



Engagious

FPG Focus Pointe
Global

SWING VOTER PROJECT (SVP)

REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2019

SAGINAW, MI

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH:

Engagious conducted a mixed-gender focus group in Saginaw, MI on December 9th with 10 swing voters who voted for President Obama in 2012 and President Trump in 2016. We explored questions and topics surrounding the president, Democrats running for president, and 2020 issues more broadly.

DISCLAIMER:

The key findings in this report are based upon the opinions and feedback from 10 swing voters in one location. They are not a representative sample, nor should they be viewed as such.

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Example: "30% of female respondents disagreed with the Medicare statement" (according to research conducted by Engagious/FPG).



1

SAGINAW SWING VOTERS EMBRACE PRESIDENT TRUMP, AND BELIEVE THEY ARE BETTER OFF NOW THAN THEY WERE FOUR YEARS AGO.

If another presidential election were being held tomorrow between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, all 10 swing voters would vote for the president again.

Hypothetically, if the U.S. Constitution didn't prevent presidents from serving a third term, and former President Obama became the Democratic nominee to challenge President Trump's re-election, eight would vote for President Trump and two would vote for President Obama.

Swing voters listed what they like about President Trump politically:

- No one bought him
- He doesn't care what others think of him
- He has been good for the economy (more jobs, stronger financial base, better stock market)
- He has been tough with other countries, including North Korea

When they see him on TV or on their device, they feel:

- Positive (2)
- OK/Neutral (2)
- Strong (1)
- Great (1)
- Secure (1)
- Somewhat hesitant (based on the way he speaks) (1)
- Uncomfortable (1)
- Shocked (1)

Our swing voters don't trust the media's coverage of President Trump, scoring this 0.9/10 (from "totally mistrust" to "totally trust"), and they feel slightly negatively, on average, about his tweets, scoring them 4.6/10 (from "I hate them" to "I love them").

They have a high level of confidence that President Trump will be re-elected. If they were placing a \$100 bet on the outcome of the election on a zero to 10 scale (from "you are totally confident the Democratic nominee will win" to "you are totally confident President Trump will win"), they would score that 7.1/10. Also, almost all our swing voters told us they would recommend to an adult in their life they can talk to about anything, including politics, that they vote for President Trump in 2020. On a scale from zero to 10 (from "not at all likely" to "very likely") they scored this 7.0/10. They indicated he has kept many of his promises and, because he has done well in his first term, he should be re-elected.



Respondents believe they are better off than they were four years ago and have embraced President Trump on a number of key issues, including the economy, trade, healthcare, and the border wall.

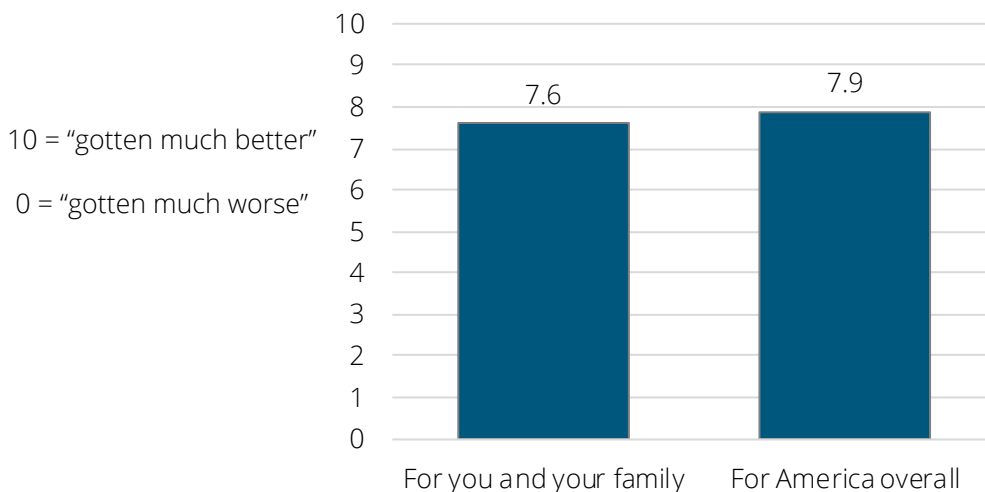
Respondents explained how they are better off now than four years ago:

- I have a full-time job in my field
- I was working a job where I was away from my child, and now I'm working a job and can be with my child
- I have a more livable wage
- I have more safety devices available to me now at my firefighting job
- My husband has a good enough job that I can stay home with our child
- I get a raise every year
- I am no longer on Obamacare, which was a "mess"
- I paid off my home and student loans and I don't need to work anymore – I can stay home with my young child
- I have seen less crime as the result of economic gains in the country

THE ECONOMY

With the unemployment rate at 3.5% nationally, the lowest it has been in five decades, and the stock market hovering near an all-time high, seven of our swing voters believe the U.S. economy is "booming." They cite the low unemployment rate, the stock market's performance, and low interest rates.

