



# Was the Last Debate a Shitshow for Donald Trump?

Dial meter viewers reaction to the third debate

October 25, 2020

## Methodology

On behalf of the American Federation of Teachers, *Democracy Corps* on October 23, 2020, conducted online dial meter research during the final presidential debate between Donald Trump and Joe Biden, among 210 registered voters nationally.

Key line groups include:

- African Americans
- Latinos
- White millennials
- White unmarried women
- White working-class women
- White college women
- White working-class men

To ensure each line was as representative as possible, these lines were individually recruited. Surveys were administered before and after the live dial meter session.

***\*This research is qualitative, and results are not statistically projectable onto a larger population.\****

## Key Findings:

- The commentariat has totally missed how much the final debate has damaged President Trump and further pushed the race's dynamic to favor Vice President Joe Biden.
- The debates take place in a country where Trump's approval and vote is stuck at 42 percent while the rest of the country decides whether they can vote for Biden. Our research showed Biden would gain from the 1<sup>st</sup> debate because of increased favorability and more saying, "he represents the middle class." It was no surprise there was a much bigger audience for Biden's town hall because the undecided are focused on him.
- Trump got heard in this debate, but that was a disaster for him. Biden gained in favorability and voters seeing him as someone representing middle class values and battling for forgotten Americans and working Americans. For each trait, the intense, "describes very well," increased by 10 points after the debate.

## Key Findings:

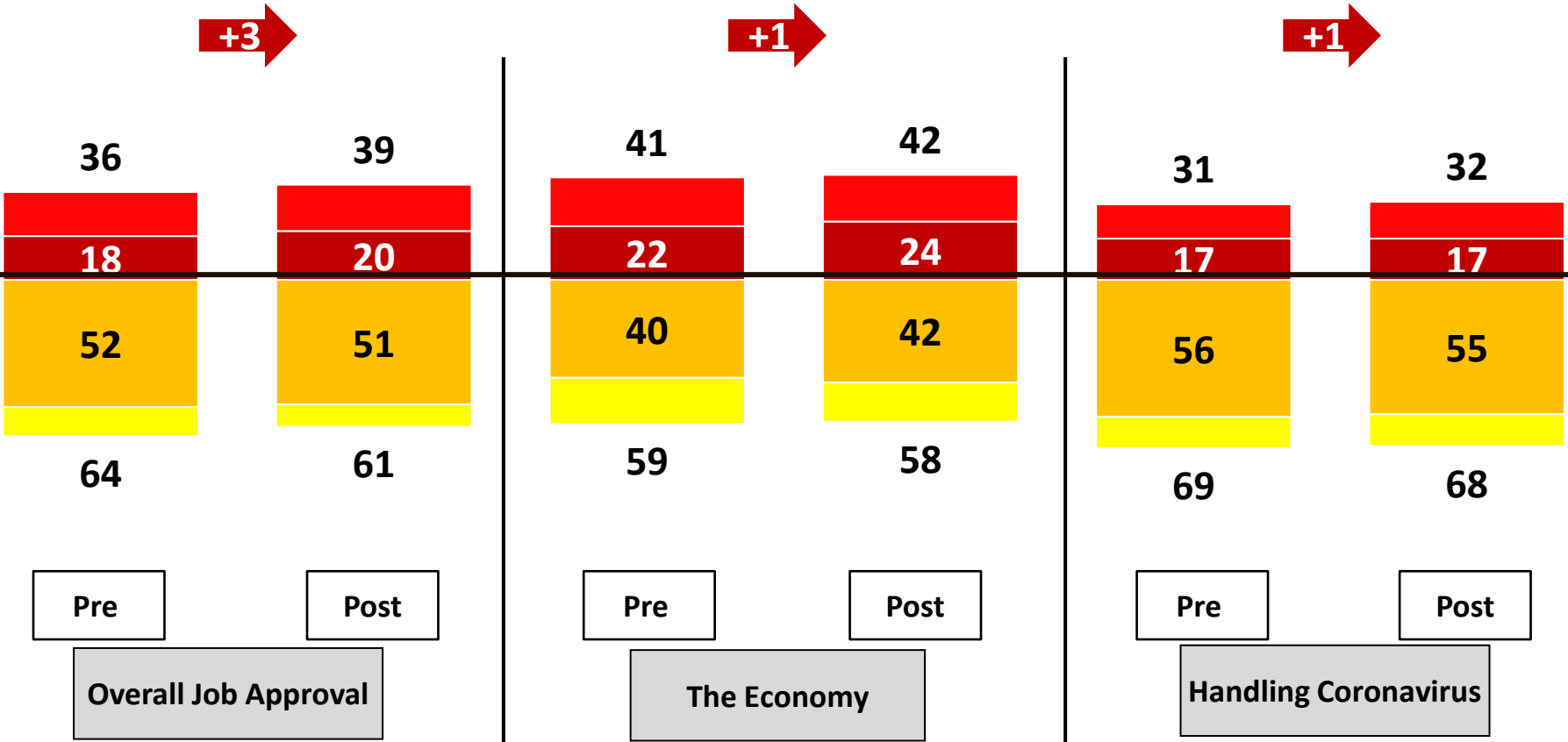
- That gain for Biden really affected the choice in the election. Biden increased his margin by 8 points on which candidate would improve things for the middle class, 5 points on uniting the country and 5 points, most importantly, on getting health care costs down.
- If you thought Trump did okay and Biden simply made no mistakes, then you do not know America. You need to watch how they reacted to the exchanges on “your family,” Trump minimizing the damage from COVID, Trump describing a public healthcare option as socialism and his position on Social Security, Biden calling Trump a racist after Trump claims he’s the best president for Black Americans since Lincoln, Trump attacking Fauci, Biden talking about DACA and separating children, the cities being a disaster, Biden describing the need for minimum wage and central workers, and Biden warning about Iran and Russia.
- Many commentators described the 1<sup>st</sup> debate as a “shitshow,” but it was the 2<sup>nd</sup> and final that was a shitshow for Trump.

