

# Swing-state leads offer Trump multiple paths to White House: polling

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New Emerson College polling finds former President Donald Trump up in three battleground states — and if the numbers hold, they present peril for Vice President Kamala Harris.

The surveys show Trump ahead in North Carolina, one of two Southern battlegrounds, as well as two of the three blue-wall states — Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — central to the Democrats' strategy. If Trump takes them? He's got **264 electoral votes**, meaning Harris would have to sweep Arizona, Georgia, Michigan and Nevada to block him from the 270 threshold needed to win.

None of these leads is in landslide territory, but with voters already casting ballots, polling leads toward the end of the race bear more weight than the aspirational surveys of earlier times.

In the Tar Heel State, Trump is up 50% to 48% among 950 likely voters polled Oct. 21 and 22, and the race for 16 electoral votes there is framed by a gender gap seen in so many other surveys.

*"There is a clear gender divide, with men favoring Trump more strongly than women for Harris,"* said Spencer Kimball, Emerson College Polling executive director. *"In North Carolina, men back Trump by 13 points, while women support Harris by seven points."*

And **economic issues appear poised to make a difference** in the state, with two out of five voters pinpointing finances as the key factor in their vote. No other issue is prioritized by even 15% of North Carolina voters.

Unhappily for Republicans, the poll doesn't suggest Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson has a path to flipping the governor's position held by outgoing Democrat Roy Cooper. Democratic Attorney General Josh Stein leads 51% to 39%.

*"Eight percent of Trump voters plan to split their ticket and also support Stein on the gubernatorial ballot, while little to no Harris voters are splitting their ticket to vote for Robinson,"* Kimball noted.

**Trump clings to an even more tenuous lead in the Keystone State**, where 19 electoral votes are up for grabs: 49% to 48%, with 3% undecided, in a survey of 860 likely voters. If those undecideds are forced to choose, Trump leads 51% to 49%, a data point seemingly in conflict with Emerson's finding that late deciders up until now are 52% to 45% for Harris. Out of the 85% of voters who've known their preferred candidate for at least the last month, Trump leads 51% to 47%.

Age is also a big factor in whom Pennsylvanians pick. Trump is +16 with voters 50 and older; Harris is +18 with the younger set.



Donald Trump campaigning in North Carolina. REUTERS

The ex-prez won the state in 2016 by less than a percentage point, then lost it by a little more than a point four years ago — and this poll suggests an anxious night of watching returns is likely for both parties on Election Day.

Republican Dave McCormick is poised to benefit from Trump strength in the state, as he's closing strong. He's down 47% to 48% against Democratic legacy Sen. Bob Casey, having cut the lead from two points in the previous poll.

In Wisconsin's battle for 10 electoral votes, Trump leads among 800 likely voters by 1 point, 49% to 48%. And there too, gender is a determinant: Trump is +12 with men; Harris is +9 with women.

As with Pennsylvania, the Badger State is usually close. Trump won by less than a point eight years ago and lost by a similarly close margin in 2020.

There are indications Trump may have coattails here too, given that Republican businessman Eric Hovde is tied with Democratic perennial Sen. Tammy Baldwin at 48%.