Respondents rated on a scale from zero to 10 how the economy has been since Donald Trump became president (from "gotten much worse" to "gotten much better"):



Four respondents have seen a noticeable increase in their wages since President Trump took office, and three attribute that increase to him. Those who haven't seen a noticeable increase in their wages do not blame President Trump.

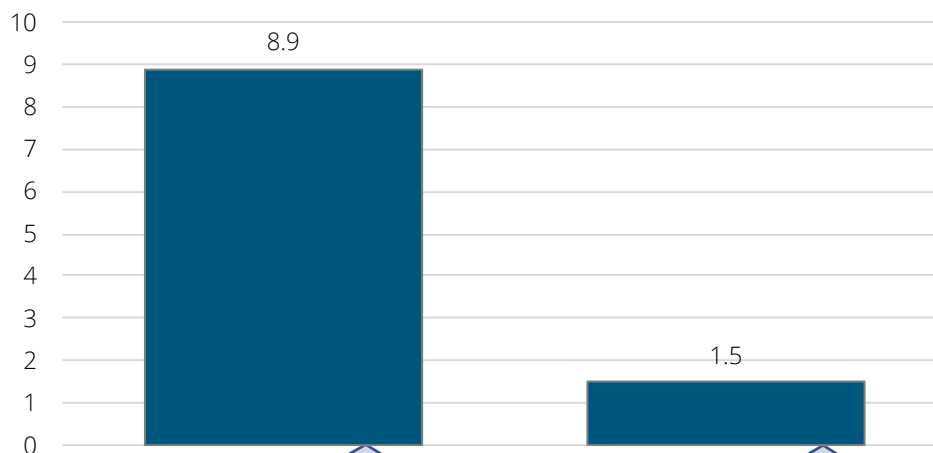


Swing voters indicated they don't think it's likely the U.S. economy will enter a recession sometime in the next year, scoring the question 4.3/10 (from "no chance it will enter a recession" to "it's already in recession"). They believe the U.S. economy is strong and their confidence in President Trump's handling of it has increased over the last several months, scoring it 7.1/10 (from "less confident in President Trump's handling of the economy" to "more confident in President Trump's handling of the economy").

Even if a recession were to occur before the next election, their support for President Trump would not erode – which is different from what we've heard in other swing voter focus groups. On a zero to 10 scale (from "my support for him will erode substantially" to "my support for him will grow substantially"), they scored it 5.6/10, indicating their support for him would grow slightly.

The state of our economy in November 2020 will have a significant impact on whether swing voters decide to re-elect the president. As the chart below shows, our swing voters aren't interested in getting back to "normal" and moving away from this president.

Respondents told us how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements about President Trump, on a zero to 10 scale. Zero means they totally disagreed, and 10 means they totally agreed.



A lot of chaos swirls around President Trump. He is an unconventional president. On Twitter he regularly makes critical statements about other people, including people in his own party and administration. Allegations of bad behavior are leveled against him regularly. While I'm aware of the controversies involving president Trump, what is likelier to influence my vote is how the economy is doing, and how my family and I are doing, in November 2020.

I just can't take it anymore with Trump's antics, and his being in our faces 24/7. I have no patience for another four years. Things in America just don't feel normal, and we need to get back to normal.



TRADE

Our swing voters support the president's trade policies. They indicated supporting the tariffs the Trump Administration has placed on imports of certain goods, scoring their support 7.5/10 (from "totally oppose" to "totally support"). Eight of the 10 believe America's efforts to secure a fairer trade deal with China, to help American exporters and to protect our intellectual property, is worth the financial pain from higher prices on imports we buy from other countries; the other two disagree. Most are focused on the long-term gains that a fairer trade deal with China can bring our country, including potentially lower prices for goods in the future, rather than the potential short-term pain – and they recognize there could be short-term pain.

Eight of the 10 believe American consumers pay for tariffs imposed on imported goods, while two believe others are paying for tariffs. In addition, four say they feel they're paying higher prices for goods because of the tariffs imposed by the Trump Administration, while six disagree. Those who believe they are paying higher prices for goods because of the tariffs say they are paying more for electronics, vegetables, and safety gear.