# Trump trapped by big majority that strongly disapproves of his job performance – and debate leaves anti-Trump bloc fully in place

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

## TRUMP APPROVAL: PRE & POST DEBATE

■ Strong approve ■ Strong disapprove



# Biden gains twice as much as Trump in personal favorability

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

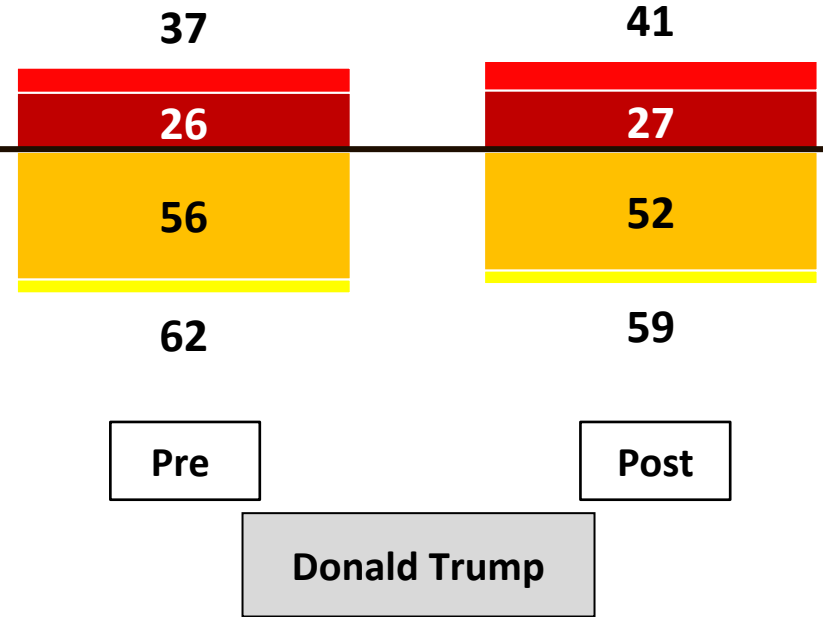
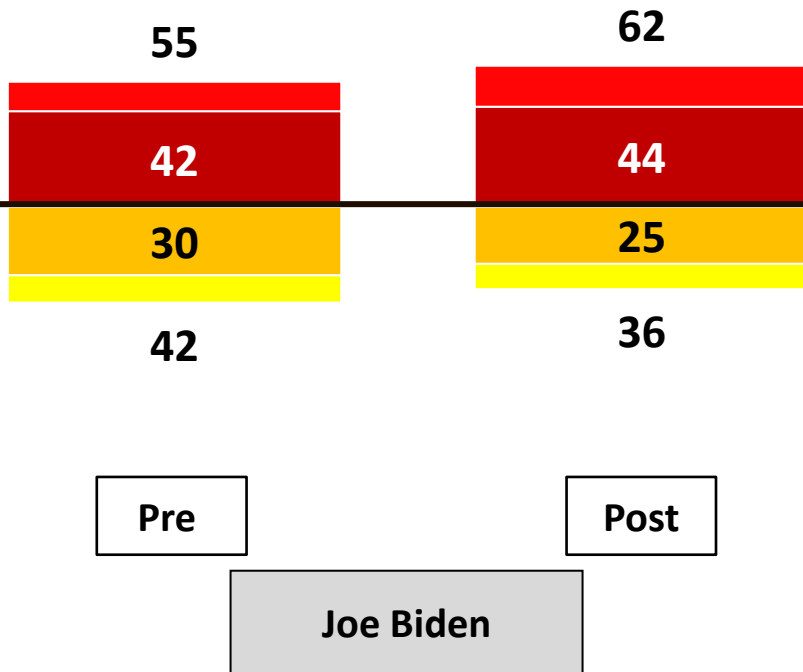
## TRUMP VS BIDEN FAVORABILITY: PRE & POST DEBATE

