

# 8 State Races to Watch

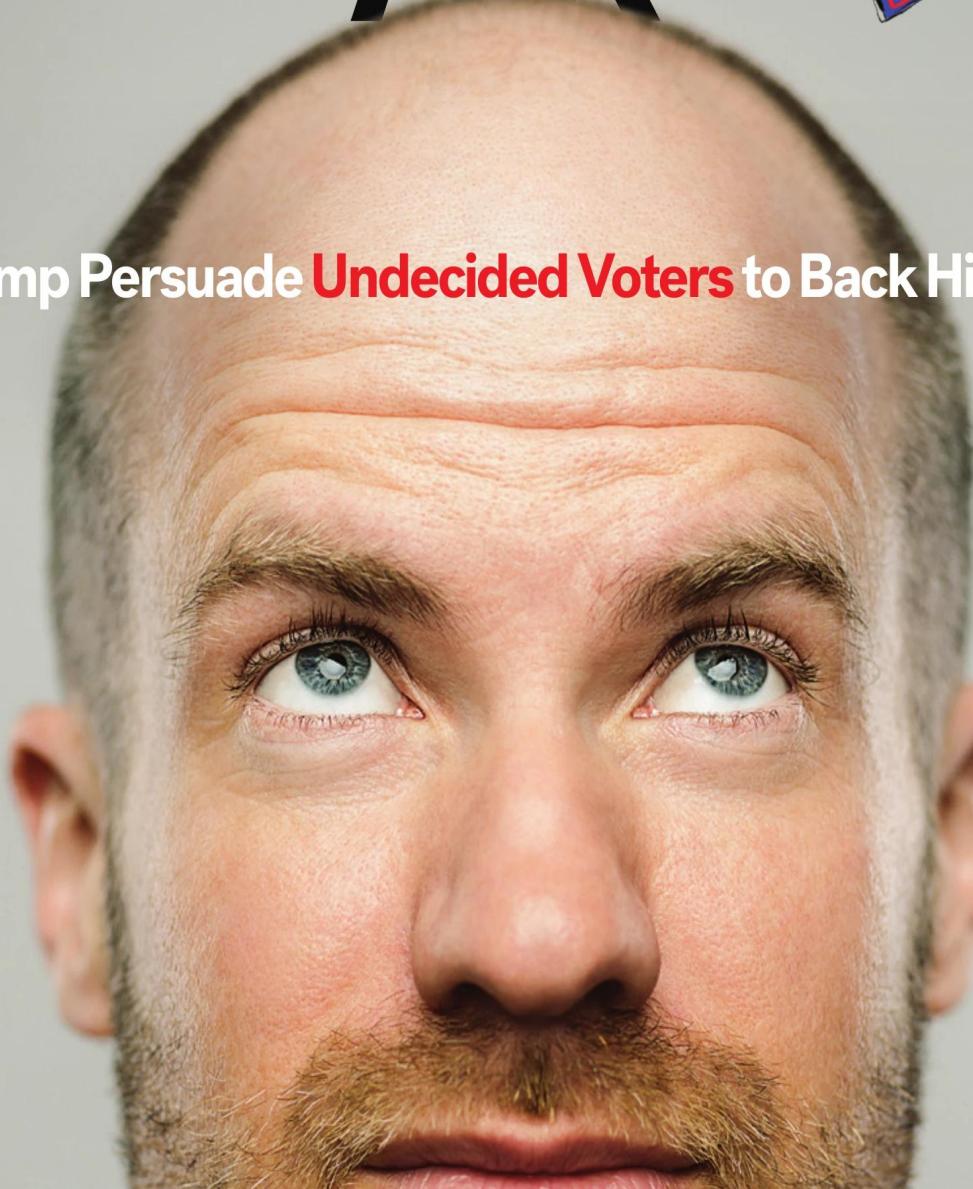
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# Newsweek

## UP IN THE AIR



Can Trump Persuade Undecided Voters to Back Him—Again?



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## FEATURES

### TUG OF WAR

The campaign season is about to get underway in earnest. The parties are fighting for voters who haven't made up their minds yet and those in reliably Republican districts that sent Democrats to Congress in the last midterms.

### COVER CREDIT

Illustration by Britt Spencer for Newsweek;  
Photograph by SensorSpot/Getty



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### The X Factor

A late break toward Trump by undecided voters helped decide the last presidential election. Can Trump persuade them to back him again—with the same results?

BY JACOB JARVIS

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### The Fateful Slate

In 2018 a lot of red House seats turned blue. To beat Trump in November Democrats need moderate-to-conservative voters in a handful of those districts to pull the lever for Biden.

BY STEVE FRIESS



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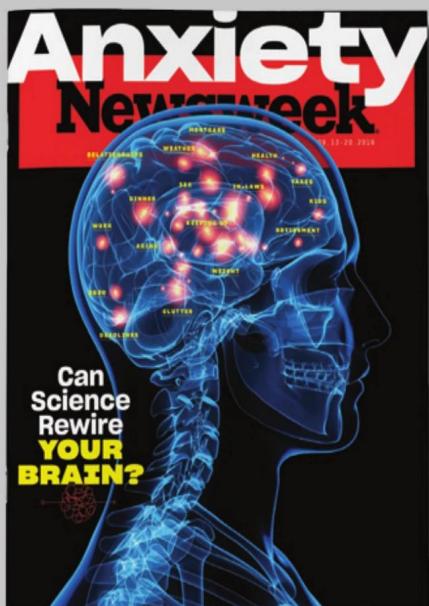
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“Journalism I don’t see elsewhere until later, if at all.”

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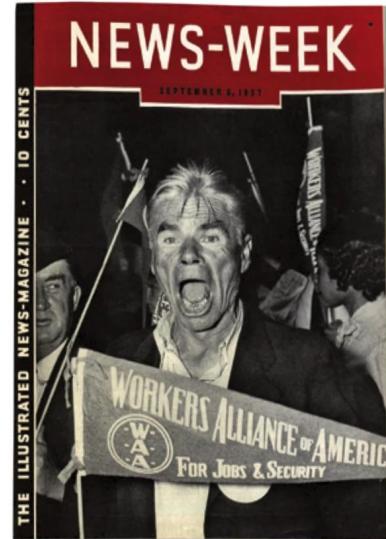


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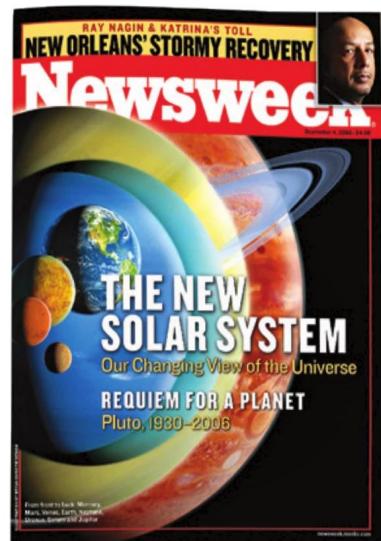
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# The Archives

**1962** Newsweek wrote that “in enigmatic Red China, one fact becomes increasingly clear: Mao’s Great Leap Forward has fallen short.” After three years of famine and environmental damage caused by disastrous policy and weather, the world was left asking, “Does the breakdown in China’s agriculture and industry herald the downfall of the Red regime?” Sixty years later, China has grown its industrial economy into the largest global exporter, but fears of food shortages have returned this summer due to a combination of widespread flooding, insect infestations, the global pandemic and high demand.



**1937** “Marching members of the WAA sang and shouted their demands,” Newsweek reported, asking for “a relief appropriation double the \$1.5 million allotted for this fiscal year.” Similarly, the Trump administration has been criticized by Democrats for relief packages that are too small to truly help Americans struggling in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.



“The solar system we thought we knew is changing faster than most of us can keep up with,” said Newsweek. This includes a new category for Pluto: dwarf planet. In 2015, NASA’s New Horizons mission flew past the ex-planet, giving scientists their first close views of it, reigniting the debate over its designation. **N**

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## The Contenders

On August 20, Jill Biden; her husband, former Vice President and Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden; and Senator from California and Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris greet supporters outside the Chase Center at the conclusion of the virtual Democratic National Convention.

PHOTO BY OLIVIER DOULIERY





CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: MICHAL CIZEK/AFP/Getty; CARL DE SOUZA/AFP/Getty; AFP/Getty



NOVO PROGRESSO, BRAZIL

## Roadblock

Members of the Kayapo tribe block the BR-163, a major trans-Amazonian highway, during a protest outside of Novo Progresso on August 17. At issue: the lack of government support during the COVID-19 pandemic and illegal deforestation in and around their territories.

→ CARL DE SOUZA

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

## People Power

Crowds gathered August 16 in Prague to support Belarusian protesters who are calling for President Alexander Lukashenko to resign after what they and others say was a fraudulent election. A thousand-plus people assembled in the Old Town Square in the capital.

→ MICHAL CIZEK

PORTE LOUIS, MAURITIUS

## Shipwreck

Taken on August 17, this picture shows the MV Wakashio bulk carrier, which ran aground and broke into two parts near Blue Bay Marine Park. According to CBS News, the ship leaked more than 1,000 tons of oil when the carrier struck a coral reef off the southeastern coast of Mauritius on July 25.

→ AFP

# Periscope

— NEWS, OPINION + ANALYSIS



## CAN THEY GET ALONG?

The era of “engagement” for engagement’s sake ‘has now come to an uncertain close.’ Here, Biden and China’s leader Xi Jinping at a 2011 meeting in Beijing.



"Companies of all sizes have signed on to Stop Hate for Profit to pause Facebook advertising." »P.14



ANALYSIS

# What Joe Biden Has in Store For China

The former VP is signaling that he won't be a "pushover" when it comes to the People's Republic if he wins the election in November

► DONALD TRUMP'S RAGE OVER THE circumstances in which he now finds himself—trailing in the polls as the November election approaches; on the defensive over his handling of the pandemic—has been directed mainly at one target: the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The list of grievances seems endless. Of course, one of Trump's greatest hits is that China is to blame for the COVID-19 virus. On July 23rd, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo gave a remarkably hawkish speech, even for him, arguing that nearly 50 years of engagement with the PRC had been a mistake. The administration then intensified economic pressure, in ways that critics say are untethered to any recognizable long-term strategy. On August 17, the administration announced it would further tighten restrictions on the Chinese telecommunications

company Huawei's ability to buy foreign computer chips. Two weeks earlier Trump announced that he wants to force a sale within 45 days of the U.S. operations of TikTok, the popular Chinese-owned social media app. He also wants to ban WeChat, a communications app that everyone uses in China, but is used in the U.S. mainly by Chinese people talking to friends and family back home. Neither company is a national security threat.

A consistent Trump theme since the campaign began has been this: a President Joe Biden would be soft on China much like he and his boss, Barack Obama, were during their eight-year administration.

So you would think that Biden would be on the defensive, avoiding the China debate every step of the way. To the contrary, the Biden campaign now plans to turn a potential weakness into an opportunity. It will paint Trump's China policy as reckless and

BY

BILL POWELL  
Twitter: @billasia2010

ineffective, particularly on trade—delivering nothing to American workers and consumers. Trump's red-hot China rhetoric, advisers to Biden believe, gives his campaign an opening: a chance to present the former vice president as the grown-up in the room when it comes to the PRC.

