



Voters to Washington in 2016:

“Rock the Boat”

An analysis of the 2016 Presidential Election

The Winston Group
101 Constitution Ave. NW, Suite 710 East
Washington, DC 20001
www.winstongroup.net

Wg THE WINSTON GROUP
making ideas matter™

Table of Contents

Overview	1
A Frustrated Electorate	1
Structural Dynamic #1: Direction of the Country and Concern for the Next Generation	2
Structural Dynamic #2: Dissatisfaction with Political Discourse and News Media	2
Structural Dynamic #3: Dissatisfaction that Voters' Voices Were Not Heard	3
A Change Election: Change Over Experience	3
Candidate Brand Images	3
Candidate Qualities	4
Is Your Voice Heard?	5
Timing of Voting Decisions	6
Factors in Voting Decisions: Policy over Personality	7
The Key Issue: The Economy and Jobs	7
Issues and Priorities in Voting Decisions	8
Trump Voters	10
Clinton Voters	11
Demographics and Electoral Shifts	13
Party	13
Ideology	13
Race	15
Region	15
Voting Among Important Groups	16
Conclusion	18

Overview

The 2016 presidential election was unusual in many ways, but perhaps the overriding characteristic was that both candidates had more unfavorables than favorables when they emerged from the primary process. The country had never seen a political party nominate a candidate that a majority of people viewed unfavorably; but in this election, both parties did. That created an intriguing dynamic — how would voters, who had an unfavorable view of both candidates, define the choice between them? The answer was that they chose the person who best represented change, and that person was Donald Trump.



The outcome of this election was driven by an electorate ready for a new direction, but the structural factors behind this desire for change were in place long before the campaign. How voters felt about the two party frontrunners was important in their decision, but that decision was also about their deeper concerns over the direction of the country, the economy, and the political system, which led them to “rock the boat.”

The goal of this report is to examine the election results and voter preferences, as well as the important dynamics that impacted the electorate both before and on Election Day. Sources for this report are the Edison Research news media exit polls and the Winning the Issues Election Night national survey of registered voters who voted at the Congressional level (1000 registered voters, surveys completed on the evening of the November 8 election).

A Frustrated Electorate

There were several long term structural dynamics that created an environment for change. Survey research has shown that the electorate has seen the country as seriously on the wrong track for about a decade, and by this election had developed serious concerns about the future for themselves and their families. They were dissatisfied with policy and political discourse as well as the way the media was reporting on that discussion. This resulted in an electorate which felt their voices were simply not being heard. This was not necessarily an angry electorate (although some were); it was a frustrated electorate that had become despondent because people felt their children’s future would not be as bright as theirs had been. This disheartenment caused them to look for someone who would dramatically change the nation’s current course to the point that they were willing to play political 52-card pickup in order to get real change.

Structural Dynamic #1: Direction of the Country and Concern for the Next Generation

On Election Day, according to the Edison Research national exit polls, 33% of the electorate thought the country was headed in the right direction while an overwhelming 62% thought the country was seriously off on the wrong track. This negative perspective of the country's trajectory has been the dominant view since the economic crisis in 2008, but what sets this apart is how long this pessimistic viewpoint has persisted.



After almost eight years of negative right track/wrong track numbers, it is not surprising that people had significant concerns about the quality of life for the next generation. In an April survey for the Congressional Institute, two-thirds of the electorate believed the statement that *"the next generation will not have the same quality of life that you had"* (61-37 believe-do not believe). This sentiment was reflected in the Edison Research exit polls, with 58% saying that they expect life for the next generation of Americans to be

either worse than or the same as life today (33% worse; 25% about the same), and only 37% expecting it to be better. This attitude reflects the electorate's concern that, for their children, life will either reflect the status quo or potentially be worse than today.

This concern was driven in large part by economic concerns, specifically the rising cost of living and the challenges of managing family finances in a time of long-term wage stagnation. These economic concerns have been in place for several years, leading voters to question how well the free market system is working and for some, whether the system is rigged.

