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FOCUS GROUP REPORT

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Trump Regretters

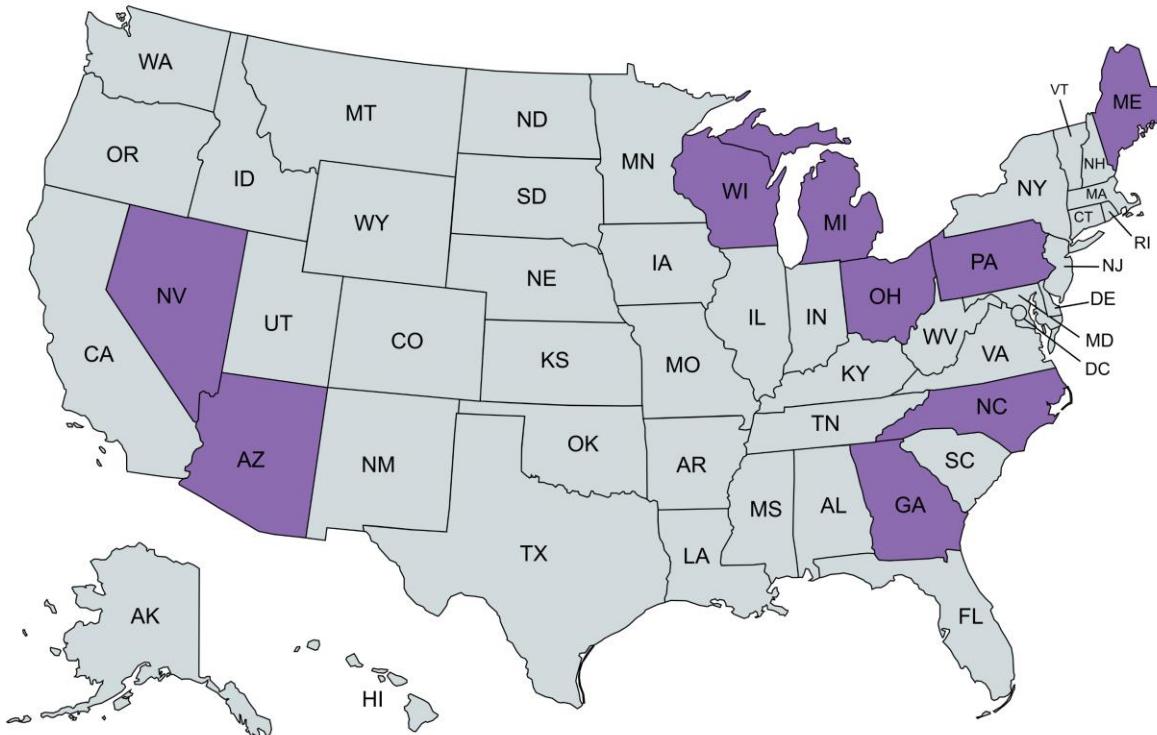


Reuters / Kevin Lamarque

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Methodology

On January 13, 2025, GBAO conducted three online focus group with young men, white voters, and Hispanic voters from battleground states* who voted for Trump but now regret their vote or are disappointed in Trump's performance.



- ❖ Group 1: White men and women from battleground states who regret voting for or are disappointed in Trump
- ❖ Group 2: Men under 35 from battleground states who regret voting for or are disappointed in Trump
- ❖ Group 3: Hispanic men and women from battleground states who regret voting for or are disappointed in Trump

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*AZ, GA, ME, MI, NC, NV, OH, PA, WI

Key Takeaways

- Some voted for Trump with hopes he'd improve the economy and lower costs, but now they regret that choice.
- Some Trump regrettters feel economically strained, despite seeing some glimmers of hope around lower gas prices and a strong stock market.
- Trump is seen as failing across the board – on his priorities, on being presidential, on tackling the economy, on his handling of the Epstein files, and on “going too far” on immigration and ICE.
- Some even feel “duped” and surprised by Trump’s term. Others expected Trump to be flawed but did not like their other options.
- Few see anyone – Democrats or Republicans – coming to stop Trump. Trump regrettters express a desire for elected officials to have “a backbone” and fight for something.