"[Trump's] rhetoric and the policy seem increasingly unhinged," says an influential Biden foreign policy adviser not authorized to speak on the record. "There's a difference between being tough and being unhinged."

In the coming weeks Biden will likely deliver a serious speech outlining his own views on the PRC. He will emphasize the need to work much more closely with allies in presenting a united front to Beijing on a range of issues, including predatory trade practices, intellectual property theft and cyber espionage. "It's one thing to talk tough about China, which Trump has done, it's the other to be effective in dealing with Beijing to advance our interests. We think we can do that, and we'll lay out how," says the senior adviser.

#### A Biden Weakness?

The guiding presumption was that Biden would spend a lot of time defending an Obama administration record that critics believe did little to deter Beijing from a variety of economic abuses. "Obama seemed to care mainly about climate change when it came to dealing with Beijing," says Derek Scissors, a senior fellow at the conservative-leaning American Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C. "They put a lot of other things, like trade, like [Beijing's] expansionism in the South China Sea, on the back burner."

There's some truth to that. China signed the 2013 Paris Accord—which Obama views as a signal

achievement—but didn't agree to any serious enforcement mechanism. China's carbon emissions hit a record high in 2019—accounting for the entirety of the globe's increase in emissions—while its investment in renewable energy has been plummeting. No surprise then that on August 7, the U.S. intelligence community reported that it felt Beijing would prefer a Biden victory in November.

As far as Biden's advisers are concerned, Beijing's leadership might be careful what they wish for. They acknowledge that early on in the campaign the candidate stepped in it when he dismissed China as an economic competitor—"China is going to eat our lunch? Come on, man!" he said last May while campaigning in Iowa.

Ever since, they've been trying to reassure Americans—and signal to Beijing—that he would not be a patsy when it comes to trade. That

effort gathered steam last month, when the candidate issued a fairly detailed set of policy proposals on economic relations with Beijing, which criticized the Trump administration's approach—but mimicked its stated goals: stiffer trade enforcement, tougher sanctions for intellectual property theft, penalties for cyber espionage.

Key foreign policy advisers to the campaign, Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser when he was vice president, and Kurt Campbell, the former assistant secretary of state for East Asia, had previously called for detailed reforms of weak World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, including subsidies to state-owned industries.

In a high profile *Foreign Affairs* article late last year, Sullivan and Campbell wrote bluntly that the era of the era of "engagement" for engagement's sake—which was effectively U.S. policy for four decades—"has now come to an unceremonious close." But they also argued that China remains "an essential partner" on issues like the environment, global health (including the prevention of pandemics) and nuclear proliferation. Biden will also seek to increase military-to-military contacts and "to build personal ties as well as understanding of each side's operations." Cooperating on those issues, while deterring Beijing's territorial expansion in Asia and its economic aggression, is what Biden seeks to do, advisers say.

#### Unintended Consequences

It's not simply electoral politics that has prompted the campaign to highlight Biden's approach to China. There was another audience in play: Advisers say he wanted to make sure Beijing understood that in no way was he going to be a patsy. While the PRC may still prefer Biden to Trump,

**"The ambassador is smart enough to understand that no candidate could afford to be soft on China."**





as the recent intelligence assessment maintains, that message has no doubt been received. Cui Tiankai, the long-time ambassador to Washington—and who is close to President Xi Jinping—could obviously see how quickly the bilateral relationship was deteriorating.

An outside but influential adviser to Trump on China policy, who has a relationship with Cui, says: “The ambassador is smart enough to understand that no candidate could afford now to be seen as soft on China. And no president can, either. He’s no doubt passed that on to the leadership.”

There may have been some unintended consequences as a result of Biden’s “no pushover” stance. In fact, some China watchers believe, it may have given a boost to Beijing’s hardliners. The PRC’s crackdown in Hong Kong is intensifying. Recently, for

example, the pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai and his two sons were arrested. The repression of Chinese Muslims in Xinjiang has ratcheted up and there’s been a continuing buildup of China’s military in East and Southeast Asia. The goal? Driving the U.S. out of the western Pacific.

According to one U.S. academic with contacts in the Communist Party, the hardliners are essentially saying, “The U.S. election doesn’t matter.

**TRADE WARS** The White House, led by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (below), wants TikTok sold in the U.S.; Chinese U.S. Ambassador Cui Tiankai (opposite page), knows Biden will be no patsy.

[Trump and Biden] are both the same. Don’t bother trying to preserve any space for a reset, don’t wait to find out what Biden will do. Just go for it.”

#### Battle Plan

It is clear, if elected, that Biden will have to walk a fine line with the People’s Republic, no matter who will guide foreign policy in his administration. Confronting China on trade—which Trump has done—while seeking to cooperate on serious issues like the environment and global health (which Trump has not) is tricky. It’s not at all clear Beijing will play along.

Biden’s China advisers run the gamut from perceived doves—Susan Rice, a possible secretary of state—to relative hawks like Ely Ratner, a vice president at the Center for a New American Security, a Washington think tank. Should they join a Biden administration, they and others will be focused on the same thing: preventing a dangerous escalatory spiral between Washington and Beijing.

Should Biden win, China will be done with an erratic President Trump guiding the relationship with Beijing. China may not think Biden will be a patsy, but they probably think he’d be steadier and more predictable. Biden believes it’s possible to compete with China and cooperate with it when it suits the interest of both sides. As a guiding principle for Sino-American relations, it’s reasonable, but it only works if Beijing plays along. If it doesn’t, Team Biden will need a Plan B—and it may be a painful one that he shares with the current kid in the room: Trump. ■

ONLINE

# Double Standard?

Many of the companies participating in the Facebook boycott advertise on sites that promote content they don't approve of on Mark Zuckerberg's site

**↗** MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND companies of all sizes—ranging from Verizon to outdoors retailer REI to hundreds of small business and nonprofits—have signed on to the Stop Hate for Profit campaign, a movement led by the ADL and NAACP asking companies to pause Facebook advertising to protest what the civil rights organizations see as Facebook's failure to fight hate speech. "Your profits will never be worth promoting hate, bigotry, racism, antisemitism and violence," the campaign argues. Yet many of the biggest brands participating in the boycott fund websites that promote as much or often more of the content that these advertisers don't want to fund on Facebook.

Over the past four months, companies including Pfizer, Microsoft, Starbucks and Target placed advertisements—probably inadvertently, through algorithms that determine where programmatic ads appear—on sites that NewsGuard has rated Red, meaning generally unreliable. (NewsGuard rates websites for credibility and transparency to give readers more context for the news they see online.)

Using data from Moat, an advertising technology service, NewsGuard examined the advertising

practices of 15 companies participating in the boycott. Some—including Patagonia, Coca-Cola, and Ben & Jerry's—did not have any ads appear on NewsGuard Red-rated sites in recent months.

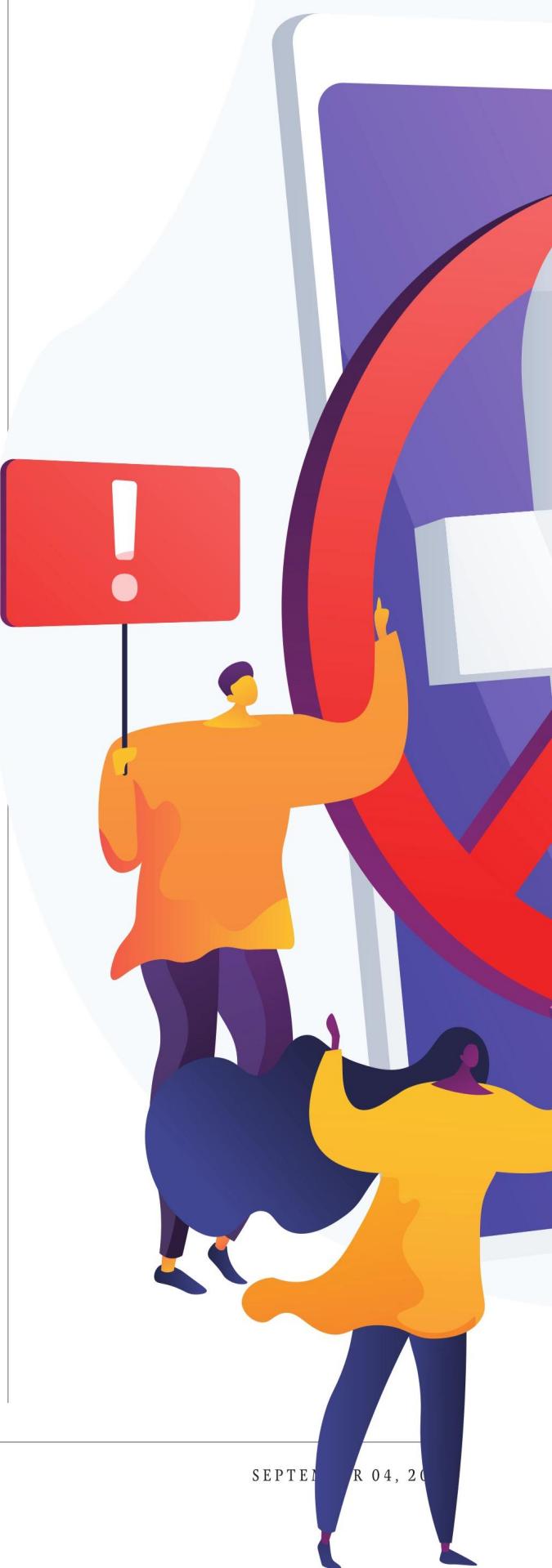
However, many others advertised on infamous misinformation websites that have promoted debunked conspiracy theories about President Barack Obama's birthplace, anti-vaccine propaganda and Islamophobic falsehoods.

Take technology giant HP as an example. "We expect all platforms on which we advertise to uphold responsible policies that prevent our ads from appearing alongside objectionable content, regardless of the source," the company said in a statement announcing its participation in the boycott.

Over the past four months, the company's ads appeared on 28 NewsGuard Red-rated sites, including GellerReport.com, an unreliable website that described Islam as an "assault to our way of life" in a 2018 article that argued that "Until the Western world understands the threat of Islamic ideology to their society and culture, people will continue to die."

HP also advertised on TheConservativeTreehouse.com, a misinformation site that gained attention in June for promoting the false claim (which

BY  
**GABBY DEUTCH**  
@GSDeutch





**“The Facebook ad boycott has amassed an unprecedented amount of corporate starpower.”**

later appeared in President Donald Trump's Twitter feed) that an elderly peaceful protester attacked by police in Buffalo, New York, had been a member of antifa. (An HP spokesperson did not respond to an email from NewsGuard requesting comment.)

The list goes on.

Starbucks, HP, Ford, Target and Unilever ads fund ZeroHedge, a finance-blog-turned-conspiracy-hub that pushed falsehoods about former Vice President Joe Biden during the congressional impeachment inquiry of Trump last fall and has falsely claimed the coronavirus was stolen by Chinese spies from a Canadian lab.

Ads for some companies appear on Russian disinformation websites, too: Microsoft and HP advertised on Sputnik, and Adidas advertised on RT, both of which are mouthpieces for Vladimir Putin that seek to sow division in the U.S. and in Europe.