Structural Dynamic #2: Dissatisfaction with Political Discourse and News Media

Compounding the existing concerns about the direction of the country and the future for the next generation, voters were not satisfied with the quality of discourse around policies and issues which they saw as failing to address the real challenges they were facing. At the beginning of this year, 69% said the discourse about policy and politics was off on the wrong track, while only 29% thought it was headed in the right direction (Winning the Issues National Survey, January 2016). Moreover, even prior to this election cycle and Donald Trump's focus on the media, the news was seen as becoming too much like entertainment. A remarkable 81% said they believed the media was influenced by special interests while only 16% saw the media as fact-based and credible, with

voters questioning media accuracy and fairness well before the election (New Models National Survey, December 2015).

Structural Dynamic #3: Dissatisfaction that Voters' Voices Were Not Heard

In an April 2016 survey done for the Congressional Institute, eight of out ten voters — in a natural extension of the first two structural dynamics — said they did not feel that their voices were being heard in political and public policy discourse about issues (yes, voice is heard 19% - no, voice is not heard, 79%). This feeling that those in political power were ignoring their problems and concerns was not new to the 2016 general election campaign. It has been in place for many years, and as a result, became a central — and very effective — component of Trump's campaign narrative.



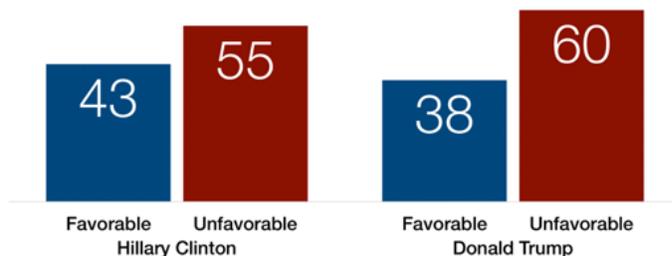
These factors drove the electorate to a point where they were ready to “rock the boat;” to take a risk by electing a candidate who not only rejected the political status quo but offered sweeping change.

A Change Election: Change Over Experience

Candidate Brand Images

In this election, we saw a unique phenomenon as both party frontrunners had historically high negatives. In the national exit polls, Hillary Clinton's brand image was 43-55 favorable-unfavorable, with Donald Trump's at 38-60. These extraordinarily high negatives for both led to an additional level of volatility in the political environment, as well as a significant percentage of voters still thinking through their voting preference up to Election Day. In a typical presidential election, the candidate with a more positive brand image would have an advantage over the opponent, but in this cycle, the desire for change became even more central than brand image.

Brand Image of the Two Candidates



About one in five voters (18%) had an unfavorable view of both Clinton and Trump; among this group, Trump won by seventeen points (47-30 Trump-Clinton). Additionally, in the national exit poll

question about qualification to be president, 15% felt neither candidate was qualified, and they broke heavily for Trump (66-15).

In the critical Rust Belt states of Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, these trends were even more apparent. Voters in these states who viewed both candidates unfavorably broke more dramatically for Trump than nationally. Trump’s margin among these voters ranged from 21 points in Michigan to 37 points in Wisconsin, and in all four states, he won a majority of them.

	MI		OH		PA		WI	
	% of Electorate	R-D						
Unfavorable of both	20	50-29	19	53-23	17	56-31	22	60-23
Neither qualified	15	63-15	16	64-12	13	67-21	16	65-16

Source: Edison Research National Exit Polls

Candidate Qualities

In the national exit polls, voters were asked to choose from four candidate attributes in terms of which one was most important to them. The top attribute was “can bring needed change” (39%), and among the group that values this attribute most highly, Trump won overwhelmingly by 82-14. Clinton won outright among those who valued the attribute “has the right experience” (7-90), and she also had a strong lead among the group of voters who chose the attribute “has good judgment” (25-65). Clinton’s campaign ads focused heavily on the two themes of experience and judgment, and she successfully won among voters who said those two factors were the most important to them. “Cares about people like me” was the last and lowest priority of the four attributes, and Clinton also won that group (34-57). But even with experience, judgment and caring as advantages for Clinton, the dominant attribute was change, and this was Trump’s advantage.



Again, this trend was even more pronounced in Rust Belt states. However, in three of these four states, the percentage of the electorate that was focused on the ability to bring change as the key candidate quality significantly exceeded the corresponding national result. In Ohio and

Pennsylvania, 46% said change was the key quality. Wisconsin was next at 44%, and Michigan was at 39%. Interestingly, that order matches the size of the Trump margin in each state, with Ohio having the largest, and Michigan the smallest.