Trade is an issue that's important to them, and they indicated President Trump's actions on trade will have a fairly significant impact on their vote, scoring it 6.6/10 (from "have no impact on my vote" to "have a significant impact on my vote"). In fact, our swing voters support the president's efforts on trade enough that if a "trade war" with China were to cause prices to rise noticeably for them and their family, their support for him would grow. On a scale from zero to 10 (from "my support for him will erode substantially" to "my support for him will grow substantially"), they scored this 6.3/10.

At this point, they don't feel strongly about whether the Trump Administration's trade policies have been a positive or negative thing for Michigan farmers, scoring it 5.5/10 (from "very bad for Michigan farmers" to "very good for Michigan farmers").

HEALTHCARE

Unlike other "Obama-Trump" groups, our Saginaw swing voters indicated they are fairly satisfied with President Trump's efforts to ensure healthcare is affordable for them and their family, scoring their satisfaction level 6.8/10 (from "not at all satisfied" to "very satisfied").

They told us President Trump has helped them and their family afford healthcare in the following ways:

- He got rid of the penalty for not having Obamacare (and tried to get rid of the law entirely)
- His tax-cut means they have more money to spend on their healthcare needs
- Prescriptions are more affordable (five agree)



THE BORDER WALL

The good news for President Trump is that only one swing voter indicated he will hold it against him if he doesn't build the wall he promised between the U.S. and Mexico. That swing voter is more troubled by the broken promise itself rather than not having the wall, which he said he doesn't really care about. Five believe President Trump didn't really mean it when he made that promise, and they're OK with there being no wall across the whole border, while four believe he didn't break his promise and he'll get the full wall built if he has more time in office.

They are willing to give him leeway on the issue because they believe he has been working to get the wall built, but others have pushed back against him, including other Republicans. Some indicated they see measures such as enhanced border security as "part of that wall" and we heard "it doesn't have to be a physical wall there, but there's progress being made." They are willing to give him that leeway because they have given leeway to other politicians in the past. Also, some noted they didn't vote for the president because of his promise for the wall.

2

SWING VOTERS ARE WARY ABOUT ELIMINATING PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE AND REPLACING IT WITH MEDICARE FOR ALL.

Swing voters have heard a reasonable amount about “Medicare for All” over the past several months, rating how much news they have heard 7.4/10 (from “no news at all” to “a large amount of news”). We learned they do not support eliminating private health insurance and replacing it with Medicare for All, rating the idea a 3.4/10 (from “totally oppose” to “totally support”). With some Democrats running for president embracing the concept of Medicare for All, there could be repercussions in 2020. This is because eight of our 10 swing voters told us they could not vote for a Democratic presidential candidate in 2020 who calls for eliminating private health insurance and replacing it with Medicare for All.

Respondents want the option to choose the type of healthcare they receive, and Medicare for All might not provide better healthcare with the government running it. Some told us they don’t know enough of the details of the proposal at this point, including what the policy is, and whether they would be choosing their own doctors or if the government would be dictating which doctors they are able to see.



3 SWING VOTERS RESENT THAT IMPEACHMENT IS TAKING THE FOCUS OFF OF THEM AND THEIR NEEDS.

During the focus group, we read the following statement to respondents:

