

Donald Trump is in a strong poll position - does it matter?

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In his third race for the presidency, Republican nominee Donald Trump has never been in as good of a poll position as he is now - but he'll have to wait at least a week to find out whether it means anything.

As of Monday, **Trump leads Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris** by as close a margin as possible - 0.1% - in the Real Clear Politics average of recent polls. He trailed in the same survey by 7.5% four years ago against Joe Biden and 4.6% in 2016, the year he won the presidency against Hillary Clinton. The way Trump and his allies see it, the closer the polls in the popular vote, the better his chances to win enough states to capture the Electoral College and the presidency - and he outperformed the polls in both of his previous races.

Democrats say there is reason to doubt that will happen this time around. They said pollsters are compensating for what they call the "hidden Trump voters" of the previous two elections, and, if anything, they are **oversampling Republicans and inflating Trump's numbers**.

Republican candidates underperformed the polls in the 2022 congressional elections, Democrats said. And Trump consistently underperformed polls in a string of Republican primaries earlier this year. *"It's much more likely that - if there's a polling miss - it's going to favor us,"* said Simon Rosenberg, a Democratic strategist and polling analyst.

The apparent closeness of the race - and the **uncertainty of the polls** - is the reason both campaigns are urging their people to get themselves and others to the polls.

"Pretend you're one point down," Trump told supporters Sunday at his Madison Square Garden rally. Harris and allies have delivered similar messages to their voters, and the vice president has expressed confidence in the outcome.

"My internal polling is my instinct," Harris told reporters while campaigning in Philadelphia. **"I let the campaign people deal with all that other stuff, and I am responding to what I'm seeing."** She added: **"It's very exciting, and the momentum is with us."**

The battleground states that will decide the election - including the trio of Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin - are also quite close, and Trump backers believe that their "hidden vote" is still a big factor.

In Pennsylvania, the Real Clear Politics average gives Trump a lead of 0.5% - at this time eight years ago, he trailed Clinton in the Keystone State by 5 percentage points but nonetheless carried it, barely, on Election Day. In Michigan, Trump has an 0.1 point lead in the RCP average. Four years ago, Biden led the survey by 8.6 percentage points, while eight years ago, Clinton held a seven-point lead. Trump narrowly lost Michigan in 2020, and narrowly won it in 2016.



Republican presidential nominee, former U.S. President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally at Madison Square Garden on October 27, 2024 in New York City. Trump closed out his weekend of campaigning in New York City with a guest list of speakers that includes his running mate Republican Vice Presidential nominee, U.S. Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH), Tesla CEO Elon Musk, UFC CEO Dana White, and House Speaker Mike Johnson, among others, nine days before Election Day.

And what about Wisconsin? Trump has a lead of 0.3 percentage points in the RCP average. Biden led the state by 6.4 points in the poll averaging four years ago, and barely won the state. Clinton led by 6 percentage points in 2016, and Trump barely won the state.

Trump promotes - and exaggerates - his poll numbers, while Democrats project a different story when the voting is complete.

"Here is a prediction," said pro-Harris political commentator Matthew Dowd, speaking on the X social media site. *"Watch every one of poll aggregators/election predictors shift their models this week to favor Harris ... They have been wrong for a month."*