The Facebook ad boycott has amassed an unprecedented amount of corporate starpower, with businesses asserting that inclusive values are as important as profits. Yet their ads continue to subsidize unreliable sites across the internet, appearing alongside racist and conspiratorial articles. This doesn't mean the companies support those websites. But it's what happens when companies place ads using algorithms, without considering a website's content or journalistic standards. ■

→ **NewsGuard** ([www.newsguardtech.com](http://www.newsguardtech.com)) provides a human solution to misinformation by rating the reliability of news and information sites. Our ratings, based on nine objective journalistic criteria, give each website a score from zero to 100—along with a corresponding Green (generally reliable) or Red (generally unreliable) shield—and give people more context for what they read online.



BUSINESS

## Everyone Needs a Side Hustle

Why true security is never allowing ourselves to become dependent on one employer

**ON A MONDAY AFTERNOON** nearly 20 years ago, when I was a young political reporter, our human resources director asked me to stop by his office—and when I left five minutes later, I no longer had a job. That's not so surprising; since 2008, U.S. newsrooms have been cut in half. But at the time, with the newspaper industry flush, I was stunned.

Within moments, I went from having a "steady day job" (albeit a poorly

paid one) to nothing at all: The paper sent me on my way with four days' severance pay. Compounding the problem, I was laid off on Monday, September 10, 2001. My job search the next day did not go as planned.

Eventually, of course, I found other work. But the stress of becoming unemployed on the brink of a national crisis was profound—and

BY

DORIE CLARK  
@dorieclark

that's exactly what many Americans are experiencing today.

The U.S. has just had the worst three-month economic collapse in its history, with 20 straight weeks of more than a million Americans filing for unemployment. Things became even more dire when political gridlock recently led to the expiration of the \$600 weekly benefit that had kept many out-of-work Americans afloat, and the confusion around President Donald Trump's executive order to partially extend those payments.

Given the unpredictable course of the pandemic, a quick recovery is impossible to count on. Instead, what I've learned, through my personal experience and writing a book on the future of work, is this: These days, everyone needs a side gig. True security is never allowing ourselves to become dependent on one employer.

Busy employees may wonder:



*Where would I get the time? How would I even know where to start?*

In the course of writing my book *Entrepreneurial You*, I discovered a few principles any of us can use to develop a side income stream—in small and manageable ways, over time.

First, even if you don't know what your area of expertise is, others do. Almost everyone has friends who come to them for certain favors: taking photos, helping them coordinate wardrobes, improving their résumé or LinkedIn profiles. They're seeking you out because they recognize you have unusual skills, and now it's time for you to take notice.

Second, test the concept. No one wants to pay you for something you've never done before. But—if your offering is desirable—many people might raise their hands to become a free “beta tester.” It's low risk for them: Even if the dinner you cater isn't up to Julia

Child standards, it's still a (presumably decent) free dinner. And it's a way for you to validate the idea, since it's bad news indeed if no one wants your product or service, even if it's free.

Finally, it's time to get paid. You probably won't land top rates at first. But drawing on referrals from your original beta testers, you should now be able to earn a bit of money from your side gig. And over time, as you hone your skills and confidence—and accumulate happy customers—your ability to charge a premium will grow.

Today, I've developed multiple income streams—teaching business

school, giving keynote talks, writing books, executive coaching, online courses and more. And when disruption hits, as it did with the pandemic, that diversification creates resiliency: Keynote talks at conferences dried up, but online course sales grew exponentially.

Change is certainly coming, but we don't know how or when. The best career security possible—for all of us, including those with “steady jobs”—is building a side gig today that can help protect our financial future tomorrow. **N**

**“When disruption hits, as it did with the pandemic...diversification creates resiliency.”**

→ Dorie Clark teaches at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business and is the author of *REINVENTING YOU* and *ENTREPRENEURIAL YOU* (Harvard Business Review Press). You can download her free *Entrepreneurial You* self-assessment. The views expressed in this article are the author's own.

## OPINION

# Coming Clean About Hydroxychloroquine

Sometimes health care gets it wrong. That doesn't mean we're not doing it right. Some Massachusetts General Hospital doctors weigh in

PATIENTS CONTINUE TO COME TO our offices begging for prescriptions for hydroxychloroquine (HCQ). Some even think there's a conspiracy to prevent them from getting one.

Perhaps this shouldn't come as a surprise. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed much about health care and our society. We have a crisis of trust and truth; it can be hard to know who to rely on. To help restore our faith in one another, it's important that we health care providers admit something out loud: We often get it wrong.

In the case of coronavirus, first we said no masks, but now we say masks for everyone. First we said no to steroids, especially if you are very sick, now we say yes to steroids, but only if you're sick enough.

And at first we said HCQ might work. In fact, some providers were guilty of self-prescribing and hoarding it. Now we say it doesn't work for COVID-19 and could actually do harm. But not everyone believes us, including President Trump and several members of his administration. And many of our own patients.

We in health care are quick to dismiss our mixed messages by saying, "Oh, that's just how science works." And, yes, science is a messy process. But

that's not the only reason we get things wrong. The truth is, we're human and influenced by more than just science.

Sometimes, we engage in wishful thinking. We assume that because something should work, it will work. For example, if you have chronic chest pain due to a blocked coronary artery, doesn't it just make sense to prop it open with a stent? And if you come in with knee pain, and we see torn cartilage on MRI, surely an operation to fix it will give you relief? Well, it turns out that in many cases, those

stents are no better than low-cost medications and that knee surgery is no better than physical therapy. We have had to learn (and re-learn) the hard lesson that intuition is not always a reliable guide to illness and health.

Sometimes, we succumb to conflicts of interest, even if we are not always conscious of them. When there is more money to be made in stenting an artery or operating on a knee, it makes it harder for us to simply prescribe a medication or send a patient to physical therapy.

Sometimes, we just want to make our patients happy. In fact, our livelihoods can depend on it. Providing evidence based care does not always correlate with patient satisfaction.

Without stellar reputations and high ratings, we might not get referrals. Because of these reasons, we might avoid hard conversations.

Sometimes, we're simply pressed for time. It might take 30 seconds for a clinician to say yes to a patient's request for an antibiotic to treat the common cold, but 30 minutes to have a conversation explaining why it won't help.

And sometimes, we just don't know the right answer. Medical knowledge is constantly evolving, and it is impossible for any of us to learn it all.

Here's what we can say about HCQ: There is no conflict of interest at play. Hospitals don't make money taking care of COVID-19 patients. In fact, they lose money, even with government bailouts. Health care professionals are taking pay cuts or getting laid off.

If cheap HCQ could get us back to business as usual—making money doing elective surgical procedures—and writing these prescriptions would help us secure our jobs and our pay, hospitals would be giving it out for free given the amazing return on investment.

Furthermore, the easiest and quickest thing for providers would be to just write the prescription, which some are. But it's not the right thing to do.

Let's say you were to go into a fatal heart rhythm, a known side effect of HCQ, and die. How could we defend our decision to a jury, let alone to your bereaved family? Referencing a video posted on Twitter, even a viral one, would be woefully insufficient. To prescribe something that can harm without helping violates our most fundamental oath.

We were hopeful at first that HCQ would work for COVID-19. It showed promise in the lab and in small human studies. But, ultimately, our wishful thinking did not pan out.



**TRUE CONFESSIONS** "We get things wrong. The truth is, we're human and influenced by more than just science." Photo left: A scientist and their test tubes.

Time, mistakes, missteps and dead ends are fundamental to this process. That is why one or two studies' findings aren't enough: We follow trends in a growing body of evidence. Reproducibility, repetition and critical reviews are essential. Whatever its flaws, science is the best process we have.

Usually medical practice changes in a gradual, gentle U-turn. However, the compressed research timeline around the pandemic has made this feel like whiplash for all of us (which, by the way, we no longer treat with a neck brace).

We are as disappointed as our patients that HCQ didn't work. Our lives are also on the line. If another well-designed large scale trial, bigger and better than any others, shows a positive effect for HCQ, we might change course again, just like we have in the past.

In the meantime, we're going to keep doing right by our patients, which doesn't always mean doing what's popular. ■

Multiple randomized clinical trials—our best tool to tell the difference between luck, placebo and actual treatment effect—showed that HCQ neither prevents infection nor treats it, regardless of whether someone has mild symptoms or is sick enough to be hospitalized, either by itself or in combination with other drugs.

We rely on the scientific method not as a matter of faith, but because it works. It has provided us all of the marvels in modern medicine that have increased longevity and reduced suffering. It also helps us identify and avoid succumbing to our own biases and potential conflicts of interest.

Like us, science is not infallible. A large number of papers related to

COVID-19 were published and then had to be retracted, many for glaring oversights. But instead of decreasing credibility, the willingness to correct course and call out questionable research, identify outright fraud and hold editorial boards accountable is a sign of a healthy, self-policing scientific community.

**"The easiest and quickest thing to do... would be to just write the (HCQ) prescription. But it's not the right thing to do."**

*The authors all work at Massachusetts General Hospital and are public fellows at the OpEd project: Dr. Hemal N. Sampat, Dr. Lucas X. Marinacci, Dr. Jeff Liao, Dr. Monique Tello, Dr. Sarah Mataathia, Dr. Daniel M. Horn, Dr. Jing Ren, Dr. Stephanie Eisenstat, Dallas Ducar, NP, Dr. Carolina Abuelo, Dr. Li Tso, Dr. Michael F. Bierer, Dr. Jennifer Haas, Dr. Nancy Rigotti, Dr. Sejal Hathi, Dr. Amy Wheeler, Dr. Marya Cohen, Dr. Andrea Reilly, Dr. Audrey Provenzano, Dr. Melinda Mesmer. The views expressed are their authors' own and do not reflect the official opinions of Massachusetts General.*

NEWSMAKERS

# Talking Points

 "I have encouraged everybody: Speed up the mail, not slow the mail."

—PRESIDENT TRUMP

The New York Times

"NOW WE'RE ALL PRODUCERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS."

—TENNESSEE SENATOR RAUMESH AKBARI



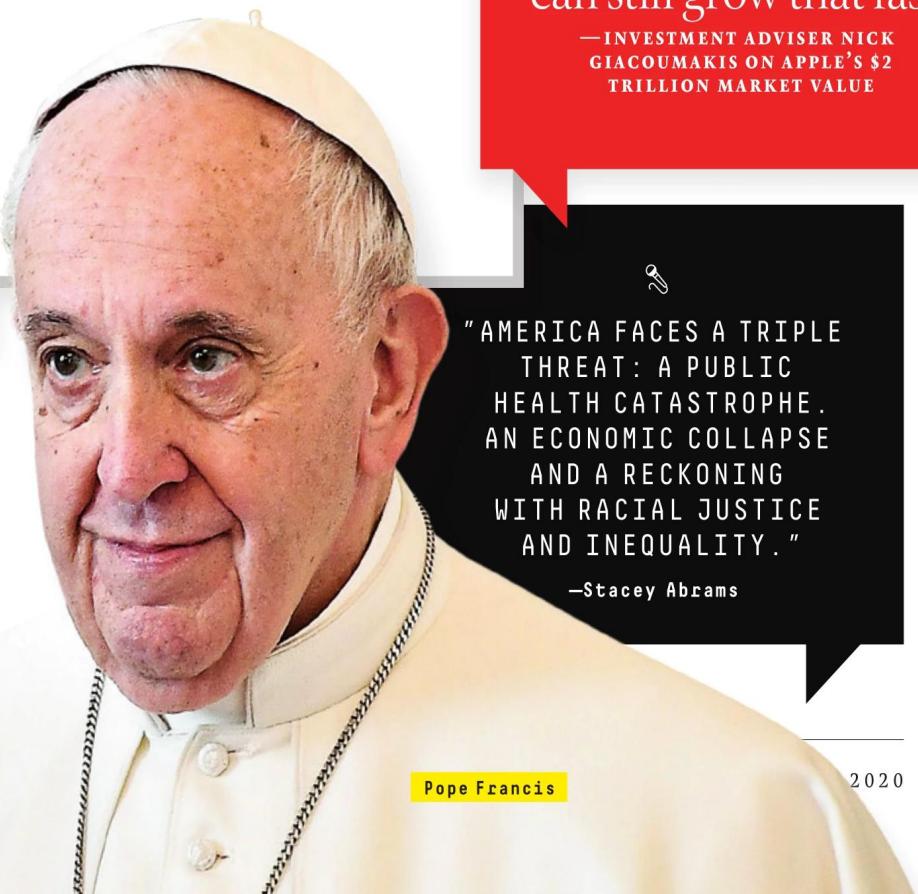
npr

"We haven't had a clear national response to this crisis, so our campus is a microcosm of what goes on elsewhere."