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Trump's Own Voters Give Him Lackluster Grades – Mostly Ds And Cs

Moderator: *What grade would you give Trump for how he's doing in his second term?*



Group	A grade	B grade	C grade	D grade	F grade	N/A
1		3	3	2	1	
2		1	3	3		1
3				4	3	
Total		4	6	9	4	1

"I did a D-minus because there's really nowhere where I can look at and say that we're doing better than we were with the last administration when it comes to the economy." – GA Hispanic woman

"I gave him a C because, again, just from a business perspective, he was known to be a big real estate developer with the whole Trump organization thing. But then, he's also a convicted felon because of falsifying business records. So I don't know, I'm just in the middle when it comes to Trump." – GA Black man

"I gave him a C-minus because I think he's unrepresentative as a president. The name-calling, the creating really scapegoats of different groups of people throughout the country, calling them names, filthy, dirty, 'We don't want this kind in.' This is just so unheard of in other presidencies. I've never seen anything like this." – ME white woman

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Many See His Behavior As Unpresidential, Unacceptable, Or Unlawful



"I compare him to my seven-year-old daughter. One minute he's like this, he's doing things straight that are good. And then all of a sudden he just gets mad, like he just has a thought and he acts on it. You can't do that being the president." – MI Hispanic woman

"I don't think he's following the law, because I don't feel like he thinks the law applies to him. Now that he's beaten a court case, where he's been basically found guilty and nothing happened to him, he believes he's above the law." – OH Black man

"Well, we'll just give the example of the lady that was killed, shot either accidentally or whatever by ICE. Instead of calmly saying, 'I grieve for her,' something nice, he's like, 'Oh, she probably deserved it.'" – GA Hispanic woman

"[Trump] says outrageous things. And I've gotten to the point that I just don't believe the man anymore. Whatever he says, I just take it with a grain of salt. I'll believe it when it happens." – AZ white woman

"It's very just unprofessional. You wouldn't deal with somebody like that in the workplace in any professional environment. And he's the president and it's just there's no accountability, there's no transparency. It's just a mess." – GA Hispanic woman

"At first him speaking his mind was refreshing and I saw him getting a lot accomplished, but then it just got mean and nasty and very unbecoming. And it just made me cringe and I just didn't like him more and more." – AZ white woman

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Some Trump Regretters See A Few Silver Linings In The Economy – Like Gas Prices And The Stock Market

[Stocks are] really not that important in the overall context of things, but I have some money invested, so that's good for me, I guess.” – NC Hispanic man



“Some of the stocks are going up, some of them are not. My 401k has definitely taken a hit. Stocks that I've invested in with my job have taken a hit. Just the cost of living is not moving. The cost of living is just too high for everyone.”
– GA white woman

“I'll say gas prices in my area are pretty good.” – GA Hispanic woman

“I wouldn't say it's perfect, but I'd say it's trending in the right direction. I know a lot of people are still struggling, but I think that we're improving and just trending on the right path.” – MI white man

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Others See Little Going Well, And Feel Economically Strained By High Costs And Tariffs

"All of our prices have gone sky-high for necessities. Our utilities have raised, our mortgage, the interest rates, the food in the grocery store. Everything has gone up except my wages, and it's making it harder and harder to make ends meet." – AZ white woman

"Everything is increased because I buy a lot of imported stuff from Italy or whatever, it be pasta, wines, whatever. Everything has gone up. Everything has increased across the board." – NV Hispanic man

"I feel like nothing [is going well] and the primary driver for that is the economy. From my experience and those I interact with, wages are not keeping up with expenses." – WI white man

"The economy, it looks like there are a lot of different factories and jobs closing. You have more store closures happening. The economy, as far as the job market, is all over the place. And then gas prices are... They're up, but then they're down, but then they skyrocket." – OH Black man

"You have your job, you have your security, but how far is it getting you? How far are you stretching?" – GA Hispanic woman

"Basically what I'm seeing is that corporations are going to start doing a lot better than they have, and regular people are not going to be doing so great. So overall, the economy is going to have some great numbers, but you're not going to see that in your wallet." – NC Hispanic man

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Many Lament That Trump Has Done Nothing To Make Things Better

"People voted Trump because we thought we were going to get lower costs of living, to some degree at least, and everything has just increased in price." – GA Black man

"The main [disappointment] to me would be the focus and the promise on getting rid of inflation. That's very disappointing because we're all still struggling." – GA white woman

"[Trump] stated you'll see prices go down in the grocery store because inflation's under control, get this handled. No. If anything, things have become more expensive." – NV Hispanic man

"So I have an EBT card, and it's a lot harder to prove certain things in order to qualify for that. So just little things like that, they all add up, and I think that they need to focus more on us rather than other countries." – MI white man

