matter which side came out on top, I wasn't feeling good about it either way, so you can't blame me.'" – WI man, non-voter strong Republican

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Ad and Content Recall Includes Abortion Storytellers, and Both Trump and Harris in Their Own Words

Moderator: Is there anything you saw or heard that made a difference for your vote? How did they make you feel?



"[I felt] Anger with some of the stories [about] choices were being taken away. Donald Trump was proud of that. And then the stories that came, I, obviously, support pro-choice. So, it angered me a lot to see those ads." – WI woman, non-voter, weak Republican

"When she would give interviews, whenever someone asked her a question, she just wouldn't be able to give any kind of coherent answer. She would just ramble on and on about totally random nonsense. It just does not instill confidence in me to have someone like that running the country." – GA man, weak Republican

"I don't know how to describe it. When she was saying, 'You better thank a union member,' I'm sorry that that was very disingenuous to me because I didn't see an honest person that could be president. Just one of the many factors that led me to vote for Trump." – AZ man, independent

"I think it was a combination of just all the podcasts [Trump] was [doing] where it was a two, three-hour conversation, and it wasn't just like two-minute clips. You got to know what his position on things was." – IL man, weak Republican

"[Trump] came off as a real person because he kept having real authentic moments. The first thing that comes to my mind, honestly, is the assassination attempt, where he gets up with the American flag waving behind [him]..." – NY man, independent lean Republican

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Trans Attack Ads, Along With Assumptions About the Democratic Party's Position, Come Up Frequently and Unaided

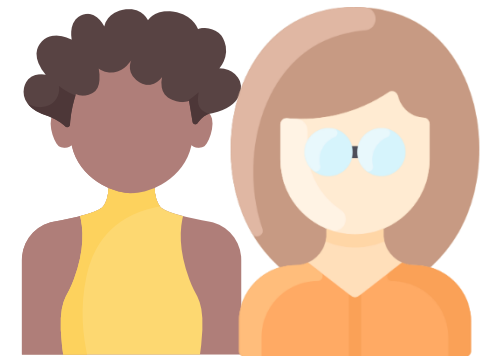


“[Trump] was pretty much promoting stuff that I agreed with personally in terms of, because I'm Christian as well, I have certain beliefs... He was pretty much talking about bringing the Bibles back in school, not having little kids being exposed to certain things at a young age. I believe that you let kids grow up and shield them from certain topics... I believe that children shouldn't be told that they could be trapped in a body and things like that. I don't think that's a good value to propagate to children.” – GA man, weak Republican

“You have to put your pronouns [in your email signature] and it's just stupid. So, it's just kind of going into that whole thing where I just feel like they're not letting people kind of live and have their own thoughts. They're trying to force their thoughts upon you, and you can't disagree with any of it, and it's just part of a larger thing to me within the Democratic Party...” – IL man, weak Republican

“I think that there needs to be some parameters on what's accepted in society and what isn't. Some of the societal norms, and I think that the Democrats have tried to open that up a little too much... [Moderator: Were you thinking about trans issues or something beyond that?] Probably primarily that...” – WI woman, non-voter, weak Republican

“As far as Kamala Harris, I don't agree with her thinking that it's okay for children to change their body parts.” – GA woman, non-voter, strong Democrat



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The Democratic Party Strikes Participants as Too Narrowly Focused “On Diversity,” Overly Permissive, Weak, and Tied to Elites

“Now Kamala, on the other hand[...] her campaigns were mainly just celebrities and people who we don't really take seriously, or they are not in the same category as us normal citizens who are trying to live daily life, trying to afford rent, groceries, stuff like that. Trump was the best option.” – NJ man, independent lean Democrat

“I feel like when Trump says he's going to do something, he does it. Where the Democrats say they're going to do something, it doesn't mean it's going to happen.” – VA man, independent

“I think the Republicans came really strong this time fighting, and I think they backed the Democrats in a corner, and the Democrats just didn't know how to get out and how to save the country. And they just tried to use, like during the election, the thing with Oprah and Beyonce and Taylor Swift, they were just looking in every corner for whatever they could dig out to make themselves shine in that, but it didn't work.” – NY woman, weak Democrat

“I think [the Democrats] try to stand for the average person, but they get caught up and it don't always work out that way. They say it up front and then a lot of it don't ever materialize in my opinion.” – PA man, non-voter, independent lean Democrat