Very favorable

Very unfavorable

+7

+4



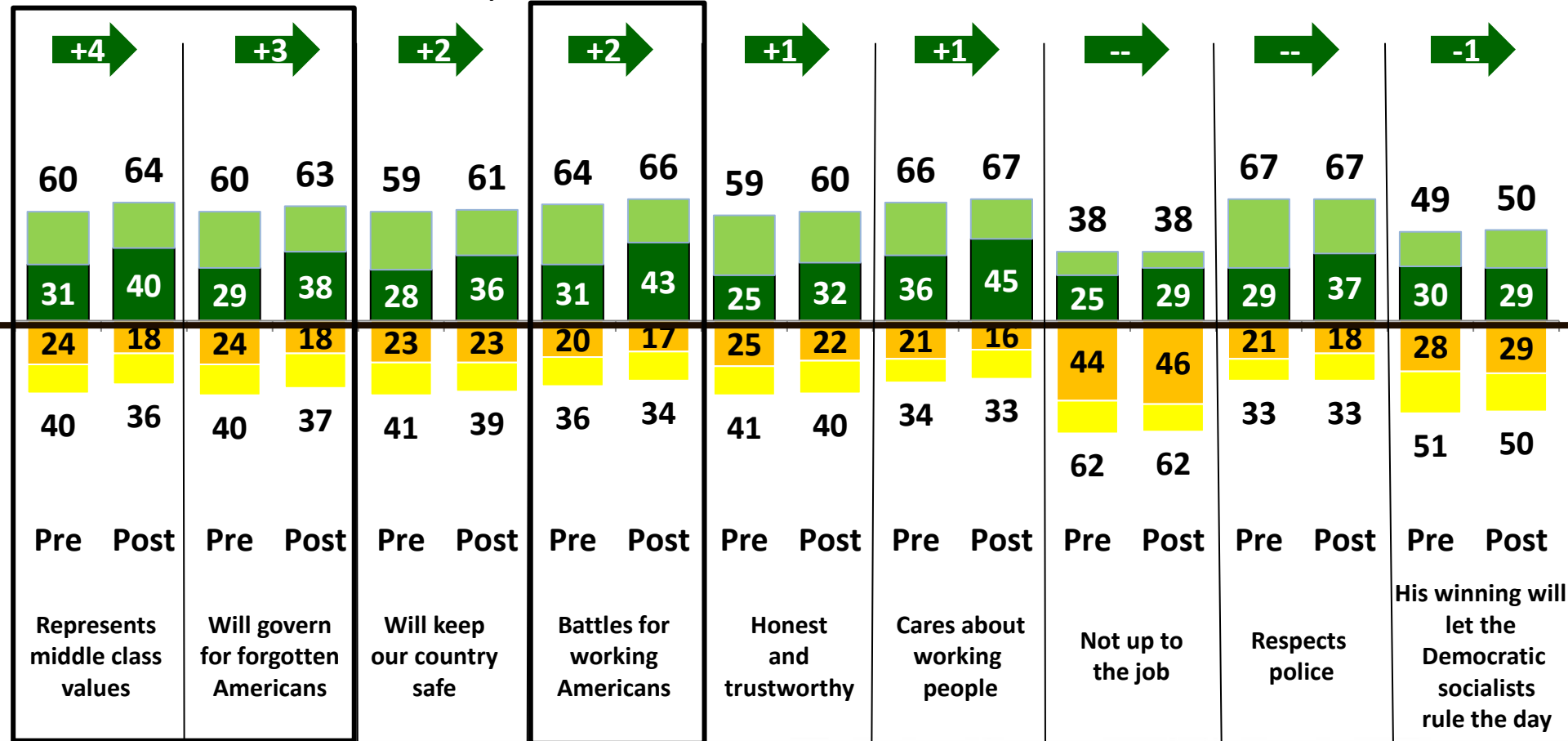
# Biden gains on representing middle class, will govern for forgotten Americans & battles for working Americans – with 12-point increase in “very good” on last