—MIMI CHAPMAN, CHAIR OF UNC-CHAPEL HILL FACULTY

 "**How sad would it be if, for the COVID-19 vaccine, priority is given to the richest.**"

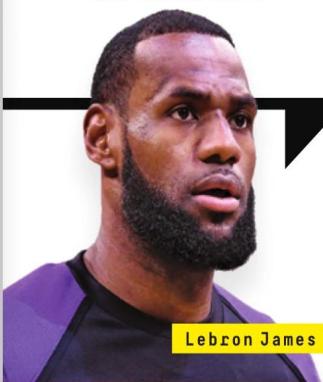
—POPE FRANCIS



VICE NEWS

"WE ARE AT A TIME WHERE WE NEED CHANGE."

—LeBron James on campaigning for Joe Biden and Kamala Harris



Lebron James

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

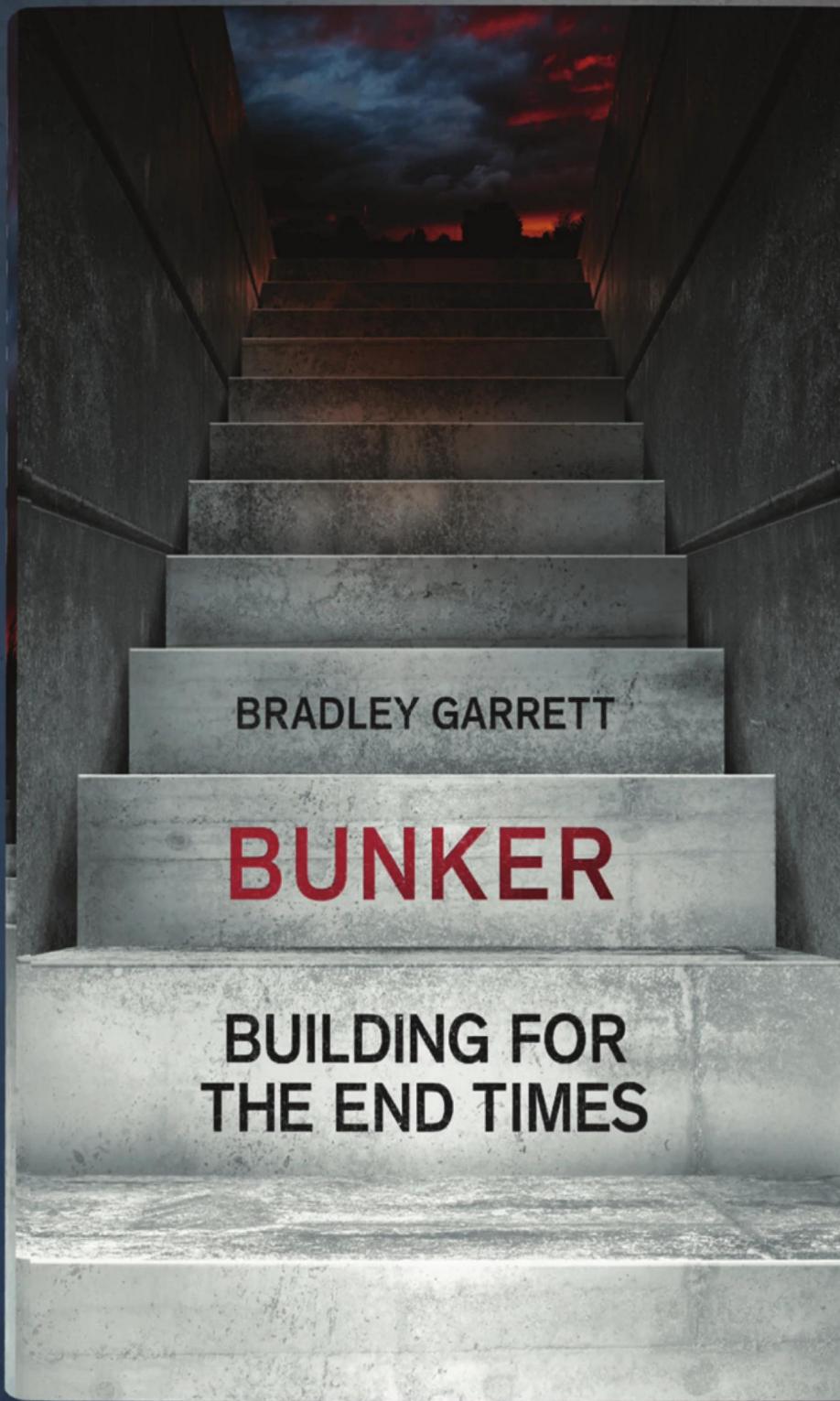
"It's incredible that companies that big can still grow that fast."

—INVESTMENT ADVISER NICK GIACOUMAKIS ON APPLE'S \$2 TRILLION MARKET VALUE

 "AMERICA FACES A TRIPLE THREAT: A PUBLIC HEALTH CATASTROPHE. AN ECONOMIC COLLAPSE AND A RECKONING WITH RACIAL JUSTICE AND INEQUALITY."

—Stacey Abrams

# ARE YOU PREPARED?



A thought-provoking, chilling, and eerily prescient look at “prepper” communities around the world that are building bunkers against a possible apocalypse.

“Fascinating, amusing, crazy, chilling, and surreally topical for what the world is going through now. You’ve got to read this book!”

—DOUGLAS PRESTON,  
AUTHOR OF *THE LOST CITY OF  
THE MONKEY GOD*

“*Bunker* is an extraordinary achievement; a big-thinking, deep-diving, page-turning study of fear, privilege, and apocalypse told through the space of the bunker.”

—ROBERT MACFARLANE,  
AUTHOR OF *UNDERLAND*

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- ★ IN 2016, A LATE BREAK TOWARD ★
- ★ TRUMP BY UNDECIDED VOTERS ★
- ★ HELPED DECIDE THE ELECTION. ★
- ★ CAN THE PRESIDENT PERSUADE ★
- ★ THEM TO BACK HIM AGAIN— ★
- ★ WITH THE SAME RESULTS? ★

# The X Factor

by JACOB JARVIS





**A**s stark as the differences are between Donald Trump and Joe Biden, millions of Americans can't seem to choose between them. They're the 10 percent of prospective voters who, with less than three months to go until the election, are still technically "undecided." They haven't made up their minds between the Republican and Democratic nominees, currently back third-party candidates or, at this point, just don't care. Analysts say there are fewer undecideds this year than in 2016, when a surge of last-minute converts to Trump helped decide the election. But it's still a sizable enough cohort—particularly in key battleground states—to potentially determine the 2020 result. "They are a relatively small population but they are certainly enough to alter the outcome," says Chris Jackson, head of public polling at Ipsos.

FOR TRUMP, TRAILING BY EIGHT POINTS ON AVERAGE IN THE MOST RECENT polls, these undecideds present both an opportunity and a risk. Should he stick with the bombastic, polarizing persona that keeps his base energized or moderate his policies and tone in an attempt to woo undecideds—and possibly alienate his most fervent supporters? "The president is a known commodity," says Thomas Gift, founding director of the Centre on U.S. Politics at University College London. "Making concessions at this late stage could seem, at best, disingenuous and, at worst, dampen enthusiasm among ardent supporters.

"For that reason," Gift adds, "Trump may think that his only plausible strategy is to stick to the tactics that got him to the White House in the first place—and hope the U.S. can turn a corner on both the coronavirus and the economy."

Right now, the number of voters still to firmly align with either of the main two-party candidates is falling. But the race remains open and even seasoned politicos are wary. "I don't think you're gonna hear anyone from the 2016 election say, 'Hey, you're gonna win, buddy,'" says Amanda Renteria, who was national political director for Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign. Continuing controversy about voting methods and access, roiled by the pandemic, only increases the uncertainty about the 2020 electorate and the ultimate outcome of the race.

Undecided voters had a big hand in putting Trump in the White House four years ago. In August 2016 an estimated 20 percent of voters were undecided, compared to 10 percent now, and in key battleground states, more than half who chose in the final week of the campaign went for Trump. While things look bad for Trump at the moment, with surging COVID-19 infections in red states like Florida and Arizona, and the unemployment rate still above its Great Recession peak, he has plenty of time left to win over undecideds who—almost by definition—

make their decisions late in the campaign cycle. A slowdown of infections, a vaccine breakthrough, a continuing strong stock market, an uptick in the job market, a foreign policy triumph, successful reopenings of businesses and schools: any number of factors could boost Trump's approval rating in the weeks before the election and bring voters into his camp.

"People who are not as engaged, they get engaged late," says Renteria. "That's why it's important every step of the way to engage them."

### Who Are the Undecideds?

EXACTLY HOW MANY VOTES ARE STILL up for grabs in the 2020 presidential election is an open question.

According to Jackson at Ipsos, about 10 percent of voters probably haven't made up their minds yet between Trump or Biden. Using the 211 million Americans registered to vote in 2018 as a guide, that suggests there are 21 million voters still open to persuasion. If the number is more in line with the 138 million who cast ballots in the 2016 presidential election, the total would be closer to 14 million.

By either measure, those numbers are sizable enough to potentially have an impact. But not everyone lumped into the "undecided" group doesn't have a preference for president. Most sway one way or another, says Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute, who puts the percentage who are truly undecided at about 3 percent. Similarly, of the 14 percent of registered voters classified as undecided in an Ipsos/Reuters survey from early August, only 6 percent were actually unsure. Another 6 percent supported a third-party candidate and 2 percent said they didn't plan to vote this year.

As a group, the undecideds tend to be younger, disproportionately His-



# ★ The Biden Advantage ★

Undecided voters are pretty evenly split in party affiliation but their views on the state of the country may be leading them to favor the Democrat in 2020.

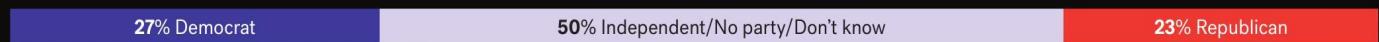
## Direction of the country



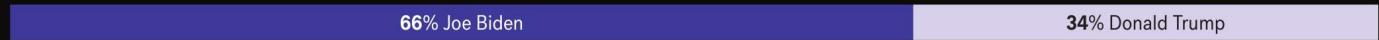
## Approval of Donald Trump



## Political party identification



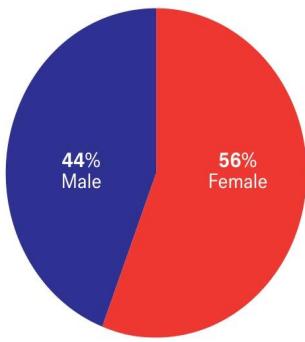
## If you had to choose, would you support Joe Biden or Donald Trump?