Most Important Candidate Qualities	MI		OH		PA		WI	
	% of Electorate	R-D						
Change	39	83-14	46	84-10	46	83-15	44	84-12

Source: Edison Research National Exit Polls

Is Your Voice Heard?

Over time and prior to the election, we had tracked the question “*is your voice heard?*” in the discussion about politics and issues. The overwhelming majority of voters said their voices were not heard, and this outlook was generally consistent among demographic groups across the board. In the Winning the Issues Election Night survey, we repeated this question and found a result among Republicans and independents relatively consistent with what we had seen in earlier data. This clearly set up the electorate’s desire for change. In the same survey, we saw a much higher percentage of Democrats (55%) say that their voices were heard, as compared to prior results among Democrats (23% in an April 2016 survey). Because the Election Night survey was completed before the eventual result was clear, this greater sense of optimism among Democrats is likely attributable to their expectations that Hillary Clinton was going to win.



In thinking about the role of people like you in the political and public policy discourse about issues, do you think your voice is heard effectively?	Overall	Rep	Ind/Other	Dem
Yes	34	23	22	55
No	54	68	64	34

Source: Winning the Issues Election Night Survey

Timing of Voting Decisions



Immediately following the somewhat surprising outcome of the election, one of the theories that emerged was that the polls were wrong. In this case, it is necessary to distinguish between the national surveys and state surveys. Generally, most national surveys done in the last few days before the election were within the margin of error of the final result. The results for state surveys were less reliable. However, the exit polls revealed that there was

real movement in voter decision-making up until Election Day, so surveys that were not in the field toward the end would have missed this shift.

Time of Decision Making	Percentage	R-D
In the past week	13	+3 (45-42)
In October	12	+14 (51-37)
In September and before that	73	-6 (45-51)

Source: Edison Research National Exit Polls

Three in four voters (73%) said that they had made up their minds in September or prior to that month, and among this group, Clinton led by 6. However, another 12% said that they decided during October, and they broke for Trump by fourteen (51-37). October was the height of the news coverage of Wikileaks, Clinton emails, and the Clinton Foundation, as well as the presidential debates. In the week before the election, another 13% decided, with Trump leading among this group of voters by 3 (45-42). With three-quarters having made up their minds before October and with Clinton leading among that group, the movement in national surveys over the past several weeks would have been gradual as more voters were making up their minds and breaking for Trump.

In the Rust Belt states, voters that decided in the last week broke significantly for Trump. This was particularly critical in two states. In Michigan, Trump was even with Clinton going into the last week, and in Wisconsin, he trailed by two points, so this shift in the last week won both states.

Time of Decision Making	MI		OH		PA		WI	
	% of Electorate	R-D						
Last Week	13	50-39	15	47-41	15	54-37	14	59-30
In October	13	55-35	10	64-29	9	41-54	11	54-39
In September and before that	71	47-50	75	50-47	75	51-47	75	46-51

Source: Edison Research National Exit Polls

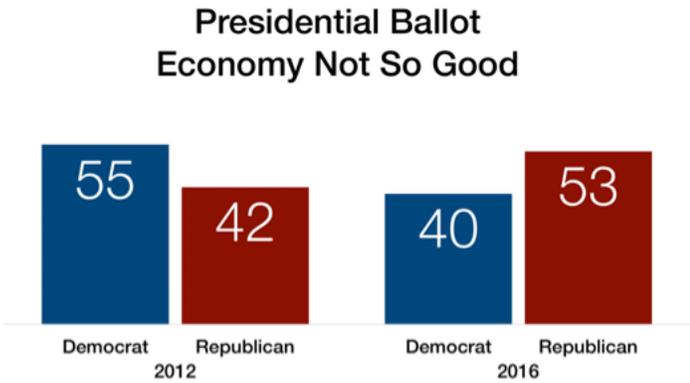
Of these four states, Ohio saw the lowest levels of movement toward Trump in the final week, but at that point he was holding a seven-point lead; movement toward him in October had been decisive.

Factors in Voting Decisions: Policy over Personality

The Key Issue: The Economy and Jobs

As we have seen in the last four national elections, the key issue driving voters was the economy and jobs. Given a choice of four issues, a majority of 52% chose the economy in the national exit polls. In the four Rust Belt states, exit polls showed the percentage of voters choosing the economy as their top issue ranged from 52% to 56%, meaning that it was either at or above the national average in all four of these states. In the Winning the Issues Election Night survey, voters had more issue choices, but the economy and jobs was still the top issue by a wide margin, with 30% choosing it.