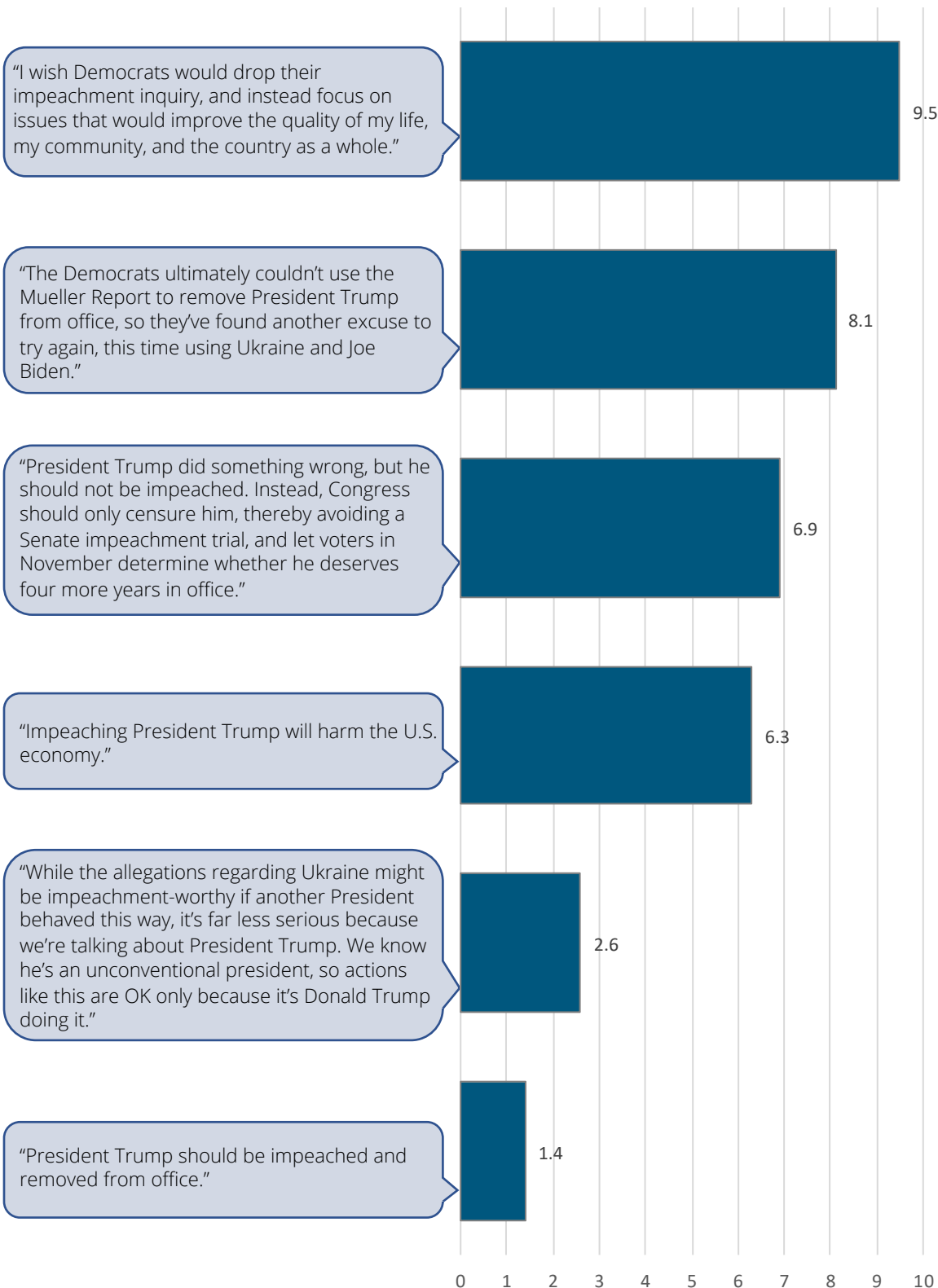
The allegation against President Trump is that in a July 25 telephone call, he asked Ukrainian President Zelensky to “look into” allegations of wrongdoing by Joe Biden, a potential 2020 competitor, and Biden’s son Hunter. A week or more before the call, Trump had directed the withholding of \$391 million in military and security aid that Congress had approved to help Ukraine defend itself against Russia. (Ukraine’s leaders reportedly found out about the withholding of funds in early August; the money was ultimately dispersed to Ukraine on September 11.) President Trump, in that July 25 call and through other actions, was allegedly using the power of his office to solicit interference from a foreign country in the 2020 U.S. election.

Respondents are not particularly troubled by these allegations, scoring them 4.2/10 (from “not at all troubling” to “very troubling”), even though all of them reported following the impeachment hearings in the House of Representatives over the past month, at least to some degree. Seven told us they watched “less than a half hour in total,” but not “none of them.” Three reported watching “between a half hour and two hours in total.”

If the House of Representatives ultimately votes to impeach President Trump, six of the group know he would not be immediately removed from office, with Vice President Pence becoming president; four told us they didn’t know whether that would happen.

KEY FINDINGS

Respondents rated the statements below about their feelings on impeachment on a scale from zero to 10 (from “totally disagree” to “totally agree”). The following chart shows how much they agree with these statements, in descending order:





If our swing voters heard the news that President Trump was being removed from office and Vice President Pence was becoming president, they would feel:

- Angry (2)
- Shocked (2)
- Frustration (1)
- Disappointment (1)
- Sad (1)
- Fearful (1)
- Confused (2)

If Speaker Pelosi were to walk into the room, they would say the following to her about impeachment:

- “Give it up” – President Trump promised to “drain the swamp”
- Why are you wasting time and money on this?
- What are you doing for us? I don’t want to hear about impeachment.
- You’re making your personal problem with Trump a national problem.

