Voters Want Change. In Our Poll, They See It in Trump.

0:05

from The New York Times I'm Michael baboro this is the daily

0:11

today a new poll showing former president Donald Trump leading President Biden in five of six Battleground States

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according to the latest New York Times Sienna polls the among likely voters Trump is ahead in Wisconsin Georgia

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Nevada Arizona and Pennsylvania frankly for the Joe Biden campaign these numbers are an absolute disaster the smallest

0:31

lead is in Arizona for Donald Trump he's up six look at this nine in Georgia 13 in Nevada my goodness gracious my God

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that is a huge League no Democrat what the latest times poll reveals about President Biden's challenges Donald

0:46

Trump's strengths and the profound hunger for change among voters that may

0:52

explain both we turn as always to my colleague

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Nate it's Tuesday May

1:02

14th so Nate welcome back Michael thank you always good to be here I want to

Why Polls

1:09

start by asking you to explain something pretty basic which is why we conduct so

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many polls on the presidential race you were just on the show I think about a month or so ago when the times did

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really that recently yes it's last big presidential poll what is different

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about this latest poll and why are we conducting it so closely on the heels of

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our last presidential poll so one reason is that these are State polls of the

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Battleground States Pennsylvania Michigan Wisconsin Arizona Nevada in Georgia and the last poll was a national

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poll and as you know the presidency is decided by the Electoral College not by

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the national popular vote and as a result we do need to drill down into these key swing states to understand the

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course of the election and we haven't conducted any Battleground State plls since November so it's actually been six

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months since the last time we looked at these key swing States got it and the second reason we pull so often is

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because a lot of things change you know even since that last National poll Donald Trump's trial began right and it

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was important to us by the way to conduct that last National poll before the trial began so that we had a marker of where the ray stood heading into it

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and looking back over the longer term since those last state polls in November so much has changed not only in American

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politics but also with respect to the economy and abroad the stock market's up 25% since October RFK has gotten on the

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ballot the primaries have wrapped up we've had six months of conflict in the Middle East Biden campaigns spent tens

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of millions of dollars of ads in these key States so there's a lot that's happened that we want to check in on

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right and you can only measure the impact of changes like that by doing polling very frequently what about the

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question of what's different about this poll than any previous poll one thing that's

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different about this poll is that we're focused a lot more on the kind of change the electorate wants for the country in

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this election by nature of these two very flawed candidates we've spent a lot of

Voters Want Change

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time this year asking about things like Joe Biden's age or Donald Trump's alleged criminal conduct and we haven't

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spent as much time focused on what voters want for the country whether on the issues or just in terms of their

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feeling about the direction of the country in general and after all of those polls showing Donald Trump in the

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lead it sort of has raised the question of well how much of this is about the personal attributes of the candidates

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versus their desire to see something different in terms of policy in the White [Music]

Topline Results

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House okay so with all that in mind let's start with the Topline findings of

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this poll and then let's turn to this deeper understanding of Voters desire

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for change that you sought to better understand through this new poll well despite all the political and economic

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changes the last 6 months that I was telling you about Michael the Topline result is kind of the same as it was 6

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months ago Donald Trump still leads in five of the Six States despite the improving

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economy despite tens of millions of dollars in campaign spending by the Biden campaign in the Battleground

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States despite the end to the primary season and despite the beginning of the criminal trial of Donald Trump and man P

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mhm in in the poll Donald Trump was ahead in Georgia Nevada Arizona

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Pennsylvania and Wisconsin among likely voters while Joe Biden only LED in one

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state among likely voters [Music]

4:45

Michigan okay this is very important because these are all Six States swing

Trump Ahead in 5 Swing States

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states that Biden won in 2020 which is in large part why he became president in

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his last contest against Trump and you're saying Trump is ahead of Biden in

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five of those six states which seems very very mathematically consequential that's right Biden won all six of these

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states in 2020 he would not have won the presidency if he lost five of the states and if the election were held today and

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if everywhere else stayed the same and these poll results were right Donald Trump would win a majority of the votes

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in the Electoral College you know it's worth emphasizing that Joe Biden doesn't need to win all of these states to win