"I have a lot of folks that rely on the Obamacare Health Exchanges and health insurance premiums are skyrocketing and there's not even really a plan in place for how to address that kind of front and center." – PA white man

"[Trump said] one of his biggest and first actions when he was in office was to handle inflation, and that was not done. That was backed off and not put as a priority, and it's still an issue for all of the American people." – GA white woman

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Most See Trump As Out For Himself And Not Interested In Their Own Struggles Or Lives

"[Trump's priorities are] himself." – GA Hispanic woman

"Based on [Trump's] actions and based on his campaigns, he doesn't like people like me. He likes what we can potentially do for him, if we're rich or if we have money. But if we're just a regular average person, like myself, no, he doesn't care about anything about us." – OH Black man

"I don't believe he cares about even the ultra wealthy rich. If he's not making money, he doesn't care about them either." – NC Hispanic man

"There's an association he's missing from the average American, because he was born into and given money as a young adult and never knew failure or struggle, I guess." – NV white man

"Basically, I don't think he sees us except for our vote, and that's all he wants." – ME white woman

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While Most Expected Action On Immigration, Recent Actions And Enforcement From ICE Has Been Surprising

"[Deportations] were a thing he was talking about, just not to the extremes. I would say, yes, I was surprised." – MI Black man

"I had three agents approach me wearing masks, wearing helmets with ARs and three different orders at a time asking me about my ID, where I'm from, where I'm born, where I live, just bombarded with questions. So that was a very eye-opening experience." – AZ Hispanic man

"You're not making America great by killing your citizens." – NC white man

"I also know someone who got deported, so it didn't affect me directly, but just seeing that was kind of crazy, because I'd never experienced that prior." – GA Black man

"I thought the focus was going to be more securing the border, focused on hardened criminals, not so much everyday folk." – MI white man

"But one of the things I'm not liking as well is the whole ICE situation and how things are being handled. And it's also kind of an abuse of power, because in these situations, there are now people dying from it, versus how the situation is supposed to go." – OH Black man



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ICE Is Top Of Mind, And Raids And Deportations Are Hitting Close To Home, Particularly With Latinos

"I think the ICE has a place in this country right now because of the influx of illegals, but I also think the ICE officers have not been trained adequately." – ME white woman

"All the South Koreans, I believe, that were going to be the instructors and teach Americans how to do that job – we had this whole thing where they refused to come back, and now they're going to let AI and robots do the majority of the jobs." – AZ Hispanic man

"The Trump administration, it just seems to be very malicious, it's like you're not just deporting people and ripping families apart, you also are creating an environment of hatred, feeding racism." – GA Hispanic woman

"I worked at the same restaurant off and on for 15 years of my life. And pretty early into his presidency and mobilizing ICE, my friend from the restaurant texted me to pray because ICE was raiding them right now and they took the whole back of the restaurant." – MI Hispanic woman

"I'm Hispanic. I have tattoos. I don't feel safe when I go out." – NC Hispanic man

"[Deportations are] making our country look crazy, because if we're supposed to be the land of the free, how are people free if they're being ripped from their homes and placed in places or facilities where they may not ever see their families again?" – OH Black man



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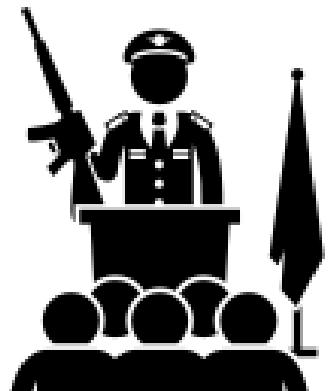
Several Liken Trump's Actions, And ICE Specifically, To That Of A Hitler-Style Dictator

"And I also feel like I liken it to 1936 Germany with the brown coats [sic]. And so, there has to be a better way to do this." – ME white woman

"Where are the checks and balances? It just seems like the individuals that are within ICE and all this, there's just no boundaries." – MI Black man

"He created his own Gestapo and you know how it is. He's going after Hispanics now, but when he gets done with Hispanics, you know who's next." – NC Hispanic man

"It doesn't feel like [ICE is] following any of the constitutional guidelines and barriers that protect that process. It feels like people aren't afforded due process, which is just a really hard line for me. I mean, I think we've seen past presidents deport a number of people correctly, but it seems like this is just being done, again, on brand, haphazardly, violating people's rights, just really disruptive." – PA white man



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The Epstein Files Are An Additional Trump Failure