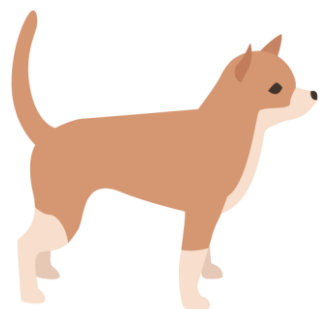
“I think with their very liberal views and standpoint and acceptance to have different parties, different groups, religious groups and/or race, religion, I think that that is where the party wants you to align with is diversity and aligning with the Democrats... I think [it's] a bad thing.” – WI woman, non-voter, weak Republican

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Animals That Capture the Democratic Party Are Described as Weak, Directionless, or Selfish

"I think of minnow, just a big school of little fish all swimming together, all like, 'Oh, we're going where everybody else is going and we're doing what we're supposed to do, and nobody knows why, but we're all just kind of moving along and doing what's expected.'" – PA man, independent

"Chameleon, it's kind of like they always change their spots to suit whoever they're talking to at the time." – GA man, weak Republican



"What I kept thinking about is a yappy dog and our dog sits outside and just barks at the air." – MN woman, strong Republican

"Cowbirds are notorious for not building their own nests. They'll find empty nests, lay their eggs there, and then leave their eggs for the actual owners of the nest to come in and raise the birds for them... If you come from the perspective of immigration and how they want to handle it's very much a situation where they want to come in, they want to throw people into communities and not really think about what are the consequences and actually give support to everyone involved in that situation." – MI man, independent lean Republican

"Koala, because they are complacent and lazy about getting policy wins that we really need." – PA man, non-voter, independent lean Democrat

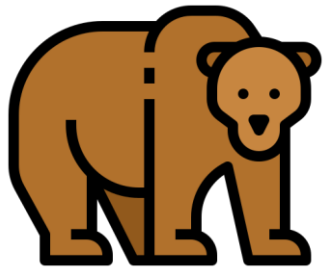
"Scaredy-cat. I don't know. I see them as not being really steadfast." – WI man, non-voter, strong Republican

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The Republican Party Strikes Some as Judgmental, but at Least Straightforward Like a Dog or a Bear

“A dog... They're in your face. First reaction, you're hearing them. First reaction, they're moving, they're doing stuff. Whether it's right or it's not, you always know their moves.” – MI man, independent lean Republican

“I chose black stallion because I see the Republican Party as they're riding into town, not like a Western movie, but they're here to rescue us.” – CA woman, independent lean Republican



“I just think of bears as being really strong-willed and then every time you see a video and someone's messing with the bears kids, they go crazy on them, so it's just very protective of like, I just kind of think of Republicans trying to be more supportive of the actual residents, the actual citizens, rather than just illegals.” – IL man, weak Republican

“An English Bulldog... They're usually called bullies. And I think Republicans can be viewed as bullies and English bulldogs are very stubborn, which I think you could characterize Republicans as pretty stubborn in their beliefs.” – WI man, non-voter, strong Republican

“Whenever you see a flock of seagulls and there is a food product, they all converge on that food product. And I feel that the Republican Party converges on an issue, and they become all about it.” – MI woman, non-voter, weak Democrat



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Some—but Not All—Support Mass Deportation, as They Assume It Will Not Truly Be “Mass”

Moderator: What do you think about the possibilities of mass deportations under the Trump administration?

“Some of it sounds good, but how in the world is this going to even be accomplished? I see this going nowhere to be perfectly honest.”
– WI man, non-voter, strong Republican

“I mean, I feel like if you're illegal, fine, so he's going to kick them out. But the thing [is] if you want the opportunity to come back on a visa and then work your way to get you citizenship. There's a lot of people who have been here for X amount of years that just skated through the system, and it's like here's other people who came here as immigrants and did the right thing and worked their way up, got citizenship and [are here] legally. So, there's no reason why everybody cannot do that.” – NJ man, independent lean Republican

“I don't think they're ever going to deport 10 million people. They're going to deport the convicts, the people that are committing crime, they're going to be smart, they're not dumb people in charge of this. They're not going to get productive people in this society and just throw them out of this country.” – VA man, independent

“I mean, I don't think I'd support ICE coming down and knocking down, going door to door and rounding up illegal immigrants, but I think that illegal immigrants commit crimes should absolutely be deported.” – GA man, weak Republican

“I would like to think the economy would improve because a lot of the resources that are devoted to the immigrants who are here illegally who are getting those debit cards, who are getting a lot of resources that I wouldn't mind getting, but they're getting.” – AZ man, independent

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Tariffs Can Be Confusing, With Some Admitting They Don't Know Enough to Judge Yet

Moderator: What do you think the impact of tariffs would be on the economy?