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the president prescy he could win if he only won Pennsylvania Michigan and Wisconsin provided he won everywhere

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else that we didn't pull that would give him exactly 270 electoral votes right and the poll does show that Joe Biden is

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still competitive in those three Northern Battlegrounds none of those states are outside of the margin of

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error Trump's lead is at its largest in Pennsylvania where he's up by three points but with six months to go you

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know that's not necessarily a daunting Hill to climb the place where Joe Biden seems to be in bigger trouble is in

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these more diverse un Belt states Nevada Arizona and Georgia where Trump has a very substantial lead and that's a

6:04

reflection of something that we've already talked about on the show before which is that Donald Trump is doing very well for a republican among black

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Hispanic and young voters and that's doing a lot to improve his standing in these relatively diverse States right so

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given that this poll ultimately reinforces our sense that

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Biden's reelection path is narrow and that many key groups have become

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disaffected with him what have you found on that question of change how much

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voters want change and how important that seems to the question of why Trump

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is doing better than Biden in so many of these swing States well we asked voters a series of questions that at least I

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thought was pretty interesting you know first we ask people what kind of change they want do they think that the system

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needs no change minor change major change or do we just completely need to tear down system in America today then

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we ask them what kind of change they thought the candidates would provide using the exact same language you think

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that Donald Trump would change nothing would he yield minor changes major changes tear it down and so on ask the same question about Joe Biden M and then

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finally we also asked whether they thought the changes that these candidates would provide would be good or bad you can imagine for instance a

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liberal who wants major changes and who also thinks Donald Trump would provide major change but doesn't like the change

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that Trump would bring right and at the end we can then Stitch all that together to sort of say okay this is what voters

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want and this is what they think they get from these two candidates and you know I think what we found was pretty interesting I mean at a high level

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voters really want major changes nearly 70% of Voters in the poll said that the

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political and economic system in the US either needs major changes or needs to be torn down entirely and it's that

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extends across parties and across both Biden and Trump supporters and so on wow obviously different people have very

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different ideas of what kind of change the system and the country needs but they are united on believing that change

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is needed what voters thought about the candidates was sometimes quite a bit different than

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that voters really didn't think that Joe Biden would bring very much change to

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the country more than anything voters weren't really convinced anything would change if Joe Biden was President a full

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30% said nothing would change nearly 40% said only minor changes would happen and

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even if they think he does provide minor changes they don't even think his changes would necessarily be good or

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bad they just sort of see him as ineffectual interesting so Joe Biden is in the minds of Voters essentially a

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status quo candidate who isn't going to shake things up at a time when they're looking for big changes right and you do not want to be the status quo candidate

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when 70% of those pulled say they want major or tear it down level of change

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exactly and Donald Trump on the other hand voters thought would provide major changes or tear it down chain even even

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many of Joe Biden's supporters think that Donald Trump would bring major changes in fact overall 70% of Voters

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thought Donald Trump would either bring major changes or tear the system down which is almost exactly what the country

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said it wanted in the first place 70% voters want major change 70% say Donald Trump brings major

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change his anti-establishment Outsider tear it all down pitch aligns

What Voters Want

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relatively well with what the electorate wants it gets a little more comp liated if we drill down into the details though

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of the kind of change voters want the kind of change they think Trump would provide but they're pretty split on

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whether the changes he'd provide would be good or bad overall 43% of Voters think that Donald Trump would make good

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changes for the country compared to 35% who think those changes would be bad so in every way Trump seems to benefit from

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what this poll finds to be this deep hunger for change in the electorate I'm

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curious who Nate the poll shows is seeking this change what kind of voter

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and if that voter was with Biden in 2020 when he won all these swing States and

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became president but who now see him as insufficient as an agent of change in

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this moment as I just mentioned the voters who are looking for change span the political spectrum they span out

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every ideology every demographic group and so on but the group of Biden voters

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who backed him last time but say they won't support him again are disproportionately likely to be

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relatively moderate or conservative young and non-white

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voters the ones who identify as liberal are mostly sticking by Joe Biden or at the very least are not supporting Donald