Over the last four years, the electorate’s attitude about the economy has gotten slightly less negative. According to the exit polls in 2012, 23% said economic conditions were excellent/good and 77% said not so good/poor. In 2016, it was 36% excellent/good - 62% not so good/poor. A key group were those voters who said the economy was “not so good.” In the 2012 election, this group made up 45% of the electorate, and Romney should have carried them. Instead, they went for President Obama by a thirteen point margin of 42-55. In this election, they made up 41% of the electorate, and Trump carried them by thirteen points at 53-40.



The results in the Rust Belt states displayed this shift on an even a larger scale. The largest shift was in Michigan where President Obama had previously won these voters by 18 points. In this election, Trump won these voters by 26 points, a 44 point swing in the margin. It is not simply that he won these voters in this set of states after Romney had lost them; it was the magnitude of the results gained. Nationally, he got 53% of these voters, however in these states, he got between 58% and 64%, and this was a central element to Trump winning them.

Economy - Not So Good Presidential Ballot	MI		OH		PA		WI	
	2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016
Republican - Democrat	40-58	61-35	46-51	64-30	44-55	58-37	49-50	63-32
Republican Margin	-18	+26	-5	+34	-11	+21	-1	+31

Source: Edison Research National Exit Polls

Issues and Priorities in Voting Decisions

In the Winning the Issues Election Night survey, we took a look at 20 issues and themes that emerged during the course of the campaign and asked voters to rate each on a scale of 1 to 9,



where 1 was not important and 9 was extremely important. Based on voter priorities, issues and policies tended to be viewed as more important across the parties, while candidate negatives were generally viewed as important by the opposing party. For example, the economy and jobs was ranked the most important across all parties. In contrast, allegations of Trump ties to Russia were viewed as important by Democrats, while the discussion of the Clinton e-mail server was much more

important to Republicans. A more basic way to view this is that issues and policies tended to appeal across the broader electorate, while attacks on the opponent drove that party's base.

Independents clearly reflect this dynamic, as they had three tiers of issues. The top two tiers were issue based, with economy and jobs being the top concern by a significant margin. But also in the first tier were a policy focus on getting things done, a surprisingly strong interest about potential Supreme Court nominations, and effectively dealing with foreign policy and terrorism. These top four were also very important for both Democrats and Republicans, reflecting some general agenda agreement.

The second tier for independents was also made up of policy questions at a slightly lower level of importance. Again, there was general agreement from both parties; however, there were some key distinctions. Republicans thought the immigration and border security issue was more important and would have put that in the first tier, while Democrats would have put taxes/making the wealthy pay their fair share and women’s issues such as equal pay as first tier issues.

The third tier was mostly candidate negatives. These generally did well with respective party bases, but had a significantly lesser impact beyond that.

Ranking of Issues in Importance of How You Voted Sorted by Independent/Other	Mean		
	Rep	Ind/Other	Dem
TIER 1			
Economy and jobs	7.68	7.38	7.37
Need to get things done in Washington and get the parties to work together	7.21	6.90	7.29
Supreme Court nominations	7.23	6.77	7.01
Foreign policy/terrorism/ISIS/situation in Middle East	7.58	6.55	6.86
TIER 2			
Immigration and border security	7.49	6.41	6.58
President Obama’s health care plan/health care	6.79	6.38	6.94
Taxes/making sure the wealthy pay their fair share	6.29	6.33	7.38
Need for a check and balance on the incoming President	6.80	6.27	6.25
Outsourcing of jobs overseas	6.88	6.15	6.58
Issues related to women, such as equal pay	5.73	5.96	7.26
Trade	6.73	5.95	6.34
TIER 3			
Reproductive issues such as abortion and contraception	6.28	5.43	6.73
Issues involving Hillary Clinton’s email server and Clinton Foundation	7.15	5.31	4.53