"I think it's hard to project on if it would increase costs or to what extent. I feel like it's something that needs to play out in order to have a good opinion on tariffs and his tariff plan and how it truly affects our economy and the prices of our goods." – MI man, independent lean Republican

"I'll just say I'm not incredibly educated on this side of things." – MN woman, strong Republican

"It's tough to [predict] anything. It's just hypothetical at this point. If it's even going to happen obviously." – WI man, weak Republican



"Honestly, I'm not really sure. If it's about money, I really don't know how to answer that one." – GA woman, non-voter, strong Democrat



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However, Some Suggest They'd Be Willing to Pay More in Inflation to Accommodate Tariffs

"[Tariffs are] just going to cause inflation of everyday stuff that we use. So, it's going to be bad for that, but also at the same time, he's going to put in more resources into the American people as opposed to what they're doing now where a bunch of countries receive foreign aid from us, and that's a whole lot resources going outside the country." – GA man, weak Republican

"Obviously I wouldn't want stuff to go up, but at the same time, in the long run, would it be better off for America and maybe having more stuff made here?" – WI man, weak Republican

"Trump is a businessman and there are a lot of really good people that are really good at figuring this out. And I honestly believe that the people that will be making those decisions, I feel confident in them." – MN woman, strong Republican

"I think it's going to make prices for some goods higher and that can be very bad for consumers like myself. But I think the benefit of tariffs is that more companies are going to be more willing to create money-making brands or money-making products. So that could also lead to an increase in [the] percentage of employment as well. So, it has good, it has the bad." – NJ man, independent lean Democrat

"I work in manufacturing and my job security depends on the state of the domestic auto industry, and I would like to see tariffs on steel and other commodity goods that are coming into the country because I would like to foster growth in terms of getting American employees back to work." – MI woman, non-voter, weak Democrat

"Obviously it's not good for [consumers] and I think that people will have to just make choices. And material goods may not be as abundant." – WI woman, non-voter, weak Republican

"Oh, I'm not going to be happy [if prices rise]... I understand you have to start somewhere to build this economy and get jobs working here and going here again. And I think it needs to be done." – GA man, non-voter, independent

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Views on Potential Cabinet Members Are Mixed, Yet Few Seem Worried

Moderator: What have you been hearing about who Trump is nominating for different cabinet positions?

"I am concerned about Dr. Oz. I just know him from his TV show, that's it. I know he's a real-life doctor, but I don't know what made him pick him." – NY woman, weak Democrat

"I like most of them. There's a few that I really like, Marco Rubio and Tulsi Gabbard, I like quite a lot. I think they're very reasonable people." – NY man, independent lean Republican

"I mean, it's clear that he very much values loyalty, and I think when he went in last time, he realized that not everyone that said that they were on this side were actually on the side. So, I understand where he's coming from and why he's probably choosing some of these picks, but we'll see." – MI man, independent lean Republican

"Health and Human Service Secretary Robert Kennedy, Jr., who is anti-vaccination. [he] Clearly has, I believe, some mental health issues, and he is going to be making healthcare decisions." – WI woman, non-voter, weak Republican

"Since we are in the Christmas season, it's really a collection of misfit toys. It's like each announcement is almost funnier than the previous one." – PA man, non-voter, independent lean Democrat

"He might not be picking the right people, but I will say this though, the people he's picking are young enough [that] if they do good these next four years, all these people that he's picking who going to keep going in the Republican Party for the next 20-something years, they all going to be from the Trump group." – GA man, independent lean Republican

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About Navigator

In a world where the news cycle is the length of a tweet, our leaders often lack the real-time public-sentiment analysis to shape the best approaches to talking about the issues that matter the most. Navigator is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, responsive tool to inform policy debates by conducting research and reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press. Navigator is a project led by pollsters from Global Strategy Group and GBAO along with an advisory committee, including: Jessica Floyd, The Hub Project; Christina Reynolds, EMILY's List; Mike Podhorzer, AFL-CIO; Jesse Ferguson, progressive strategist; Navin Nayak, Center for American Progress Action Fund; Stephanie Valencia, EquisLabs; and Melanie Newman, Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

About the Study

GBAO conducted three online focus groups December 11, 2024, with voters and non-voters in battleground and blue states. Some quotes have been lightly edited for brevity. Qualitative results are not statistically projectable.

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