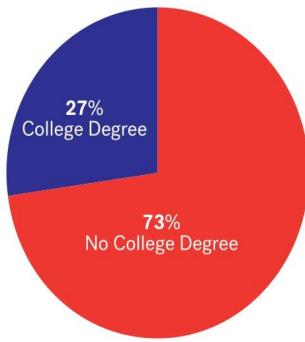
# Portrait of the Undecideds

Prospective voters who haven't chosen between Biden and Trump are more likely to be young, female and white and less likely to have a college degree.

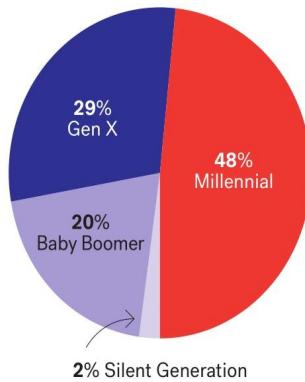
Gender



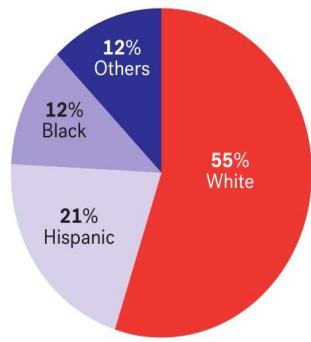
Education



Age



Race/Ethnicity



NOTE: POLL OF 1,114 REGISTERED U.S. VOTERS, 18 AND OLDER, WHO SAID THEY WERE UNDECIDED OR VOTING FOR A THIRD-PARTY CANDIDATE; TAKEN JULY 6-7, 2020. SOURCE: REUTERS/IPSOS

panic, skew female and are less likely to have a college degree than the typical registered voter. They're also fairly evenly dispersed across parties: Ipsos found half to be Independents and the rest roughly split between Republicans and Democrats.

The Independent half of the group may behave differently than their party-affiliated cousins, says Jackie Salit, president of IndependentVoting.org and the author of *Independents Rising: Outsider Movements, Third Parties, and the Struggle for a Post-Partisan America*. She points out that independent voters—a group Trump narrowly won in 2016—are not necessarily less engaged than other voters but rather see a need for reform in the political system that leads them not to align with the major parties. "It's a statement of non-compliance with the system," Salit says. "They don't want to be forced to vote along party or ideological lines. They want to take responsibility for making their own decision."

That's quite different from the modus operandi of the typical undecided voter, who analysts generally view as less politically engaged. "Many 'undecided' voters are what political scientists somewhat patronizingly call 'low information' and 'low propensity' voters," says Richard Johnson, a lecturer in U.S. politics and international relations at Lancaster University. Jackson agrees. "They're not following the 24-hour news cycle. They're people who are just living their lives and can't find the time to care strongly. The election and politics are just not a high priority."

The fact that these undecideds tend to get their information episodically could make them more open to persuasion than other voters, says Rich Thau, co-founder of the research firm Engagious and moderator of the Swing Voter Project, which conducts focus groups with voters who switched support from the Democratic to the Republican presidential candidate or vice versa between 2012 and 2016. Says Thau, "They could be swayed if they learn something new."

## All About That Base

FOR A CANDIDATE BEHIND IN THE polls, as Donald Trump is now, that openness to new information could present a promising path to convert undecideds to supporters. And Trump has reason to believe in the opportunity this group holds, given the pivotal role they played in his 2016 win, particularly in states where he won by a narrow margin.

An analysis of the last election by the American Association of Public Opinion Research shows that in key battleground areas, most people who were undecided eventually went for Trump—many of them making up their minds in the final days. In Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Florida, 11 to 15 percent of voters said they decided in the last week and, according to exit polls, they broke for Trump by nearly 30 points in Wisconsin, 17 points in Pennsylvania and Florida and 11 points in Michigan.



**"MANY ARE  
UNDECIDED  
BECAUSE THEY  
DON'T LIKE EITHER  
CANDIDATE. THEY  
WILL LOOK AT  
WHO IS LESS BAD."**

ALEXI ROSENFELD/GETTY

So far this year, though, concerted outreach to undecided voters doesn't seem to be in the Trump playbook. Instead his focus looks to be largely on maintaining his grip on those who voted for him last time.

"The Trump campaign is seriously neglecting the moderate middle in America, and those voters are turning instead towards Biden," says David Andersen, assistant professor in U.S. politics at Durham University. "Incumbents typically can point to their established records as president to appeal to 'middle of the road' voters by showing that they are not extremists but instead are reliable problem solvers. Trump, though, has spent the last three and a half years in catering to his base and intensifying the partisan divide in the country."

If these were normal times, Trump's "relentlessly single-minded focus" on his base could work, says Gift. "That might have been a viable (if risky) re-election strategy before COVID-19: Trump could count on dyed-in-the-wool Republicans to turn out to the polls, and also expect a healthy number of swing voters—even if they didn't back everything the president stood for—to grudgingly vote for him given a strong U.S. economy."

While Biden currently has a larger number of people saying they'll vote for him, they're nowhere near as fervent about their choice as the Trump supporters are. According to a Pew Research survey conducted from July 27 to August 2, two thirds of those backing Trump say they strongly favor their candidate, while only 46 percent of Biden supporters are as certain of their choice. One mitigating factor: Among those expressing moderate support, just 10 percent of Biden voters say there's a chance they'll change their minds vs. 17 percent of Trump voters.

#### SIGN UP HERE

Registering new voters is particularly challenging in the middle of a pandemic. Here, three women help the cause, working to get out the vote in New York City's Union Square.

The president is smart to concentrate on maintaining that enthusiasm, says Jacob Neiheisel, associate professor of political science at the University of Buffalo. "Campaigns that play to the middle where the bulk of the undecided or persuadable voters are located risk alienating loyal supporters in order to gain votes among a group that is less reliable when it comes to turnout," he says. "Campaigns can and do win just by mobilizing core supporters."

Then too, working actively to win over undecided voters probably was a tactic that had a far greater chance of success in the pre-pandemic era than it would now. "Trump has spent most of his presidency talking to people who already supported him," notes Larry Bartels, co-director of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions at Vanderbilt University. "If there was ever a strategy for expanding his base of support, it was predicated on peace and prosperity. Given current conditions, it's hard to see what positive argument would move 'undecided' voters to change their views of the president at this point."

Bartels does not believe, though, that Trump would turn off supporters if he did attempt to moderate his tone or policies. "If people who've stuck with him so far get alienated in the next few months, I think it's much more likely to be due to the condition of the country and the president's response to it," he says.

Those who have yet to make up their minds may not be looking for different policies from the president in any case. Monmouth's Murray, for one, believes that undecided voters may be more motivated by emotion than logic. "At this point, if you're undecided, it's not about a particular issue. It's more a gut feeling. They need to feel some sort of personal connection."

### Accentuate the Negative

IF A DIRECT APPEAL TO VOTERS WHO HAVEN'T COMMITTED TO A CANDIDATE isn't the right approach for Trump, what is? The answer may be one that suits Trump especially well: Go negative.

Douglas Heye, former communications director for the Republican National Committee, believes this is the Trump campaign's clearest option as the pandemic continues to rage and the economy flails. "If you can't build yourself up, you have to tear down your opponent," he says.

Studies show that negative campaigning can be particularly effective with undecided voters, and could add the emotional element that analysts say can help win over this group. It's a strategy that uses Trump's combative personality and comfort with ad hominem attacks to his advantage, even without a formal effort to win the undecided vote.

Aradhna Krishna, a behavioral scientist and professor of marketing at the University of Michigan, has conducted research on how undecided voters eventually make their decisions. Her conclusion: Negative factors can be a more powerful influence than positive ones if people are not particularly happy with the idea of either outcome. "Many [voters] are undecided because they don't like either candidate," Krishna says. "People can be described in desirable and undesirable attributes. When the set of options is considered unattractive, people focus more on the unattractive attributes. They will look at who is less bad on each attribute."

Looking back to 2016, when chants about Clinton such as "lock her up" were a feature of Trump's campaign, Krishna said: "Focusing on the negatives made sense because they were both disliked. I don't know if it was a brilliant move or if it was just his behavior." So far, Trump's attacks on "Sleepy Joe" and "Creepy



ANGELO MERENDINO/GETTY



#### NOT THIS YEAR

Four years ago, Donald Trump reveled in packed campaign rallies, like this one in Akron, Ohio. In 2020, in-person campaigning has been limited by the pandemic, though Trump has held some events—often without strict COVID-19 safety precautions, like social distancing and mandatory face masks.

"Joe" don't seem to have gotten traction, but continued Biden-baiting could prove effective, cumulatively.

For now, though, the negatives associated with Trump seem more powerful for undecided voters than any bad feelings they may harbor about Biden. Case in point: In a poll last month from Reuters/Ipsos, 68 percent of undecided voters said they believed the country was on the wrong track and 67 percent said they disapproved of Trump. It's not especially shocking then that, when asked if they had to choose between the two candidates, two-thirds picked the former vice president.

The lean toward Biden, though, is soft, polls have shown. And that lack of enthusiasm for the former VP is a weakness the incumbent may seek to exploit. "The Trump campaign's aim will, I suspect, be to bolster those reservations, encouraging people to stay home or even to support Trump as the lesser of two evils—not to change anyone's mind about Trump himself," Bartels said.

But some political analysts do not think an apparent lack of excitement over Biden's candidacy will necessarily be a major hindrance to the Democrat or deter people from casting their ballots for him come November. "The enthusiasm gap is misunderstood and overstated," says David Brockington, a lecturer in politics and social science at the University of Plymouth. "While there's evidence that Biden supporters are less enamored of their guy, they are really strongly motivated by their desire to vote against Trump."

Adds Brockington, "The real enthusiasm mobilizer is a negative: Dislike for the incumbent will drive a lot of Biden's supporters to the polls. And it doesn't really matter what motivates a vote for Biden, as a vote's a vote."

In other words, both sides will play the negative game.

### Look for an October Surprise

SINCE UNDECIDEDS OFTEN DELAY MAKING THEIR CHOICE UNTIL THE LAST WEEK or two before an election, unexpected events, positive or negative, can have greater impact on who they ultimately vote for.

"Undecided voters can be swayed by late developments in a campaign, in part because they have low levels of engagement to begin with," says Donna Hoffman, a political science professor at the University of Northern Iowa. "That is why there

is so much attention given to the 'October surprise' narrative."

In 2016, there was a lot of news in October with the potential to affect the election. These events included the release of the *Access Hollywood* tape in which Trump discussed groping women; the WikiLeaks release of emails hacked from the Clinton campaign; multiple women accusing Trump of touching them inappropriately; the announcement that Obamacare premiums would rise 25 percent; and most damaging of all, the announcement by then-FBI Director James Comey of a review of new evidence in the Clinton email probe.

What could happen this time? "Improvement in the economy or some other factor for which Trump could plausibly claim credit could help him make at least some undecided voters vote for him," says Hoffman. "The question is whether there would be enough to add to his base and propel him to re-election."