4

MOST OF OUR SAGINAW SWING VOTERS PREFER
RIGHT-WING POPULISM OVER LEFT-WING POPULISM.

We presented two batches of policy choices for next year's election, and asked respondents to tell us which they would choose:

ON THE LEFT	ON THE RIGHT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impose an annual 2% tax on every dollar of net worth above \$50 million, and a 3% tax on every dollar of net worth above \$1 billion. • Impose an additional 7% tax on any corporation with profits above \$100 million. • Cancel \$50,000 in student loan debt for every person with household income under \$100,000. • Pass a Medicare for All plan and make large corporations and wealthy people pay for it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a wall between the U.S. and Mexico. • Ban citizens from certain countries from coming to the U.S. • Impose tariffs on goods coming from China and Mexico, to force these countries to negotiate more favorable trade deals with the U.S. • Weaken Obamacare with the goal of dismantling it.

Seven members of this group prefer the policy ideas of right-wing populism, and three prefer the policy ideas of left-wing populism. Notably, four would describe the left's ideas as "socialism," while one disagrees and five "don't know."

Those who prefer the policies on the left told us:

- They want to raise taxes on big companies
- They have student loan debt and it's going to take a while to pay it back
- People aren't getting the medical care they need because of pre-existing conditions

Those who prefer the policies on the right said:

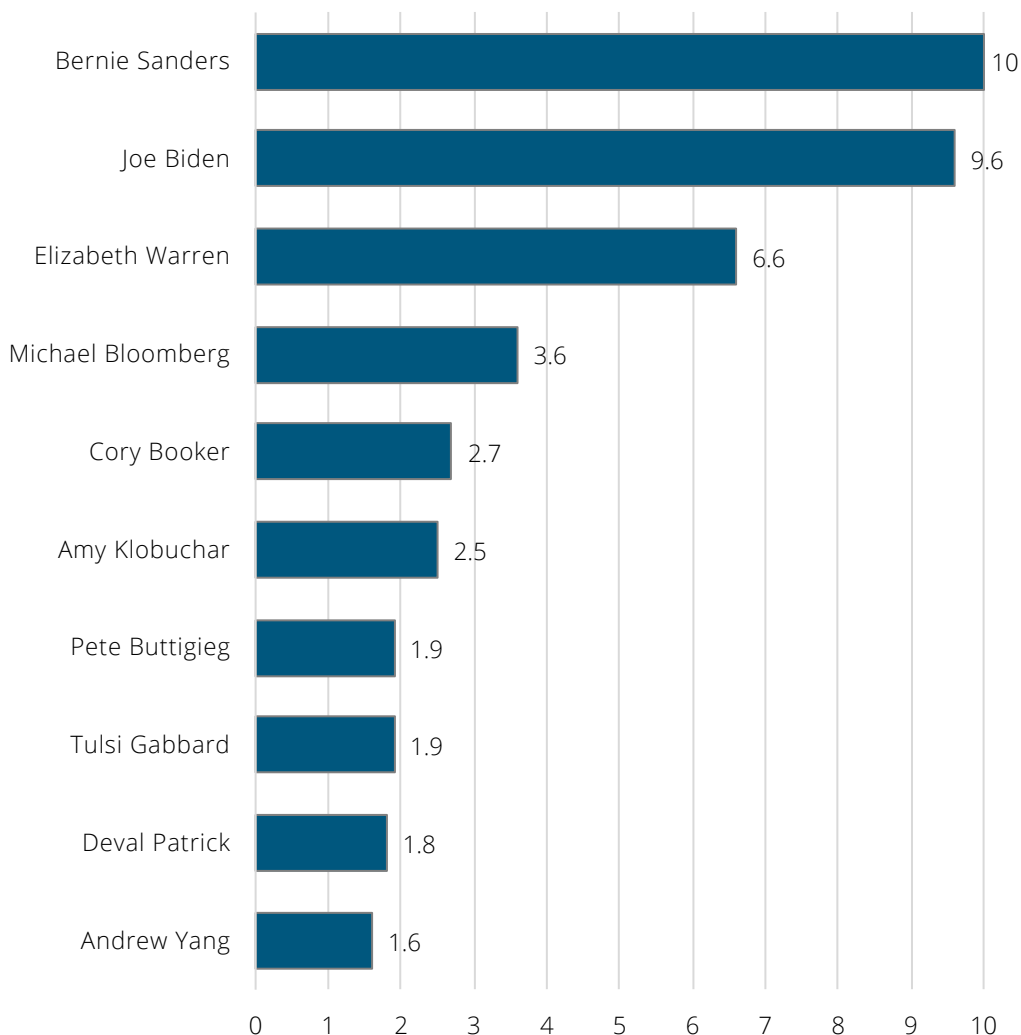
- Those are policy ideas that directly affect them
- The wealthy shouldn't be taxed more, and they would find ways to avoid paying higher taxes anyway
- They don't like the ideas on the left, including Medicare for All, and they won't happen