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Trump so we have a sort of unusual group of Voters here at least unusual in the way we usually think about American

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politics right young black latino voters who want big changes but don't think of

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themselves as liberals who think of themselves as moderate or conservative H there's not a specific policy program

Black Latino Voters

11:04

they're advocating there's not a specific aspect of the system that they're looking to critique what

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distinguishes them is that they're so unhappy with the system that they demand major changes or fundamental changes and

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so un ideological that they don't bring the sort of clear left right views to

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the issues that keep voters with Joe Biden mhm if they were the sort of

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person that felt strongly about Medicare for all they probably really dislike Donald Trump on ideological grounds so

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you're looking for someone who has the same yearning for change but who does not have that kind of consistent view on

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the issues that binds them more clearly to the Democratic party got it and when

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we ask them an open-ending questioning you know what's the most important issue why are you voting for this candidate

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their answers remain sort of typical there's not anything that really stands out about them they still are

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complaining about the economy and immigration just like like everyone else it's just that they're just that much more frustrated with the status quo that

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they're willing to defect there's something very intuitive

The Obama Coalition

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about Trump's appeal to a voter like this because if you're not especially

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ideological and you crave deep change I can't think of any

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candidate in our political system in a generation who more embodies the idea of

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change much of it pretty radical than Donald Trump yeah I think that's right I

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think if you were looking for another candidate in recent memory you'd probably have to go back to Barack Obama at least in the general election another

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candidate who famously represented change change we could believe in he was

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also kind of not necessarily the clearest candidate on ideological grounds right he was a relative moderate

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on some issues and had appeal to certain kinds of Republicans in the 2008 election and I think that it's not a

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coincidence that there are so many Obama Trump voters out there right there is a way in which both of these candidates

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despite disagreeing on so much nonetheless have figured out a way to Channel A critique of the status quo

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critique of the establishment and a desire for change into a political message even if the content that

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supports that message is very different that message in itself has appeal to a certain kind of person right and quite

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relevantly for our conversation here Nate Obama very famously in electoral

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terms created a coalition that was very successful in

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winning over young black and Latino voters and in what we'd have to call a

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historic change it is now Trump a republican who seems to be disassembling

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that Coalition that was once this hard-earned prize of the democratic party and kind of taking it and making

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it his own it looks like for 2024 I think that's such a good point

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Michael and I don't think it's a coincidence that in our poll the groups that yearned for the most fundamental

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changes to American society are the classic Obama Coalition constituencies of Young Black and Hispanic voters and

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they're also the groups that Joe Biden is losing the most ground among I mean if we just think about Biden and Obama

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for a second the case for Obama to represent change was clear in every respect every element of his biography

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his personal characteristics represented change his brand of politics after 35

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years of Reagan conservatism represented a clear departure from the status quo

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and now today it's the reverse Joe Biden represents sort of demographics of the past he is an old white male from

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Scranton he's also no longer fundamentally a changed candidate right at least four years ago when Donald

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Trump was President Joe Biden could represent change when he was challenging Donald Trump in the White House you know

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at the time the country was in the depths of the pandemic there was unrest in the wake of the death of George Floyd

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and the black lives matter protests the economy was doing terribly so Joe Biden in arguing for a different approach on

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the pandemic and for racial conciliation he could represent a real change from the status quo even though he wasn't in

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any way a deeply radical candidate now those aren't the issues that voters are focused on right it's not even obvious

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what his second term agenda is to me I mean he wants to win this election on democ and abortion but those are efforts

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to sort of protect the things that we used to take for granted not ways to

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improve the country and bring it to a new Progressive Frontier got it Biden

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was just enough change in 2020 and nowhere near enough right now

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for a meaningful number of the voters that you pulled in these key swing States that's right Biden does not

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represent change Donald Trump absolutely does represent change

Trump represents change

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and while you might expect that the same desire for change would affect other candidates and other races Elsewhere on

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the ballot that just doesn't seem to be the case which tells us that this is almost entirely isolated to the

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presidential [Music] contest we'll be right

