



TRUMP RIDES TO NEW HAMPSHIRE VICTORY ON THE STRENGTH OF SUPPORT FROM THE GOP BASE, AP VOTECAST SHOWS - ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Former President Donald Trump had rock-solid support from New Hampshire Republicans in his primary victory Tuesday, with even most backers of rival Nikki Haley acknowledging the GOP belongs to him.

Yet as Trump's hold on securing the party's nomination tightened, AP VoteCast found that some voters express concerns that he is too extreme to compete in the November general election. Some also worry about his legal peril in a trio of pending criminal trials.

Haley, a former South Carolina governor and a U.N. ambassador under Trump, performed relatively better with college graduates and moderates, a possible sign that Trump has yet to expand his political base.

The survey found signs that primary voters on the Democratic side rallied around President Joe Biden. He won in New Hampshire with strong support on the economy, but many have concerns about his age – he is 81 — and his handling of the situation in the Middle East.

Only weeks into 2024, voters have already shown an awareness of Trump's strengths and liabilities. But even as the coronavirus, the major challenge during the 2020 election, has faded from public view, the cultural and social forces of that Biden-Trump matchup have hardened in ways that are testing the country's sense of itself.

The New Hampshire primaries are unique because undeclared voters -- those not affiliated with either party -- can choose to vote in either party's primary. This draws in voters who are not necessarily party loyalists.

More than 4 in 10 GOP primary voters were not affiliated with a party, compared with about 2 in 10 in the Democratic primary. Among those affiliated with the Republican Party in the state, Trump won handily.

AP VoteCast is a survey of 1,968 New Hampshire voters who are taking part in the Republican primary and 903 Democratic primary voters. The survey is conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

HOW TRUMP WON IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire's demographics favored Trump.



He won in the small towns and rural communities, where about two-thirds of primary participants say they live. Most GOP voters in the state lack a college degree; about two-thirds of them voted for Trump. He won about 7 in 10 Republican voters who identified as conservatives.

Trump was backed by Republicans who prioritize either immigration or the economy, the two top issues among GOP voters in New Hampshire and Iowa, where the former president won the leadoff caucuses last week.

Among those in New Hampshire who named immigration as their top priority, about three-quarters support Trump. New Hampshire's primary voters agreed with Trump on the need to limit immigration and build a wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

About half of those who said the economy was the top issue backed Trump.

HOW HALEY'S STRENGTHS FELL SHORT

Haley drew her support from groups that could be crucial in November. But those groups were distinct minorities in the GOP electorate.

She beat Trump among primary participants who were not formally affiliated with any party. About half of Haley's supporters graduated from college, just as about half of them identify as moderates.

In many cases, her backers were simply uncomfortable with Trump.

Haley performed well among those who said Trump did something illegal in at least one of the criminal cases against him. And in the 2020 presidential election, about half of Haley's supporters voted for Biden, a Democrat.

Iowa exposed suburban voters as a potential weakness for Trump. While Haley did slightly better in New Hampshire's suburban communities than she did in other areas, she still didn't pull ahead of Trump in those areas.

POTENTIAL WEAKNESSES FOR TRUMP

Compared with Iowa caucus-goers, New Hampshire Republican primary voters have slightly more doubts about Trump.

In New Hampshire, about half of GOP voters are very or somewhat concerned that Trump is too extreme to win the general election. Only about one-third say the same about Haley.

Regarding Trump's criminal indictments, about one-third of GOP participants in New Hampshire believe he has done something illegal related to either his alleged attempt to interfere in the vote count in the 2020 presidential election, his role in what happened at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, or the classified documents found at his Florida home after he left the White House.

REPUBLICAN VOTERS EXPECT TRUMP TO BE GOP NOMINEE

The vast majority of Republican voters in New Hampshire, about 8 in 10, believed Trump would win the nomination, a finding that came after his dominant showing in Iowa.

Only about 2 in 10 say Haley will be the nominee. In a blow to a candidate who has pitched herself as a Trump alternative, more than half of Haley's own supporters think Trump will represent the party on the ballot.

About 8 in 10 say they decided before Iowa which candidate they would support. After the caucuses, three contenders ended their

campaigns: biotech investor Vivek Ramaswamy, former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis.

About 6 in 10 GOP voters say they had their minds made up more than a month ago, including about 4 in 10 saying they have known all along.



BIDEN'S DEMOCRATIC COALITION COMES INTO FOCUS

Biden's New Hampshire victory provided key insights into the Democratic coalition.

About half hold a college degree, as education has become a major political dividing line across the country. There was almost universal support among Democratic voters for abortion to be legal in most if not all cases. About three-quarters called discrimination against Black people a major problem.

The polling also suggested that the economy might be evolving into a strength for Biden among his base. High inflation had hurt his approval ratings for most of his presidency, but inflation has eased without disrupting job growth and Democrats are showing newfound support for Biden's agenda. More than 8 in 10 approved of his economic leadership.

There are limits on what New Hampshire can reveal, as the state is less urban, less suburban and less racially diverse than the rest of the country. Cities, suburbs and non-white voters were crucial elements of Biden's winning 2020 coalition.

Still, not everything Biden does received strong plaudits in New Hampshire. Only about 6 in 10 approve of how he is handling immigration, and only about half approve of his handling of the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians.

About 4 in 10 say Biden is too old to serve a second term as president.

During his presidency, the Democratic Party has chosen to make South Carolina the first official presidential contest, a choice that has relegated Biden to write-in status in New Hampshire. Just over half said it is very or somewhat important to them that New Hampshire's presidential primary is the first in the nation.

AP VoteCast is a survey of the American electorate conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research for AP and Fox News. The survey of 1,890 Republican primary voters and 873 Democratic primary voters was conducted for six days, concluding as polls close. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. The survey combines a random sample of registered voters drawn from state voter files and self-identified registered voters selected from nonprobability online panels. The margin of sampling error for voters is estimated to be plus or minus 3.8 percentage points for Republican primary voters and plus or minus 4.6 points for Democratic primary voters.

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