5

SAGINAW SWING VOTERS AREN'T FAMILIAR WITH MOST OF THE DEMOCRATS RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT.

Respondents indicated with their dials their level of confidence in being able to identify unlabeled photos of Democrats running for president in 2020, on a zero to 10 scale. Zero means they had no idea who the candidate is, and 10 means they were totally confident they know who the candidate is.

The following chart shows the results, on average, in descending order:



Almost a year after Democrats began announcing their candidacies for president and following five primary debates, swing voters indicated many of the candidates still aren't recognizable to them. They are getting their news from a variety of news sources, including local TV news (six of the 10), Facebook, Apple News, and cable news.

We also showed unlabeled photos of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (6.3/10), Adam Schiff (3.1/10), and Jerry Nadler (1.2/10). Remarkably, Ocasio-Cortez is more recognizable than seven of the 10 Democrats running for president whom we asked about.



There was no consensus in the group that any of the candidates “excites them,” nor could they think of anyone not running who they would like to see run for president.

We showed a highlights reel from last month’s Democratic debate, where the candidates presented their policy ideas, and respondents reacted moment-to-moment using their hand-held dials on a scale from zero to 100 (from “totally dislike” to “totally like”). The highest-scoring messaging came from Andrew Yang, who talked about his proposal for paid family leave, with respondents scoring this as high as 79/100. This messaging resonated for respondents because some of them have childcare needs and they believe it’s really important for new parents to bond with their children. Notably, none of our respondents have heard about federal legislation that would provide paid family leave. The lowest-scoring messaging came from Senator Klobuchar when she said, “If you think a woman can’t beat Donald Trump, Nancy Pelosi does it every single day,” with respondents scoring this as low as 26/100. This sounded very negative to them and didn’t ring true. They questioned how Speaker Pelosi is beating President Trump every day. One respondent remarked that Pelosi opposes the president, “but she’s not winning.”

Also, we showed Michael Bloomberg’s 105-second announcement video and solicited verbal feedback. We learned they don’t know very much about him, but they liked his ad overall. It’s notable, however, that some were skeptical about some of his claims in the ad, including his desire to raise taxes on wealthy people, which would mean himself.

Questions for Michael Bloomberg include:

- How will you use your power to fix America?
- Who are you going to help?
- What is your position on healthcare?
- Why would you want a job that comes with so many headaches?
- What can you tell us about your background, including how you got your money, your family, the type of business you created, and what kind of schools you sent your children to?
- Why would you want to raise your own taxes?
- When you raise taxes on the wealthy, what are you going to spend that money on?
- Do you volunteer?
- How much money do you donate to charity?
- Who’s supporting you?

Our swing voters viewed Senator Warren negatively, saying she has “no credibility” because she wants to spend money we don’t have, and they disputed her claims about housing discrimination. They described her as “abrasive,” and none liked her personality.



Our swing voters would give the following advice to Democrats running for president:

- Stop focusing on President Trump, and tell the American people what you would do as president, especially for the middle class
- Move away from negative campaigning
- Do your homework because President Trump has all his bases covered
- Distance yourself from previous Democratic candidates

If they were advising President Trump's Democratic challenger and were asked to come up with a phrase built upon "Make America _____ Again," they would recommend:

- Free (2)
- America (1)
- Proud (1)
- Strong (1)
- Honest (1)
- Sane (1)
- Equal (1)
- Educational (1)
- Profitable (1)

We told our swing voters, "Imagine former President Obama walked into this room right now and he said to you, 'Look, you all voted for me in 2012. Please vote for the Democratic nominee next year. We need you to do it.' What would you say to him?" A number of respondents would want to know why they should do that. Importantly, five told us they won't vote for the Democratic nominee, with two saying they're definitely voting for President Trump, while the others may vote for him, may vote for a third-party candidate, or may stay home.

6

THERE WAS NO CONSENSUS ON THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR SAGINAW SWING VOTERS HEADING INTO 2020.