Ranking of Issues in Importance of How You Voted Sorted by Independent/Other	Mean		
	Rep	Ind/Other	Dem
Donald Trump statements about groups such as the disabled and Mexicans	4.65	5.25	6.74
Donald Trump statements about women	3.86	4.98	6.80
Benghazi	6.66	4.97	4.90
FBI/Comey re-evaluation of the investigation of Clinton emails	6.81	4.92	5.03
Disrupting the status quo/drain the swamp	6.14	4.86	5.32
Hillary Clinton statements about Trump supporters being deplorables	5.87	4.78	5.22
Allegations of Donald Trump ties to Russia	4.03	4.26	6.08

Source: Winning the Issues Election Night Survey

Trump Voters

Trump voters had the same first tier issues as independents, but also included immigration and border security, and the Clinton e-mail server. The second tier items were still important to Trump voters, but not at the same level as tier one. Trump supporters tended to agree with independents on the second tier policy items, but added the Comey investigation and Benghazi. At the bottom of the list were the negatives about Trump.

Ranking of Issues in Importance of How You Voted TRUMP VOTERS	Mean
TIER 1	
Economy and jobs	7.71
Immigration and border security	7.60
Foreign policy/terrorism/ISIS/situation in the Middle East	7.44
Issues involving Hillary Clinton’s email server and Clinton Foundation	7.39
Supreme Court nominations	7.17
Need to get things done in Washington and get the parties to work together	7.12

Ranking of Issues in Importance of How You Voted TRUMP VOTERS		Mean
TIER 2		
Outsourcing of jobs overseas		6.83
FBI/Comey re-evaluation of the investigation of Hillary Clinton emails		6.80
Need for a check and balance on the incoming President		6.78
Trade		6.64
President Obama's health care plan/health care		6.63
Benghazi		6.60
TIER 3		
Taxes/making sure the wealthy pay their fair share		6.19
Reproductive issues such as abortion and contraception		5.94
Disrupting the status quo/drain the swamp		5.92
Hillary Clinton statements about Trump supporters being deplorables		5.92
Issues related to women, such as equal pay		5.67
TIER 4		
Trump statements about groups such as the disabled and Mexicans		4.30
Allegations of Donald Trump ties to Russia		3.79
Donald Trump statements about women		3.56
<i>Source: Winning the Issues Election Night Survey</i>		

Clinton Voters

Clinton voters' first tier contained most of the independents' top tier issues with the exception of foreign affairs and terrorism, but they also included quite a bit more in their set of top priorities. In terms of policy issues, they added taxes/making the wealthy pay their fair share, women's issues such as equal pay, and the health care plan. Beyond policy, they also included Trump's statements about women and groups such as the disabled and Mexicans. The second tier contained the remaining issues, and included the allegations of Trump ties to Russia. Like Trump supporters, the negatives about their candidate — Clinton — were at the bottom of the list.

Ranking of Issues in Importance of How You Voted CLINTON VOTERS	Mean
TIER 1	
Economy and jobs	7.33
Need to get things done in Washington and get the parties to work together	7.24
Taxes/making sure the wealthy pay their fair share	7.19
Issues related to women, such as equal pay	7.06
Donald Trump statements about women	6.96
Donald Trump statements about groups such as the disabled and Mexicans	6.90
Supreme Court nominations	6.89
President Obama's health care plan/health care	6.87
TIER 2	
Foreign policy/terrorism/ISIS/situation in Middle East	6.63
Reproductive issues such as abortion and contraception	6.48
Outsourcing of jobs overseas	6.35
Immigration and border security	6.13
Need for a check and balance on the incoming President	6.13
Trade	6.12
Allegations of Donald Trump ties to Russia	5.89
TIER 3	
Disrupting the status quo/drain the swamp	5.02
Hillary Clinton statements about Trump supporters being deplorables	4.72
Benghazi	4.46
FBI/Comey re-evaluation of the investigation of Clinton emails	4.41
Issues involving Hillary Clinton's email server and Clinton Foundation	3.94
<i>Source: Winning the Issues Election Night Survey</i>	

Demographics and Electoral Shifts

Party

In terms of electoral composition by party (source: Edison Research exit polls - House level), Democrats had a three-point advantage (36%) over Republicans (33%), with independent/other comprising almost a third of the electorate (30%). As shown in this chart which tracks party identification at the Congressional level since 1984, there are several notable trends. The first is the gradual increase in independents as a percentage of the electorate. Since 2002, the percentage of independents has increased from 22% to 30%.