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[Music] back Nate before the break you were

Biden is isolated to the presidential race

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describing how this latest New York Times poll of battleground states in the

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presidential race lets us see how much the question of change and how it

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advantages Trump and disadvantages Biden is isolated to the presidential race

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rather than races elsewhere in these Battleground States so just explain that

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and tell us precisely what the poll found well we asked voters how they thought about four races for US Senate

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in these states Pennsylvania Wisconsin Nevada and Arizona three of those four

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states feature Democratic incumbents and in all four of these states the Democratic candidate LED H sometimes

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even by a comfortable margin and even though Donald Trump was ahead in the

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presidential race so here we have these Democratic incumbents weighed down by many of the same problems as Mr Biden

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but it's only in the presidential race where we see this yielding a breakthrough for the Republicans at this

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stage give us an example that really illustrates this yeah I think Ground Zero is Nevada of all the states we

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pulled Nevada was Joe Biden's worst it's the youngest and most diverse of the Battleground States and Donald Trump led

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by a staggering 12 points among registered voters in this poll this is a state that Joe Biden won by two points

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in 2020 but in the race for US Senate things looked basically normal the Democrat Jackie Rosen an incumbent

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Senator but but not a juggernaut not someone who has routinely excelled in

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her previous election contest she was leading by two points and young and non-white voters lined up behind Miss

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Rosen in the usual and expected proportions with her winning among 18 to 29 year olds and Hispanics by a wide

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margin even as Mr Trump LED those groups in the presidential race right this becomes therefore a very potent way of

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isolating Biden's weaknesses because fellow incumbents from the same party as

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you said in pretty much the same position facing the same headwinds and forces are beating him quite

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meaningfully in the case of Nevada and that makes me wonder do these Democratic incumbent

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Senate candidates just do a better job of embodying Voters desires for change

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than Biden or in your estimation is it more complicated than that well as just

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alluded to many of these Senate Democrats are not political juggernauts we're not talking about Senator Bernie

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Sanders or Senator Barack Obama in 2006 we're talking about relatively generic Democrats who have no special case to be

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agents for change or no path to being presidential candidates in 2028 or

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something like that so I don't think it's that they embody change in some basic way I think it is instead about

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voters holding Joe Biden responsible for so many of the problems with the status quo whether that's inflation or the

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Border I also think it's worth remembering Donald Trump as a variable here he's not some unknown Senate

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Challenger this is someone with a really unique brand for a republican he in a

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way that is not true for other Republicans is a is seen as someone who would shake up the system who's Against

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The Establishment he's also someone who has a demonstrated record of success on the economy in the minds of most voters

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which they say is the most important so I would keep Donald Trump as having unique strengths with respect to Biden's

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vulnerabilities as being an important factor here as well right and this may of course also be a measure of the fact

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that the Republicans challenging these Democratic incumbents just aren't all that wellknown and definitely not

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wellknown enough to embody any kind of change that's right and for many of these voters these Senate races between

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a reasonably well-known Democrat and an unknown Republican are just sort of opportunities to express your default

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partisan preferences when you don't know anything about anyone and you're a Democrat you vote for the Democrat mhm so those Young Black and Hispanic voters

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who are defecting from the Democrats to Trump in the presidential race they're sticking by their default normal

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Democratic partisan political preference in these Senate races so here we have further evidence of Biden's somewhat

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unique weakness in this race and speaking of battleground States and

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potential risks to President Biden something else has happened since you last pulled these Battleground states in

21:01

the fall that feels pretty important you referenced at the very beginning of our conversation that is the fact that RFK

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Jr Robert F Kenley Jr has gotten himself on the ballot in at least one of these

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swing States and Robert De Kennedy Jr hails from democratic royalty he wanted

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to run as a Democrat but ultimately decided to run as an independent so the Assumption has been that he would pose

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the greatest threat to Biden I wonder if this latest poll shows that to be the

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case it does not show that to be the case Michael it does show him receiving a pretty substantial amount of support

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he won 10% of the vote um when we named RFK on the ballot which if it were to

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hold up in the final result would be the strongest performance by a third party candidate since Ross perau um but the