"They started touching on the **Epstein situation** again. And then as soon as they started touching it, what happened? The Venezuela thing. **Every single time it comes up, something crazy happens to distract people from it.** He's trying to pull the wool over somebody's eyes." – MI Hispanic woman



"I think the whole **Epstein debacle**, I think that should have been out already months and months ago." – PA white man

"**We're not getting the Epstein files.** And here's my thing, too, about that. It's not that I want it. What am I going to do with it? What do I need to know? I want the people who did bad things to go to jail." – MI white man

"I mean, **birds of a feather flock together**, and there's been a lot of proof showing that, from before **Epstein** died, recently all the way back to when you go back to the '80s and the '90s, he's been associated with this guy in multiple photos, videos, just everything." – OH Black man

"**You would think if you're innocent of something, you'd say, 'Throw it all out there and clear my name,'** but it just feels like there's still a lot of unanswered questions." – PA white man

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Views On Trump's Actions In Venezuela Are More Mixed

"I think he should take care of the U.S. first instead of acquiring other countries. There are so many factors that he has not taken care of right here for the people. And if he's going to do this to Venezuela, who's next?" – AZ white woman

"I think it needed to happen, but as for physically running another sovereign nation, plucking a foreign leader out of their bed and bringing them to the stateside for prosecution, that's not a great look on the international floor." – WI white man

"He didn't give us a warning that this was going to be his agenda. I thought it was going to be on the Rust Belt of the Midwest, and now we're telling Venezuela that he's going to make them great again, as well as Cuba and Greenland and wherever else." – ME white woman

"I think something good happened [in Venezuela]. I think the people of that country have been suffering for a long time, and I also think that it opened the door for countries like Iran and Russia and China to kind of gain a foothold in the Western hemisphere and kind of start influencing things, so I am in favor of that." – MI white man

"Look, [Venezuela] didn't have a good president. I get it. But I just think that things could have been handled differently." – GA Hispanic woman

"I actually support the whole Venezuela thing. I see the whole geopolitical reasoning behind it. I think 98% of Venezuelans, especially refugees, support it." – MI white man

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Many Regretters Admit To Feeling Embarrassed, "Complicit," Or "Duped"

"I couldn't believe that I was complicit [in deportations] and I felt horribly and I cried a lot about it and everything. I didn't know what to do because it was stupid of me not to let myself know. I guess I kind of knew, but refused to pay attention to it because it just seemed ridiculous in my head to think that things could really go that way." – MI Hispanic woman

"Some of the stuff that he will just post on social media or just say to other people or about other people, especially official people, I think it's very childish and it's almost embarrassing to be like, 'Oh yeah, and I voted for that guy.'" – MI white man

"I mean, Mr. No-more-foreign-wars and he just immediately keeps the funding going to Ukraine and starts more proxy wars and everything else. It's just absolutely not, [something] I wished to sign up for." – NV Hispanic man

"It's surprising [Trump wants to run Venezuela] because, again, he ran on this idea of no new wars, no intervention, but I mean, it's like he's kind of making us all to be a fool...trying to believe that when we voted for him." – PA white man

"I just wanted to say that I feel really duped...I voted for him because I was expecting him not to go to war. And then he's going to war everywhere and in America, you know what I mean?" – NC Hispanic man

"Feeling silly, nearsighted for not seeing certain behaviors and actions coming." – GA white man

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Some Had An “A-ha” Moment When They Shifted To Regretting Their Vote

“He’s completely different to what he was in 2016. I mean, I thought ‘people, you do have Trump’s derangement syndrome. Why are you not seeing this?’ But **now I see, wow, he actually is everything that’s been promised that went around before.**” – NV Hispanic man

“As soon as I saw him with Elon Musk, which was almost immediately, I was like, ‘I got played.’” – NC Hispanic man

“[Trump] promised that we were going to help the middle class...but nothing happened. Instead, it looked like the moment he got validation of being president, he turned around and the hatred that he carried that first term that should have been an eye-opener carried over. It came out. His true colors came back.” – GA Hispanic woman

“I was shocked [by the Epstein coverup]. And I think that one really turned me against him and made me see exactly what was going on. There’s obviously a coverup. There’s obviously something that somebody doesn’t... Or else they would release it.” – MI white man

“I was reading the article today where Trump said that—because everybody knows that for a minute he was talking about the \$2,000 for everybody with the tariffs and everything. He told an interviewer that he doesn’t even remember saying that. So, now that has me under the impression, **are you getting Alzheimer’s or dementia or what’s going on?**” – OH Black man