The second trend is that during the last two presidencies, the party that held that office seemed to lose voters. When Bush was elected in 2000, 36% of the electorate was Republican, and in the election at the end of his term, 2004, 33% of the

electorate was Republican. The same holds true for Obama, as when he was elected 40% of the electorate was Democrat, and in the 2016 election at the end of his term, 36% are Democrat.

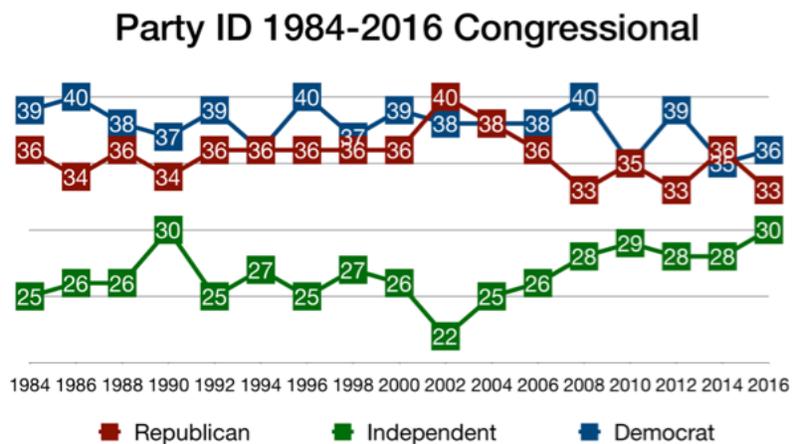
The third trend to note here is the steady composition of Republicans as a share of the electorate — 33% in the past three presidential cycles, and 36% in five of the six previous presidential elections. The unusual election was 2004, when the Republican percentage reached 38%.

A final item to note is that the Democratic composition of the electorate in 2016 (36%) is the lowest in a presidential year since 1984. In the eight prior Presidential elections, Democrats ranged between 38% and 40%.

Ideology

The electorate continues to be center-right, with moderates (38%) still being the largest group, and with there being more conservatives (35%) than liberals (26%). However, while moderates continue to be the largest ideological group, their percentage has declined since 2000, going from 50% to 38%, while the percentage of liberals (6% gain) and conservatives (5% gain) have about equally increased.

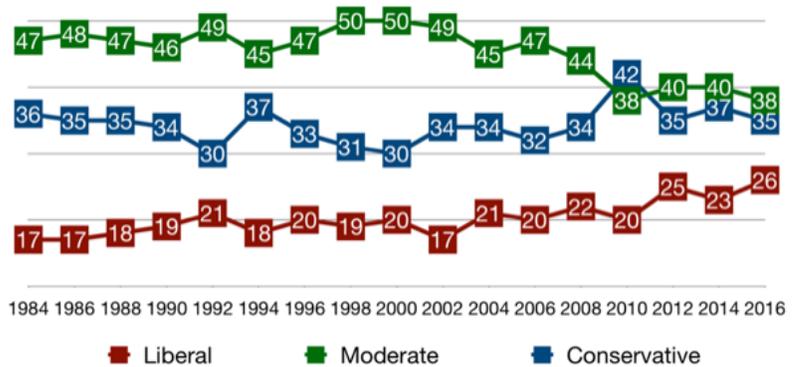
This level for conservatives existed before, during the Reagan years and the Gingrich Revolution election. But for liberals, this represents a new high. Certainly the last two presidential elections



have been quite different from the previous seven.

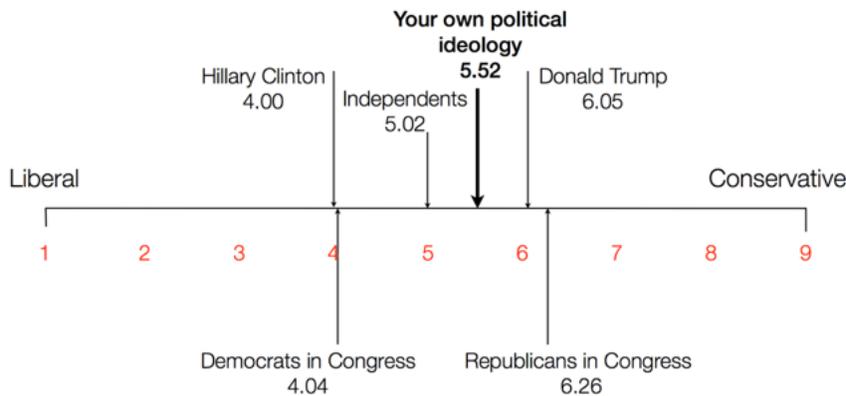
However, when shortening the time frame to the last three Presidential elections, the percentage of conservatives has been remarkably consistent (34% in 2008; 35% in 2012; 35% in 2016). In contrast, the percentage of liberals has ticked up a bit from 22% to 26%. Yet despite this national increase of liberals, the Democratic candidate lost in 2016.