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poll did not find that Kennedy Drew disproportionately from Biden voters um

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in fact um slightly more of Donald Trump's supporters were likelier to say that they would prefer RFK on the ballot

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than Biden supporters how do you make sense of that well there's a group of Voters that voted for Biden in 2020 and

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lean Democratic that no longer like Joe Biden we've been talking about them for much

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of the episode in fact right right many of those voters say that they will vote for Donald Trump this

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November but many of those voters who voted for Biden last time and who say that they'll vote for Trump would

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actually rather vote for RFK which makes some sense right they voted for Biden last time how much can they really like

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Donald Trump but as a consequence RFK is winning a group of Voters who backs

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Trump narrowly in 2024 but backed Biden pretty significantly in

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2020 and that sort of complicates The Narrative about how we talk about this group imagine someone who voted for

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Biden four years ago and who now wants to vote for Donald Trump the sort of person who wants change traditionally

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Democratic that we've talk about all episode many of those voters would rather vote for RFK than Donald Trump

23:05

which makes some sense they didn't vote for him last time they don't love the guy but as a consequence the RFK vote is

Biden is not winning right now

23:12

slightly disproportionately coming from people who would prefer Trump in this election but simultaneously backed Biden

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quite overwhelmingly in the last election so we're talking about a group of Voters that Biden really needed to win last time but that he isn't winning

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right now so in our whole today he's not really affecting the race even though

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there are people who were pretty important to Biden last time so Nate if I'm understanding you correctly and this is admittedly pretty complicated there's

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a group of Voters here voted for Biden in 2020 and either way they're not going to vote for him again in

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2024 not in the poll right now yep instead they're likely to vote for RFK

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instead of defecting to Trump is that good for Biden is it better for Biden in

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a swing state to have a voter who once was with him go to RFK instead of

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trump so I guess I have two answers here the first answer is right now Biden is

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not doing well enough for RFK to be a problem because Biden is doing so badly among these people who ought to be

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Democrats that it doesn't make a difference whether they're voting for RFK or Trump MH that said if we can

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imagine a world in the future where Joe Biden hypothetically mounted a comeback

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where alternately Donald Trump collapsed because he was convicted of federal

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crimes in that scenario where Joe Biden was strong enough to win like he was four years ago then I think RFK might

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actually hurt him at that point fascinating so I want to turn to another factor that has entered this presidential race and that is the

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Israeli military operation in Gaza and America's support for Israel in this war especially President Biden's support for

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this war which as we know from covering it so much on the show has triggered tremendous amount of leftwing activism

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especially among young voters who President Biden is struggling to win

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over does the poll reflect the conflict in Gaza as a

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problem for President Biden I think it does Michael you know if we focus again on these voters who

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have swung against Joe Biden the people who voted for Joe Biden the 2020 election but don't do so anymore 133% of

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those voters said the most important issue to them was either foreign policy or something about the war in in the

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Middle East like they said Israel or Wars or Gaza and almost none of those voters said that they were more

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sympathetic to Israel than the Palestinians in the conflict most were sympathizers with Palestinians

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133% that's a pretty big chunk of the voters who Biden is struggling with but

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that's a much higher proportion than it is among the whole electorate so most voters don't seem to care very about

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foreign policy or Israel but those who do are pretty likely to have flipped got

26:04

it one thing that's worth noting is that Joe Biden's Challenge on this issue is

26:09

especially pronounced among voters who were either Muslim or who said they were of Middle Eastern or North African

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ancestry and nearly all of those who flipped said that the war in the Middle East and foreign policy were most

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important to their vote now it's interesting because I mentioned earlier that this is still a small segment of

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the electorate and despite of those challenges Joe Biden is still ahead in

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Michigan in fact it's the only state he leads in even though it's the state

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where these voters represent the largest share of the electorate wow so it's a

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great illustration of how look we're talking about something that clearly is affecting a sliver of Voters and even a

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pretty substantial chunk 13% of those who have defected from Joe Biden and yet

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even in the single state state where Muslim Middle Eastern North African voters represent the largest share of