Johnson of Lancaster University, also thinks more people could shift toward the president—particularly if increased attacks on Biden are effective. "There is a possibility that the undecided voters could disproportionately 'break' for Trump as we get nearer election day," he says.

Those undecided votes could really make a difference, like last time, in critical battleground areas. "Remember, he only 'won' in 2016 by 77,000 votes scattered across three states and lost the popular vote by over two points," says Brockington. "He got lucky on the day, he got lucky with the Comey letter and he got lucky that he was facing a candidate with as much negative baggage as he had."

In the end, though, the single most important issue for undecided voters, as for the rest of the electorate, is likely to be Trump himself. "An election with

**"WHEN YOUR OPPONENT KEEPS  
SHOOTING HIMSELF IN THE FOOT,  
YOU DON'T GET IN THE WAY."**



**ROCK THE VOTE 2020**  
(Top) Voting booths, like this one in New Hampshire from February, will play a more limited role this November as mail-in ballots rise. (Bottom right) Will there be another "October surprise," like 2016's reveal by the FBI's James Comey of new evidence in the Clinton email probe? (Bottom left) "I Voted" stickers from Super Tuesday in North Carolina.

an incumbent is often seen as a referendum on the incumbent," says Daniel Birdsong, a lecturer in political science at the University of Dayton. Adds Salit of IndependentVoting.org, "This election is a yes or no on President Trump."

"What the Biden people are banking on is more people hate Trump than love him," says Thau.

In the final month of the summer, that's looking like a pretty good bet, but that was true in 2016 too, and look what happened that fall. Michael Biundo, a senior adviser to the 2016 Trump campaign, thinks 2020 could be a repeat, if the current re-election team plays it smart in the home stretch. "Got to convince the voters who came out in 2016 to come out again [and] litigate a case against Joe Biden," he says. "I think there's plenty of time."

American University professor Allan Lichtman, author of *Predicting the Next President: The Keys to the White House*, who called Trump's win in 2016, disagrees. He has predicted a victory for Biden in 2020, and believes neither late-breaking developments nor a last-minute surge of undecideds breaking for Trump will change the outcome. "I've been doing this for almost 40 years, and nothing that's happened close to the election has ever changed my prediction," he says.

For Team Biden, the best approach to undecided voters may be to leave well enough alone, says Joel Benenson, chief strategist for Clinton in 2016. "When your opponent keeps shooting himself in the foot, you don't get in the way," he says. "[Trump] won the [last] election losing the popular vote by the biggest margin in history. I don't think he can thread that needle again."

**Note:** The Trump and Biden campaigns were each contacted for comment. Neither responded to this request or provided representatives for interview in time for publication.

# THE FATER



In 2018 a lot of red House seats turned blue.

To beat Trump in November **Democrats** need moderate-to-conservative voters in a handful of those districts to pull the lever for Biden.

SOURCE IMAGES: GETTY (5)

# FULSLATE

by

STEVE FRIESS

*Photo illustration by*

GLUEKIT

## DO IT AGAIN

The re-election races of freshmen like (clockwise from left): Conor Lamb, Elissa Slotkin, Haley Stevens, Donna Shalala, and Chrissy Houlahan, could be key to winning the White House.

# IN

2018 DEMOCRATS FLIPPED 41 REPUBLICAN House seats, 23 of them in districts that Donald Trump won in 2016. This year Democrats are hoping those midterm wins stick for a second round—and turn out to have been harbingers of growing dissatisfaction with Trump among conservatives and independents, dissatisfaction that could now be decisive in the race for the White House. The logic: if some GOP voters will vote for moderate Democrats in the House, they should also, after nearly four years of Trump, be willing to cast their ballots for a moderate in the White House.

Eight of the flipped seats are in three key states Trump won by narrow, and in one case razor-thin, margins: Michigan, Pennsylvania and Florida. All eight of those freshman Democrats are running for re-election this year and those elections are being closely watched by the brass of both parties.

"The districts Democrats flipped in 2018 are the places where we might expect to see the most voters move from Trump to Biden, but there aren't many of them," says Dave Wasserman, House editor for *The Cook Political Report*, which is non-partisan. "These are largely suburban seats with swaths of voters who used to support Republicans and have shifted pretty strongly over."

The Democrats are making a big bet on a small group of voters. In the U.S.'s system, though, a relative handful of votes can make a huge difference. Citizens vote, but it's the Electoral College that actually elects the president. All the electors of a given state are awarded to whichever candidate wins the popular vote. Trump won in 2016 even though he lost the popular vote nationwide, be-

cause he eked out popular vote wins in elector-rich states. And if Biden can do the same (or better) this year he'll win the White House.

## Every Little Bit Hurts

IN 2016 TRUMP WON THE POPULAR vote in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Florida, but not by much. He got Pennsylvania's 20 electoral votes by winning 48.8% of the popular vote to Clinton's 47.6% and he won Florida's 29 electors by getting 48.6% of the popular vote to Clinton's 47.4%, differences of 1.2 and 1.5 percentage points respectively.

The narrowest and bitterest defeat for Clinton, though, came in Michigan, which had not gone for a Republican for president since 1992. Trump, helped by Clinton's inept campaign in the state, won Michigan's 16 electors by winning the popular vote by only 0.3 percent. Of the 4.8 million votes cast that year in Michigan, a state of about 10 million people, Trump got only 11,000 more than Clinton. Put another way: Trump's microscopic margin of victory was even tinier than the pitiful average attendance last season (18,767) at Detroit Tiger home games. (The woeful Tigers lost 114 of 161 games, finishing in the basement of the American League East).

For the 2018 midterms, the Democrats worked to overcome their 2016 nightmare in Michigan and elsewhere, by choosing candidates in conservative-leaning states who could plausibly be positioned as non-ideological pragmatists. In Michigan's sprawling 8th District, which Trump had won by 6.7%, the candidate was Elissa Slotkin, a former CIA analyst. The 8th, which was redrawn after the 2010 census, is a vaguely pot and handle shaped "purple" district, a mix of suburbs, small cities and farms. It is about 80% white and had not sent a Democrat to Con-

### UNWANTED BATTLES

Opposite: Michigan Rep. Elissa Slotkin speaking in January 2019 during the federal government shutdown. Slotkin, a Democrat, has tried to avoid big partisan fights like the impeachment of President Trump.







gress in more than 20 years. While most of the district is reliably conservative, the part of it in Ingham County, which includes the state capital Lansing, usually goes Democratic and the party has also made inroads in some of the district's affluent and growing suburbs. As Slotkin recently told *Politico*, "This is a microcosm. All of the crosswinds of the country in one district that's an hour and 30 minutes across."

While maintaining liberal bona fides on issues like abortion rights, LGBTQ equality, and Trump's attempts to kill Obamacare without a replacement, Slotkin ran as a centrist eager to reach across the aisle. She avoided the subject of Trump himself as much as possible and beat Republican Mike Bishop by 3.8 percentage points or about 19,000 votes. Since then she's co-founded the House's bipartisan Servicewomen and Women Veteran caucus; voted for Trump's U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement; backed a \$4.6 billion border security bill that nearly 100 other House Demo-

#### AIMING FOR THE CENTER

Democratic freshmen Rep. Conor Lamb (top) and Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, both of Pennsylvania, are facing re-election challenges two years after they flipped red seats. So is Rep. Donna Shalala of Florida, a self-described "pragmatic progressive," who served as Secretary of Health and Human Services under President Clinton.

crats opposed; and co-sponsored a series of bills with Republicans to use more tech tools to fortify the nation's borders. "Any illegal crossing into the United States should remain illegal. We have the right to know who is coming into my country. That's pretty different than a lot of my peers including the Speaker of the House," she says.

Slotkin's challenger for reelection this year is Republican Paul Junge, a former prosecutor and TV newscaster. Democrats are hoping, naturally, that Slotkin, a formidable campaigner, will win. But they also hope the same moderate pitch that's worked for her in central Michigan will help Biden there. Trump won the 8th District by 6.7 percentage points in 2016. Democrats don't think the district's conservatives and independents have turned into liberals since then, but they are betting those who went for Slotkin in 2018 will vote for Biden now.

A top Democratic official in Michigan who asked not to be named describes the party's thinking like this: "If you didn't like the guy who put kids in cages and kept trying to take away your health insurance two years ago, what has happened since then to make him seem any better? 175,000 dead people and 20 percent unemployment?" (According to the Labor Department, the official unemployment rate is about 10 percent, although some economists say that significantly undercounts the number of jobless people.)

Slotkin, however, doesn't think it is going to be easy. "This is a Republican gerrymandered district. That's just the reality. We can win here, but we're going to have to work for it. If anyone thinks that we can rest on our laurels and just coast into a victory, I'm sorry, that doesn't reflect what I'm hearing and seeing in my district."

**Not The Squad**

THE SEVEN OTHER CONGRESSIONAL districts that could make the difference for Biden this year include those represented by Haley Stevens, also of Michigan; Conor Lamb, Chrissy Houlahan, Susan Wild and Mary Gay Scanlon all of Pennsylvania; and Donna Shalala and Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, both of Florida. Houlahan, who wrested a suburban Philadelphia district from Republican control, says, "I believe that we can win for the vice president in my district. We lost Pennsylvania by something like 40,000 votes [in 2016] and I think we can find them in my district." (According to *Politico*, the actual number was more like 68,000.)

If all eight incumbent Democrats share a strategic theme and image ("I am a reasonable moderate who gets along with Republicans and so is Joe Biden"), so do their GOP challengers ("Don't be fooled again. Under those mild-mannered exteriors lurk fanatical Bolsheviks"). In a YouTube video, Lamb's opponent, Sean Parnell, calls him "Nancy Pelosi's biggest supporter." Maria Elvira Salazar, who lost to Shalala in 2018 and is challenging her again this fall, says Shalala has been "disturbingly silent" while "some members of her party peddle the same radical Socialist agenda that has ruined the countries from which many of us es-

# “THE DISTRICTS DEMOCRATS FLIPPED IN 2018 ARE THE PLACES WHERE WE MIGHT EXPECT TO SEE THE MOST VOTERS MOVE FROM TRUMP TO BIDEN.”

caped." And Slotkin's opponent Junge says she votes "90 percent of the time with the radical liberal squad of Congresswomen Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez."

The GOP challengers also like to point out that when they were candidates in 2016, all eight Democrats said they were not interested in impeaching Trump and were open to supporting someone other than Nancy Pelosi for Speaker. Once elected, they all voted for Pelosi (except for Lamb who voted for Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy III and Slotkin who voted "present") and for impeaching the president.

Junge, who worked in the Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Services office before returning to Michigan last year, says Slotkin betrayed the promise she made to voters in 2018: "She said she would be an independent-minded, bipartisan representative. The message then was, 'Well, if you don't like a few things here and there, I'll be independent-minded.' That's not how she has voted."

Slotkin says she changed her mind on impeachment only after Trump's Ukraine shenanigans proved too outrageous to ignore and did so reluctantly: "I can't think of something I would want to work on less than impeachment in my first term as a Democratic representative of a Republican-leaning district, and frankly, I resisted it for a long time." Slotkin says she's at peace with her vote to impeach, but she took a fair amount of heat at town halls from unhappy constituents.

Rather than partisan battles, she and the other Democratic incumbents prefer to talk about the times they've reached across the aisle. "We passed nine provisions into law, all of them bipartisan," Slotkin says. "We've introduced another 22 in the House, all bipartisan."