Ideology 1984-2016 Congressional



In the Winning the Issues Election Night survey of down-ballot voters, we asked voters to rate their own political ideology on a scale of 1-9, with 1 being very liberal and 9 being very conservative.

Ideological Spectrum - Overall



Reflecting the center-right nature of the electorate, voters placed themselves at a 5.52 — center-right. This is similar to 2012, when voters placed themselves at 5.55. Independents rated themselves almost exactly in the center at 5.02. Voters overall placed Republicans in Congress farther to the right (6.26) than themselves (5.52), and also placed Trump farther to the right (6.05). From an ideological

perspective, this indicates the electorate views itself as closer to Trump ideologically than to Republicans in Congress.

Additionally, the electorate placed Congressional Democrats (4.04), as well as Hillary Clinton (4.00), to the left of themselves. This means that the broader electorate is still closer to Republicans in Congress (a difference of 0.74) than Democrats in Congress (1.48 difference). Moreover, they placed themselves closer to Trump (difference of 0.53) than Hillary Clinton (difference of 1.52). This does not mean the electorate necessarily agrees with Trump on his policy positions, but from an ideological standpoint and placement on the scale, they view themselves closer to Trump than to Clinton. Finally, Trump voters placed themselves at a 6.43, while Clinton voters put themselves at 4.66.

Race

In looking at the past three presidential cycles, 2016 had the lowest white composition of the electorate of the three. African-American percentages of the overall electorate were aligned with historical precedents (13% in 2008; 13% in 2012; 12% in 2016), although there are variations by state and region. At a national level there has been some slight uptick in the percentage of Hispanics in the electoral composition, from 9% percent in 2008 to 11% in 2016. A similar trend has occurred among Asians (2% in 2008; 4% in 2016). Given the relative stability of race in percentages of voter share, the difference for Trump was more a result of voter preference rather than major demographic shifts.

Race	2008	2012	2016
White	74	72	71
African-American	13	13	12
Hispanic	9	10	11
Asian	2	3	4

Source: Edison Research National Exit Polls

Region

From 2012 to 2016, the most significant changes by region were not in electoral composition but in voting preferences. Trump improved in rural areas, but the percentage of the rural vote went down from 21% to 17%. However, in the suburbs, Trump improved the Presidential margin from +2 to +4.

Electoral Shifts by Region	Percentage of 2012 Electorate (Pres)	2012 Vote (R-D)	Percentage of 2016 Electorate (Pres)	2016 Vote (R-D)
City over 50,000	32	- 26 (36-62)	34	-26 (34-60)
Suburbs	47	+2 (50-48)	49	+4 (49-45)
Rural/small city	21	+20 (59-39)	17	+27 (61-34)

Source: Edison Research National Exit Polls

Voting Among Important Groups

In looking at many of the key voter groups, Trump and Clinton both had mixed results. Trump had difficulty building support among women, particularly married women. Romney won married women by seven, while Trump lost them by two. The margin among independents/others did not significantly change. The margin for 18-29 year olds and Hispanics improved for the Republican candidate, but that was due more to Clinton falling short of the 2012 results than Trump improving upon them. However, among Catholics and white evangelicals, there was clear improvement for Trump over 2012 results.