27:03

the electorate it's still not necessarily enough to single-handedly determine the outcome so Nate we've

27:09

covered a lot of ground in this conversation about this latest New York Times presidential campaign poll and I

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just want to conclude by having you as best you can kind of draw it all together by giving us your higher level

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thoughts about the meaning of what you learned from this

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survey I think my high level takeaway is that with 6 months to go voters are deeply dissatisfied with the direction

Higher level takeaways

27:35

of the country and they want to do something very different than what they have now and that's a really tough spot

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if you're an incumbent president who doesn't represent change and you only really have a couple of paths to pull it

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off one option is that you have to figure out a way to get Americans to be

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happy with where the country is going basically that we're on track I know we're not there yet we on the way is the

27:59

the general way that you can imagine Joe Biden trying to thread a needle of a country yearning for something different

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Without Really believing that Joe Biden can single-handedly alter the course of American history and while we've talked

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a lot about Joe Biden's vulnerabilities we haven't talked very much about Donald Trump's problems in this poll and

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alternately the opportunities that may present themselves to Joe Biden as the campaign gets underway voters are

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overwhelmingly in favor of abortion rights in the Battleground States they don't like Donald Trump much either a majority of Voters have an unfavorable

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view of him but right now the electorate is thinking mostly about how unsatisfied it is with the status quo and it's

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yearning for something different and to the extent that over the final six months Joe Biden can refocus voters on

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Donald Trump's liabilities get them to feel a little bit better about where the country is going maybe that still offers

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a route to a comeback because as we just mentioned many of these voters are still voting for Democratic Senate candidates and many of them aren't even tuned in

28:53

yet it's still a long way to go and if you really step back Donald Trump should arguably be winning this election by a

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huge amount given just how unpopular Joe Biden is and and given how many young

29:04

and non-white voters have defected away from the Democratic side if Nikki Haley was the Republican nominee this election

29:11

maybe could have been a landslide in fact in our last time SI poll of these same States Nikki Haley was posting double- digit leads in Wisconsin Right

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essentially what you have found in this poll Nate and correct me if I'm wrong is that this is shaping up to be a change

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election where Donald Trump is the c change agent but he's also such a

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fundamentally flawed Agent of Change that the question is going to become do

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enough voters think he's willing to reelect for the

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change and are they willing to accept all the flaws that's right and you know it's

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worth remembering the thing that we always mention as a caveat but is so so

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serious that's there are 6 months to go until the election the campaign is just heating up there are conventions and

30:01

vice presidential picks and possibly convictions and debates still

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ahead we don't know how that is going to change what the electorate is focused on

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but right now we know that they're deeply dissatisfied and taking it out on Joe Biden whether that's what they'll be

30:18

thinking in 6 months we just don't know and the Biden campaign will do everything that's power to try and change that I don't know what is

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ultimately going to happen but I think that it at least sets out the road map the playing field as we enter the heart

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of the campaign season well late thank you very much we

30:38

appreciate it thanks for having me [Music]

30:48

Michael we'll be right

Outro

30:54

back here's what else you need to another day in damning testimony during Donald

31:00

Trump's hush money trial Trump's former fixer Michael Cohen testified that Trump

31:06

personally directed him to pay off a porn star and personally approved the

31:12

deceptive reimbursement plan at the center of the Criminal Case Cohen

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testified that stormmy Daniel's plan to publicize her account of having sex with

31:22

Trump was a quote catastrophic threat to Trump's 2016 president itial campaign as

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a result Cohen said Trump ordered him to silence Daniels Cohen recalled Trump

31:36

telling him quote just take care of it an order that Cohen said he then carried

31:43

[Music] out today's episode was produced by

31:49

relle Banja AA chaturv and Diana win it was edited by Liz oalen contains

31:56

original music by Alicia bitu Dan Powell and Maran Lozano and was engineered by

32:03

Alyssa Moxley our theme music is by Jim brunberg and Ben lansburg of

32:08

[Music]

32:17

[Music] wonderly that's it for the daily I'm Michael

32:22

B see you tomorrow

32:27

[Music]