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Others Knew Or Suspected Trump's Term Would Go This Way, But Felt They Had No Other Choice

"He still, I think, would be the best to handle the situation with Iran, with Venezuela, with our current dynamics of China or the war in Ukraine. Unfortunately, both the candidates from the Democratic side, I think, just wouldn't hold their own in this venue." – WI white man

"I didn't take the time to critically think through this specific race. And I mean, Kamala didn't seem like a great candidate either. I mean, it was just like, well, whatever, he's kind of a known quantity. He just talks big and it's stupid." – MI Hispanic woman

"There was no other choice really. I mean, it was almost like a coin flip, but you were leaning towards 'we needed some kind of change' and we were all hoping maybe it would go like he did in his first term, but I think it just got so far out of hand." – MI white man

"Even though towards the end of his first term, I was disappointed in his actions, when it came to the second term, it was picking the best of the worst." – AZ white woman

"I mean, [this is kind of what I was expecting]. There was not a good choice originally, and we can see why." – GA white man

"I expected his behavior, but I think he stepped it up, and that's the disappointment. I mean, I liked his kind of direct approach and his bluntness because he wasn't a career politician, but the lack of that experience is evident." – NV white man

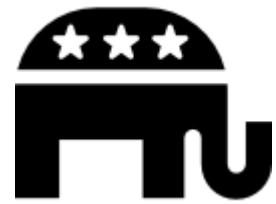


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Republicans In Congress Seen As Just Going Along With Whatever Trump Wants

Moderator: "How do you feel about other Republican leaders?"

"I think the Republicans right now are great at following someone else's instructions and not really doing what's best for the country, in a sense." – OH Black man



"You feel like there's nobody else controlling him, like even the Supreme Court, it just seems like he's the only person that we're hearing from." – ME white woman

"I'm just really disappointed that nobody ... I mean, I know a lot of those people speak better than Trump, they're far more eloquent, they make more sense, but nobody used any of that to really speak up." – MI Hispanic woman

"They are great at wagging their fingers and making YouTube content, but I don't see anything really happening beyond fines." – NC white man

"The only two [Republicans] that I really care about...[are] Ron Paul, [and] Thomas Massie....the rest of them are bought and paid for. They just could give a shit less unless they're getting money back in their pocket and they're going to get reelected." – NV Hispanic man

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Few See Democrats As Fighting For Them, But A Handful Can Name Democrats Who Excite Them

Moderator: "What Democrats are you excited about?"

"So it's primarily AOC out of New York from the House. I have a lot of admiration for Senators Warren and Sanders as well, along with Senator Duckworth. And there's somebody from California. I think her last name's Porter." – AZ Hispanic man

"So here in Michigan, we have Whitmer. She's a Democrat. Vote for her. I agree with her policy. She's a little moderate." – MI white man

"Give us something to vote for, not just something to vote against. We know about Trump. Give us something to vote for." – GA Hispanic woman

"I don't think the Democrats have much of a backbone in Congress because they don't really fight the Republicans on a lot of issues that should be fought." – OH Black man

"At one point I was really following Sanders, but they all sort of followed the same agenda. And I didn't want any more wars. and...I felt that he was going to continue with the Obama administration with fighting multiple wars and bailing out Wall Street. So it's kind of hard to get excited about any politician." – NC Hispanic man

"I think my governor [Whitmer], of Michigan." – MI white man

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Trump Regretters Would Tell Their 2024 Self To “Get Out Of The Manosphere” And “Buckle Up” For The Bumpy Road Ahead

Moderator: “If you could send a message to your 2024 self, what would you say?

“I would've just said to myself that everything that was promised to be that didn't necessarily come to light in the first term, that is what it will be. So go any other direction.” – NV Hispanic man

“Get out the manosphere and just look. Just use your discernment, use your judgment, not what the buff guy who says he's rich on the podcast says. Use your brain.” – GA white man

“Be more prepared because of the hostility of the country.” – NV white man

“Just buckle up, you know what you're voting for basically.” – MI Hispanic man

“The selling point for my vote, getting rid of inflation and it being prioritized, is not going to happen. And why not give someone else a chance instead of automatically going with who was already in presidency?” – GA white woman



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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.

About the Study

GBAO conducted three online focus groups with voters from battleground states (AZ, GA, ME, MI, NC, NV, OH, PA, and WI) who voted for Trump but now regret their vote or are disappointed in Trump's performance.

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