Key Electoral Groups	Percentage of 2012 Electorate (Pres)	2012 Vote (R-D)	Percentage of 2016 Electorate (Pres)	2016 Vote (R-D)
Women	53	-11 (44-55)	53	-13 (41-54)
Married Women	31	+7 (53-46)	30	-2 (47-49)
Independents/something else	29	+5 (50-45)	31	+4 (46-42)
18-29	19	-23 (37-60)	19	-19 (36-55)
Hispanic	10	-44 (27-71)	11	-38 (28-66)
White Evangelical	26	+57 (78-21)	26	+64 (80-16)
Catholic	25	-2 (48-50)	23	+4 (50-46)

Source: Edison Research National Exit Polls

But the real story is the movement of blue collar, white working class voters that moved toward Trump, putting him over the top in the Rust Belt states. This movement could be seen at a national level, but the state level is where the impact was felt the most. More specifically, these groups included union households, those making \$50,000 or less, those that had an associates degree or had attended some college, and those that had a high school diploma or less.

Among union households that Romney lost by 18, Trump cut that margin in half and lost by only 9. Among those making under \$50,000 a year, the margin went from -22 to -12. The margin for those who had an associates degree or attended some college went from -1 to +8. Finally, among those that had a high school diploma or less, the margin went from -6 to +5. The obvious item to note about these groups is that they are potentially new additions to the Republican party. In contrast, looking at those that made \$100,000 or more per year, the margin went from +10 for Romney to 0 for Trump.

Electoral Shifts	Percentage of 2012 Electorate (Pres)	2012 Vote	Percentage of 2016 Electorate (Pres)	2016 Vote
Under 50K Income	41	-22 (38-60)	36	-12 (41-53)
Some college/Associates degree	29	-1 (48-49)	32	+8 (51-43)
High school graduate or less	24	-6 (46-52)	18	+5 (51-46)

Source: Edison Research National Exit Polls

In the four Rust Belt states, movement among these groups was even more pronounced. Romney lost the union household vote in Michigan by 33, but Trump lost them by only 13. In Wisconsin, where Romney lost them by 33, Trump closed the gap to 10 points. One of the most dramatic changes was among union households in Ohio which Trump won by 13, while Romney had lost them by 23.

Presidential Margin	MI		OH		PA		WI	
	2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016	2012	2016
Republican Leading/ Trailing								
Union households	-33	-13	-23	+13	-15	NA	-33	-10
Under 50K Income	-26	-11	-20	-8	-36	-12	-25	-4
Some college/ Associates degree	-9	+4	-5	+12	-4	+3	+3	+18
High school graduate or less	-20	+3	-9	+1	-27	+13	-12	+13

Source: Edison Research National Exit Polls

The pattern is similar for those making under \$50,000. In Pennsylvania, Romney lost them by 36, while Trump reduced that loss to 12. In Michigan Romney lost them by 26, and Trump reduced that loss to 11. Looking at the education levels of associates degree/some college and high school graduate or less, the same pattern exists, with Pennsylvania high school graduates or less being the most significant example. Romney lost that group by 27, while Trump won them by 13. From these numbers, it becomes clear how each of these states was won.

Conclusion

In the end, voters in this election who were struggling to make a choice for President decided they were going to vote for the person who was most likely to bring change, specifically to impact the economy. While the situation at the end of September seemed to favor Clinton, Trump began to make up ground in October, as voters focused on change as the preferred outcome. In the last week, he took the lead in key states that put him over the top.

While it is certainly unusual to have the popular vote result be so different from the electoral college result, it is also important to recognize how long it has been since Republicans won these four Rust Belt states at the same time: 1984. In looking at the states separately, Republicans had not won either Pennsylvania or Michigan since 1988, and had not won Wisconsin since 1984. Winning this combination of states was no small feat, and has potential long-term positive implications for



Republicans. At the same time, not winning the popular vote is a concern, and turning the electoral college victory into a longer-term popular vote majority coalition also needs to be a goal for the Republican Party going forward. Republicans are the center-right party in a center-right country, so the opportunity to achieve a sustainable majority coalition is there.

Republicans now control the three branches of government.

However, voter expectations are high. Lawmakers will be judged based on their performance and the extent to which people see change in their own lives, especially in their personal economic situations. In this election, voters were willing to “rock the boat,” and they will certainly be willing to do so again if they do not see results.

Photo Credits:

cover - WBFO file photo/Eileen Elibol
page 1 - CC0 Public Domain
page 2 - Getty
page 3 - Charlie Neibergall/AP
page 4 - Nigel Parry/CNN
page 5 - CC0 Public Domain
page 6 - Frederic J. Brown, AFP/Getty Images
page 8 - NBC News
page 18 - History.com