They also like to talk about the times they challenged their party's leadership from the right. Michigan's Haley Stevens, who was elected co-president of the Democratic freshman class, points to a letter she wrote to Pelosi urging support for Trump's new trade deal with



## NEW KIDS

The freshman class of the House of Representatives pose for a group portrait after the 2018 midterm elections. The Squad got most of the attention, but the majority of the new Democrats needed to appeal to voters accustomed to voting Republican.



TOM WILLIAMS/CO-ROLL CALL/GETTY

**“THE FRESHMAN CLASS  
HAS GIVEN SPEAKER PELOSI  
THE MOST CENTRIST CAUCUS  
ANYONE HAS EVER HAD.”**



Canada and Mexico “for the health of Michigan’s economy, for the health of Michigan’s workforce, for the health of Michigan’s small businesses. It wasn’t a popular thing, it wasn’t like leadership was asking me to do that.” Pennsylvania’s Conor Lamb notes he voted against the HEROES Act, the House Democrats’ \$3 trillion COVID-19 relief package which has languished since its May passage, because he “didn’t think it was well-constructed.”

Indeed, for all the hype around The Squad and the defeats this summer of moderate incumbents by Squad-style upstarts, the reality is Democrats won the House in 2018 by running centrists. *The Cook Report*’s Wasserman says, “The overwhelming number of Dem-

ocrats who came in were more moderate, business-oriented members.”

Shalala, a former Secretary of Health and Human Services whose last job before running for Congress was as president of the University of Miami, agrees: “The freshman class has given Speaker Pelosi the most centrist caucus anyone has ever had because so many people that were elected had non-political jobs before they flipped seats, which meant that they weren’t either to the left or the right. They were pragmatic. I described myself as a pragmatic progressive.”

Not that you’re likely to hear that from any Republicans. According to Michigan State University political scientist Matt Grossmann, “You’re gonna hear the words ‘socialist’ and ‘extremist’ a lot, there will be a lot of images of looters, I wouldn’t discount any of those things as being effective messages for Republicans.” Grossman adds, though, it’s not clear that tactic will work well this year because: 1) Biden, the man at the top of the ticket, is nobody’s idea of a revolutionary; and 2) the Democrats who won Republican seats in 2016 have worked hard to separate themselves from their party’s left.

### **Stuck With Trump**

IF THE EIGHT DEMOCRATS HAVE AVOIDED being linked to their party’s progressives, most of their GOP opponents remain identified with Trump. That became a liability when COVID-19 and its economic fallout sent his popularity plummeting.

David O’Connell, a political science professor at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa., who is tracking the Pennsylvania races, says, “Things have changed so dramatically in the last few months. I was fully confident Trump was going to win re-election in February. His approval ratings were similar to Obama at the end of the third year and he had



a great economy. No incumbent has ever lost with those situations."

Now Trump's weak poll numbers leave loyal supporters like Junge in a bind. He says: "I voted for President Trump in 2016, I served in the Trump administration and I will campaign and urge people to vote for him to win re-election in 2020. Whether there's wisdom to being tied to the president or not, I am."

*The Cook Report*'s Wasserman says that while many Republican House candidates had to show support for Trump to fend off right-wing challengers in the primaries "it's probably not an asset in the general election. Even though Trump carried these Michigan districts in 2016, he didn't win by that big a share of the vote and his standing is lower now than it was then."

A few Republicans are attempting to position themselves as the bipartisan independents they say the Democratic incumbents promised to be. In Florida, Carlos Gimenez is giving Debbie Mucarsel-Powell a serious challenge by touting his 2016 vote for Hillary Clinton and by criticizing Trump for failing to wear a mask in public amid the COVID-19 crisis. In Michigan's 11th District, Haley Stevens' GOP challenger Eric Esshaki, a Chaldean Christian whose father immigrated to the U.S. from Iraq, is frustrated that Trump has scaled back asylum program and left thousands of Christian refugees from ISIS and other Muslim regimes to languish. He's also unhappy with the continuous efforts to kill Obamacare without offering any other plan. "You can't repeal without a replacement, it's been implemented now for too long," he says. "You would essentially pull the rug out from underneath private insurance companies and destroy the market."

Dickinson College's O'Connell agrees with *The Cook Report*'s Was-



## “YOU’RE GONNA HEAR THE WORDS ‘SOCIALIST’ AND ‘EXTREMIST’ A LOT, THERE WILL BE A LOT OF IMAGES OF LOOTERS.”

### ARM'S LENGTH

Democratic freshmen like Michigan's Rep. Haley Stevens (above) have tried to avoid being grouped with progressives like (opposite, left to right): Reps. Ilhan Omar, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib and Ayanna Pressley. They have also sometimes been willing to cross Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

serman that Lamb, Houlahan and the other Pennsylvania Democratic incumbents will probably retain their seats and that could boost Biden. But success, he says, could come at a price. "If Biden wins, then Lamb is targeted in 2022 and he'll be one of the most endangered Democrats in the country, the type of person who definitely loses his seat in a midterm swing election," he says.

In the meantime, it remains to be seen whether the eight Democratic freshmen will be able to not only win re-election but also draw significant numbers of votes to Biden. All of their districts have big Republican and independent populations and despite the wins of 2016, none of the incumbents is considered a lock this year.

Slotkin could easily be speaking for all of them when she says, "It's a competitive district, it's always going to be a competitive district. It's a very independently minded district. And that's good. It keeps you on your toes." ■

# Culture

HIGH, LOW + EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY NEWSWEEK; BABY: SIRI STAFFORD/GETTY; HAIR: MICHAEL KOVAC/FILMAGIC/GETTY; TOP RIGHT: COURTESY OF NIGHT MEDIA



TRENDS

# Bye Bye, Karen

Will anyone ever name their child Karen again? A baby name expert weighs in on the now-controversial moniker

↗ THERE ARE 1,107,736 PEOPLE NAMED KAREN IN the United States right now, and there are probably never going to be 1,107,737.

The reason: Karen has now joined that battery of names so closely identified with negative traits or reprehensible individuals that they're taken off the table as baby names by well-meaning parents everywhere.

As far off the table as Adolf?

Unlike Adolf, the name Karen is not associated with a heinous person who masterminded the murder of 11 million people and started an international war. Nor is Karen a pointed ethnic slur, the way many other names that have become epithets often are. Guido is a contemporary example, now a derogatory term meaning a macho, thuggish person of Italian descent, sparked by the movie *Risky Business* in 1983.

There were no babies named Guido (or Adolf) in the U.S. in 2018, the most recent year that names were counted and ranked. But the year before innocuous Guido became tainted Guido, 17

baby boys were given the name, the same number as were named Susan (yes, really), Parnell and Dick.

Gender politics aside, the trouble with a boy named Sue, as Johnny Cash once famously sang about, is a lot more obvious than the problem with Parnell. But Parnell, along with its female form Petronilla, was basically the Karen of the 14th century, a once-popular name that came to mean a priest's concubine or person of loose morals. The association may have faded, but the name never really recovered.

Dick is another issue. At the peak of its popularity in 1938, when it was given to nearly 1,000 baby boys, dick was already a slang term for penis. It wasn't until the late 1960s, though, that the word dick began taking on other negative meanings, as a noun, a verb and an adjective.

The upshot: zero baby boys named Dick today.

BY

PAMELA REDMOND  
 @prsatrana

## Name Reinvention

Some names outlast the taint of their derogatory associations. Few people

remember, for instance, that there was ever anti-Irish prejudice in the U.S., much less that it was expressed by calling young Irish maids who immigrated to the U.S. "the Bridgets." The term was so negative, shorthand for ignorant and stupid, that many actual Bridgets changed their names to avoid being stigmatized.

My grandmother was one of them. In 1911 she renamed herself Bertha, which then itself became infamous when the heavy artillery used by Germany in the First World War was nicknamed Big Bertha. And so then she changed her name again, this time to Beatrice.

Many Karen's trying to make a name for themselves in this already-difficult world may have the same idea. The more than 2,000 Karen's who are turning 21 this year may decide to morph into Karas or Kerrys or possibly Olivias. And the nearly 500 parents who named their baby girls Karen in 2018 may be suffering the world's biggest case of baby name regret.

But most Karen's—the 32,000-plus

## "The nearly 500 parents who named their baby girls Karen in 2018 may be suffering the world's biggest case of baby name regret."

who were given the name in the U.S. at its peak in 1965, for instance—may feel it's too late to restyle themselves as Olivias. They may also fear they'll be seen as Karen's even if their name is Lisa or Donna or, okay, Pamela.

The problem with Karen as a name is rooted in its very ubiquity. The fact that none of the individuals who gave Karen her bad name were actually named Karen is the source of the name's power as a pejorative. Karen symbolizes the kind of white privilege that's been around so long and is so universal that it passes as ordinary and acceptable, like the name Karen itself.

But Karen has been fading from

fashion as a name since it hit the height of its popularity 55 years ago, a year after the Civil Rights Act was signed into law. And its current derogatory meaning stems, in part, from it being a relic of that bygone era. It's a name that stands for an outdated brand of normalcy, behavior that was once as unremarkable as segregated schools or blackface comedy but that now is totally unacceptable.

### Disappearing Act

So is Karen the name as unacceptable as the behavior it signifies?

The short answer is yes. Even before it became a synonym for racist shrew, Karen was heading straight downhill as a baby name. And it's destined to fall much further much faster until, like Adolf, like Guido, like Genghis, there are no babies named Karen at all.

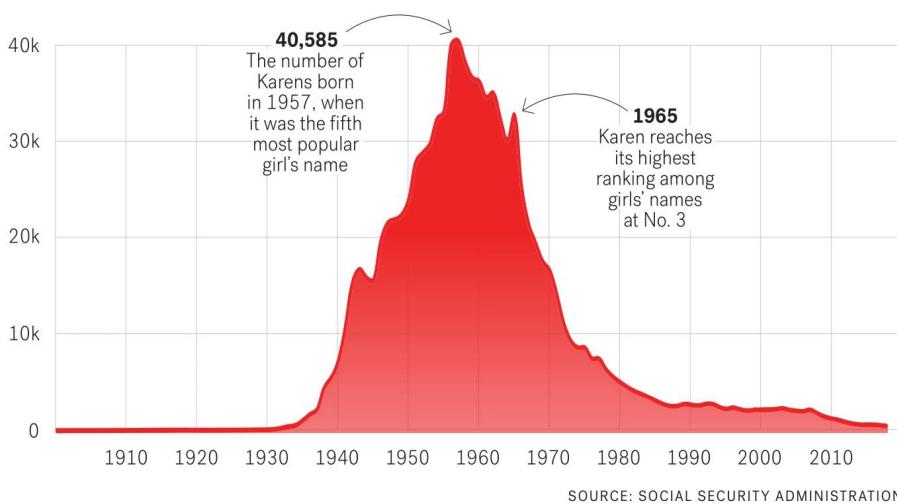
Still, you have to do something a lot worse than any Karen to be crossed off the master list of names forever. Lilith, Azrael and Cain—names that are associated with evil of literally Biblical proportions—are all coming back as stylish baby names. Figures of death and destruction—Kali, Electra, Osiris, Pandora, even Hades—are now fashionable names for innocent babies.