In the beginning of the focus group, respondents named their top issue of concern heading into 2020:

- Changes to Social Security that would reduce benefits (2)
- Immigration – the lack of vetting and making the process for applying easier (2)
- Education – teachers’ needs, classroom curriculum, retirement policies (2)
- Foreign relations/war (1)
- Foreign trade – the outsourcing of jobs (1)
- Term limits for Congress – they have become too comfortable in office, enriching themselves, and they’re not necessarily representing the people anymore (1)
- The economy/budget (1)

Only one respondent feels the Democrats running for president are speaking about the national issues he or she cares most about.

Respondents also named the one thing a presidential candidate could propose that would help them economically:

- Jobs
- Lower taxes
- Tax breaks for veterans
- Accountability for our government officials to keep their promises
- Congress shouldn't receive benefits we don't get – their benefits are costing us a lot of money
- Help for caregivers

Respondents rated the direction of our country and the direction of Michigan on a zero to 10 scale (from “totally wrong direction” to “totally right direction”). Notably, swing voters are much more satisfied with the direction of the country (6.1/10) than the direction of Michigan (3.9/10). They told us the country is “in a good place,” especially with the strong economy. However, at the state level, they disapprove of some of the actions of their Democratic governor, whose ideas they say are “more liberal than mine,” citing the recent gas tax. Also, they said the governor has been looking to reverse some of the good things the previous governor did – and they oppose those actions.



Swing voters would ask the Democrats running for president the following questions:

- How can you help us?
- What are your policies on healthcare, Social Security, education, and the economy?
- How will you follow up on those policies?
- How are you going to make America great?
- How are you going to make America secure?
- Why is your only focus trying to bring down President Trump and not helping the people who have elected you to office?
- What system of checks and balances are going to be in place to keep you in check?

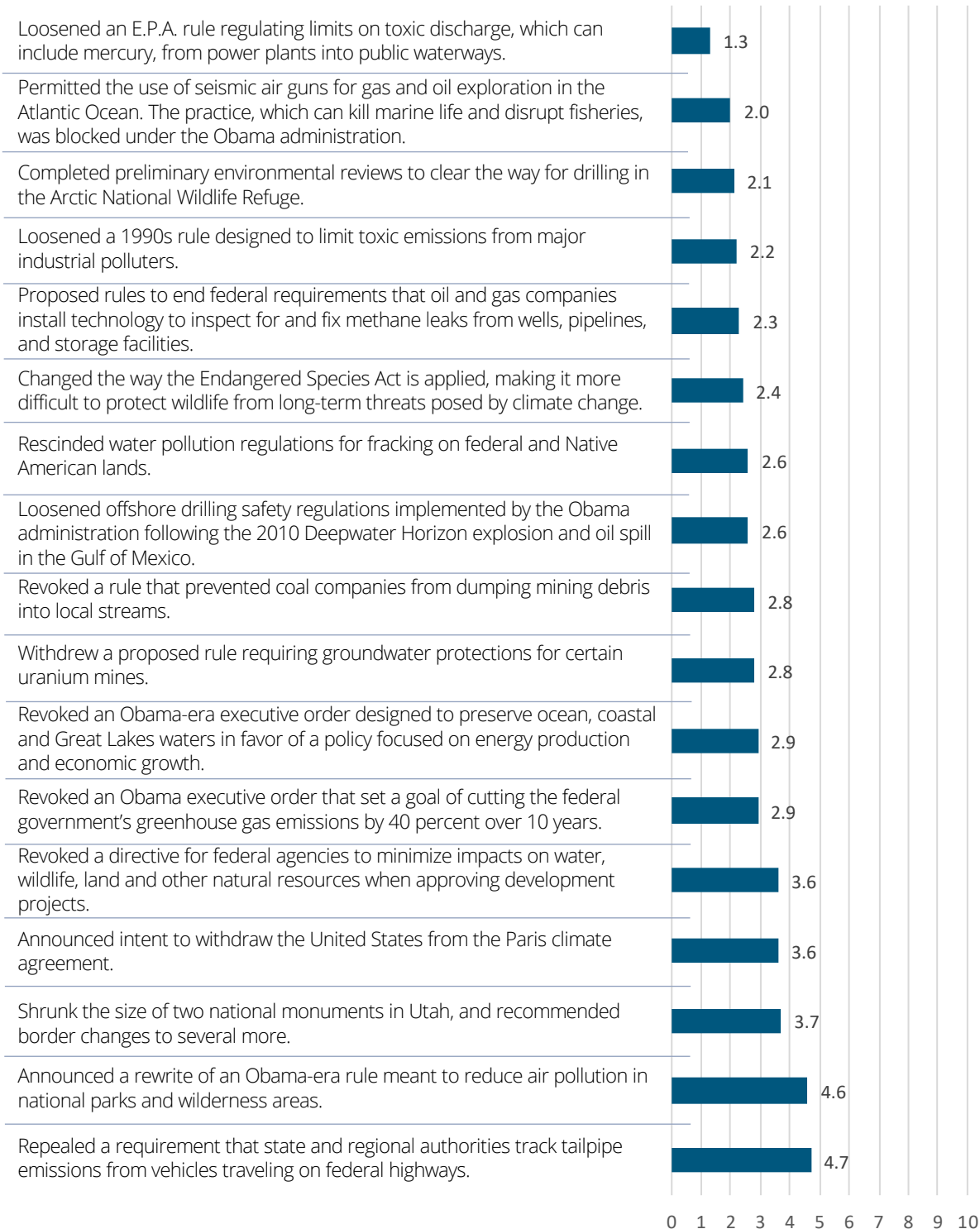
Questions for President Trump included:

- Will you tone down your tweets?
- What ideas are you proposing for the next election?
- Are you going to continue the success you have had in the past?

7

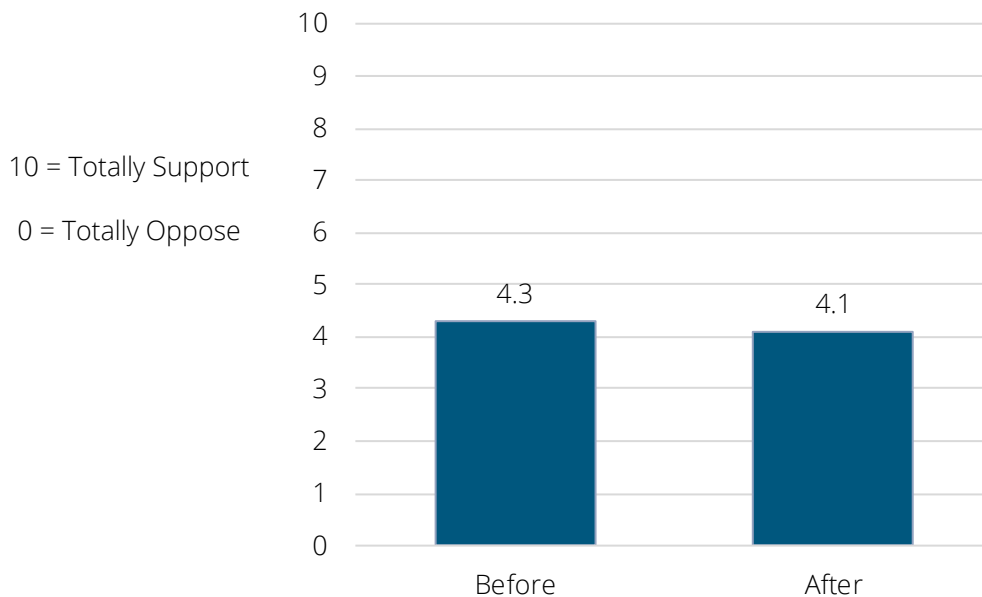
SWING VOTERS ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS TO LOOSEN ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS.

Respondents rated a list of steps taken by the Trump Administration as it relates to the environment on a scale from zero to 10 (from "totally oppose" to "totally support"). The following chart shows them in ascending order, from most opposed to most supported:





Before and after we read the 17 regulations the Trump Administration has rolled back or is looking to roll back related to the environment, respondents rated how much they support or oppose these efforts, on a scale from zero to 10 (from “totally oppose” to “totally support”).



8

SWING VOTERS AGREE THAT THE WEATHER IN RECENT YEARS SEEMS "WEIRD."

Respondents have heard very little over the past several months about the “Green New Deal,” scoring it 3.2/10 on a zero to 10 scale (from “no news at all” to “a large amount of news”).

On average, swing voters somewhat agree with the idea that “compared to when you were much younger, the weather in recent years seems weird.” They scored it 5.8/10 on a zero to 10 scale (from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”). Those who agreed cited colder weather sooner and longer, they’re not seeing much of a spring or a fall (it goes from winter to summer or summer to winter), more extreme temperatures, and high-water levels.

They agreed less with the idea that “compared to when you were much younger, certain months seem warmer now,” scoring it 4.0/10 using the same scale.