That's proof that a millennium or two can wash away even the darkest name associations. As the British parents who recently won a legal battle to name their son Lucifer maintained, they saw it not as an alias of Satan but simply as a unique name with a pleasing sound.

Said little Lucifer's dad, "We just thought it was a nice name." ■

### FALLING STAR

The name Karen had been dropping out of favor with new parents even before the current controversy began.



→ **Pamela Redmond** is the co-creator of Nameberry, the world's largest baby name website, and the author of the novel OLDER, the sequel to TV's YOUNGER, due out in September.

## Popularity Contest

WHEN IT PEAKED AT NO. 3 IN 1965, THE NAME KAREN WAS GIVEN TO 32,874 BABIES. HERE'S WHAT ELSE WAS IN VOGUE THEN—AND NOW. ONLY THE NAME JAMES HAS MANAGED TO HOLD UP OVER TIME.

1965 BOYS' NAMES

2018 BOYS' NAMES

1965 GIRLS' NAMES

2018 GIRLS' NAMES

#1

Michael

Liam

Lisa

Emma

#2

John

Noah

Mary

Olivia

#3

David

William

Karen

Ava

#4

James

James

Kimberly

Isabella

#5

Robert

Oliver

Susan

Sophia

POPULARITY RANK



SOURCE: SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION



**01 Van Buren Sisters**  
Suffragist Motorcyclists  
New York City to San Francisco

Sisters Augusta Van Buren and Adeline Van Buren were the first women to ride solo motorcycles across the continental U.S. in 1916—a trip that spanned 60 days and 5,500 miles. Their cross-country ride demonstrated that women could serve as military couriers for intelligence reports in the First World War as well as men.



**02 Nellie Bly**  
Globetrotting Journalist  
Hoboken, New Jersey  
An American journalism pioneer who championed women's rights, Nellie Bly once spent 10 days in New York City's infamous Blackwell's Island women's asylum for an investigative exposé. She is also known for beating the "around the world in 80 days" record inspired by the Jules Verne novel. In 1889 she circumnavigated the globe by steamship, train, rickshaw, horse and donkey—all in 72 days.



**03 Bessie Coleman**  
First Black Female Pilot  
Le Crotoy, France

"The air is the only place free from prejudices," said American Bessie Coleman, the first Black woman to earn her pilot's license. When she did, in France in 1921, she was also the first Black person to earn an international pilot's license. Of African American and Native American descent, "Queen Bess," as she was known, performed aerial stunts and raised funds for an African American flying school.



**04 Krystyna Chojnowska-Liskiewicz**

First Woman to Sail Around the World Alone  
Canary Islands, Spain

It took two years, but the Polish sea captain and shipbuilding engineer became the first woman to sail solo around the world, completing the circuit in 1978. Enduring a bout of kidney stones and treacherous conditions through the Great Barrier Reef, the "First Lady of the Oceans" single-handedly sailed 28,696 miles across the seven seas.

UNCHARTED

# The Most Interesting Women in the World: A Century of Explorers

In honor of Women's Equality Day and the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage, we're highlighting women of this century who were pioneers in exploring the world. These real-life wild women threw caution and convention out the window—such as the first women to ride solo across the U.S. in motorcycles; the first woman to summit the tallest peaks on every continent; and the first Black woman to host her own travel show, flying her own plane to remote islands around the world. While we won't be taking the freedom to travel for granted ever again post-pandemic, we owe a lot to these trailblazing women who paved the way for all of our adventures—even the ones yet to come. —Kathleen Rellihaan



### 05 Kellee Edwards

First Black Female Travel Show Host

Indonesia to Alaska

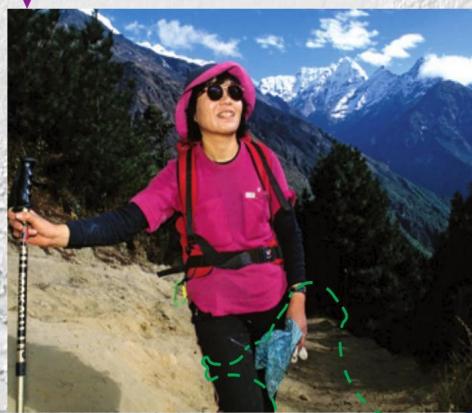
Dubbed "The World's Most Interesting Woman" by *Outside* magazine, Kellee Edwards, host of *Mysterious Islands* on the Travel Channel, is a licensed pilot and expert scuba diver who flies herself to distant islands for high-adrenaline adventures. They include exploring Indonesian caves with thousands of buried bodies, freediving with matriarchal divers in Korea and piloting an aircraft in Alaska's temperamental Aleutian Chain.

### 07 Junko Tabei

First Woman to Summit Mount Everest

Himalayan Mountains, Nepal

This pioneering Japanese mountaineer defied naysayers who told her to "stay at home and clean the house," becoming in 1975 the first woman to climb to the top of Mount Everest, the world's highest peak. Next, she took on the "Seven Summits," the highest mountain on each continent, and was the first woman to conquer those as well.



### 06 Aloha Wanderwell

First Woman to Drive Around the World

Nice, France

"World's Most Widely Traveled Girl," Aloha Wanderwell lived the life of an adventure movie: Over a seven-year expedition she drove across six continents behind the wheel of a Model T Ford. She was only 16 years old in 1922, when she joined a caravan of automobiles circling the globe, and quickly became both the star and director of the films taken throughout the expedition, along with her pet monkey.



### 08 Barbara Hillary

First Black Woman

to Trek to Both Poles

North and South Poles

Defying stereotypes of age and race, African American adventurer Barbara Hillary was the first Black woman to trek to both the North and South Poles, arriving at ages 75 and 79, respectively—and after surviving breast cancer in her 20s and lung cancer in her 60s.



PARTING SHOT

# Jimmy “MrBeast”

 LIVING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC REQUIRES NECESSITIES LIKE PAYING BILLS as well as trivialities like fighting boredom. Philanthropic YouTuber Jimmy “MrBeast” Donaldson addressed both in July by posting what was billed as the world’s toughest puzzle. The winner got a \$100,000 prize. Donaldson says he got the idea from the work of an online puzzle maker known only as Cicada 3301. “I got the inspiration from a Cicada riddle on YouTube. I knew we could go bigger!” Going big is what MrBeast is all about. The 22 year old with 40 million subscribers raised \$22 million to plant 22 million trees with the #TeamTrees movement he co-founded last year. “I’ve always wanted to use my platform to help people, and, with the success of my channels, I’m able to do that. It started off with something as simple as giving pizzas away, and now we have been able to gift cars and homes.” Beast’s riddle was solved in just eight hours, but not before participants learned Shakespeare, scanned hundreds of QR codes and played the game *Flappy Bird*. Regardless, Beast says he’s “100 percent doing another one in the future.”



**“It started off with giving pizzas away, and now we have been able to gift cars and homes.”**

**Was the COVID-19 pandemic a factor this contest?**

Of course. We’ve been trying to keep everyone entertained while they’re inside, and this was another project to keep everyone’s minds busy.

**Are you disappointed the riddle was solved so quickly?**

It’s definitely not disappointment, more shock that it was solved in under 12 hours. Ultimately, we did this because we knew fans would enjoy it, and it would also take their minds off everything else going on in the world.

**Perhaps the most devious step of the puzzle was the page full of QR codes. What was the goal of that?**

I wanted to create a time-consuming puzzle that didn’t involve problem solving, just stuff that was very tedious mixed in. It was definitely the step that would make people stop wanting to keep going.

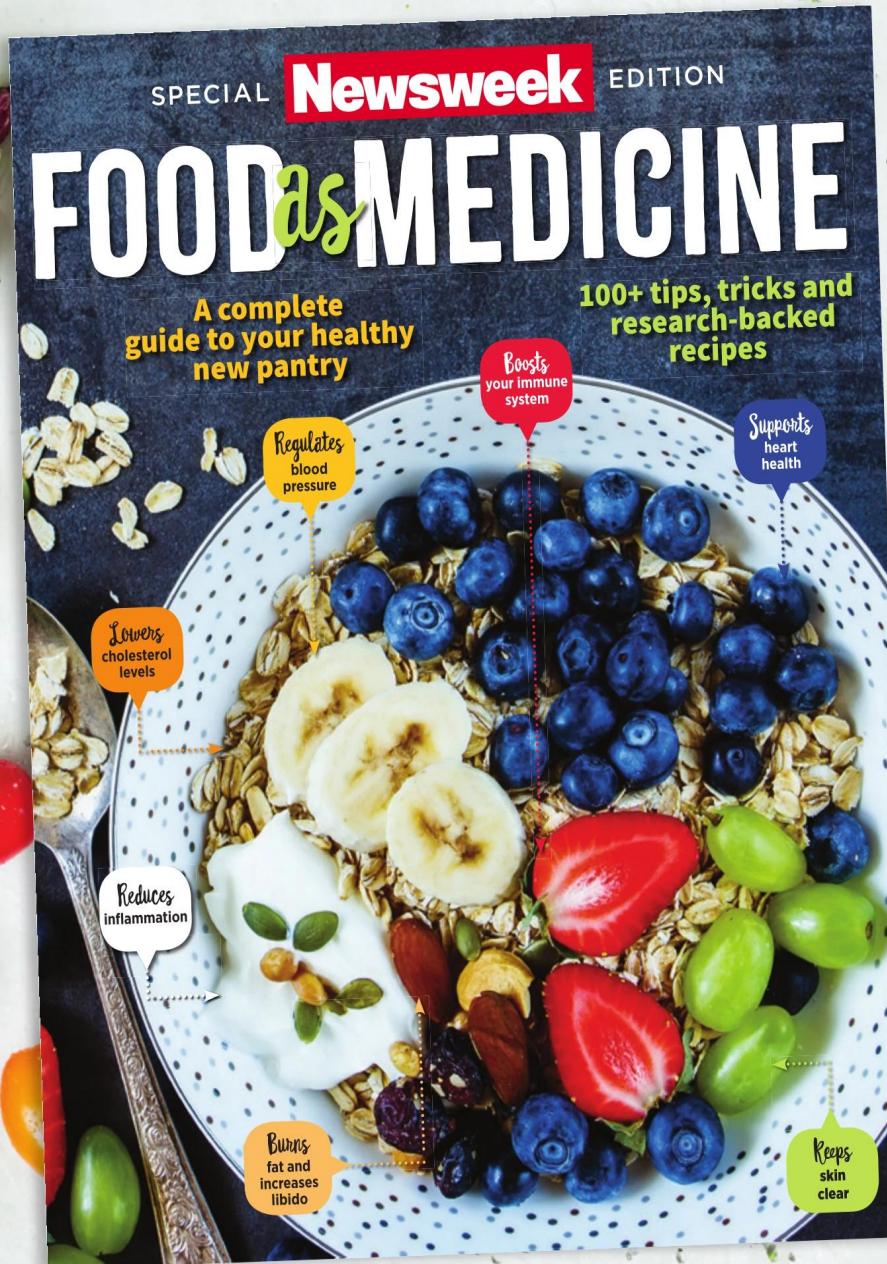
**What will the next one be like?**

Encouraging people to play with their friends or allowing steps that take multiple people to complete. If people are going to work together, we might as well lean into it.

**What do you say to those who may not take the job of being a full-time YouTuber seriously?**

People don’t realize how time consuming these videos [are] to come up with, produce, shoot, edit and post. Find something you enjoy doing and make it a career! —Christopher Groux

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