How well do these descriptive terms describe Joe Biden- very well, well, not so well, or not well at all?

## BIDEN ATTRIBUTES: PRE & POST

Very well

Not well at all



# Biden gains in big middle class-class argument on who for forgotten Americans, particularly with white working-class women

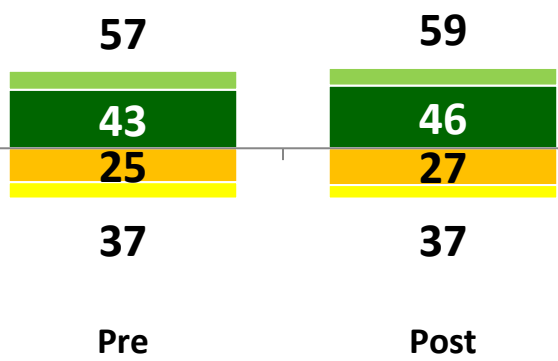
Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

Biden is from a middle-class town, with working class parents and went to a state university. He cares about what happens to working class communities and farms. He believes in hard work and that personal responsibility should be rewarded. He wants to build back American jobs for the middle-class families like he came from, not the wealthy investor class. Trump is a billionaire, inherited his money, went to an Ivy League university, and lived on Fifth Avenue. He shows little sympathy for the struggling working class and mainly worked to enrich his friends.

Trump governed for the forgotten Americans, renegotiated trade agreements to avoid outsourcing, and promoted manufacturing in America. Trump built a great economy, and amidst a global pandemic, he's doing it again with months of record job growth and devastated industries adding back hundreds of thousands of jobs. Biden spent years letting our jobs be outsourced and governing only for the elites, and he is too weak to stand up radical left in his party.

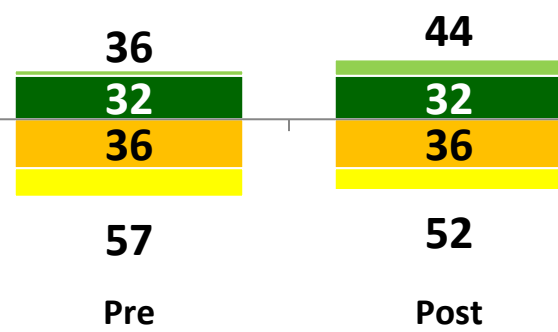
■ Much More    ■ Somewhat More    ■ Much More    ■ Somewhat More

+2 →



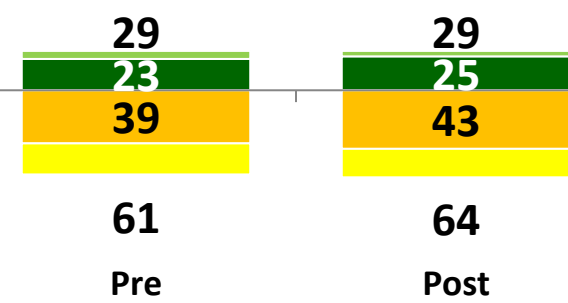
Total

+8 →



White working class women

-5 →



White working class men





**Biden gets rise when says, "don't live off stock market" in Scranton (B). Lines tank on Trump attacking Dem governors (C), spike "American President" for "firefighters, first responders" (D)**



- **[A] (Biden)** He thinks he's running against someone else. He's running against Joe Biden. I beat all those other people because I disagreed with them. Joe Biden, he's running against. And the idea that we're in a situation and want to destroy Medicare -- this is the guy that the actuary of Medicare said, 'If in fact' -- and, social security -- 'If, in fact, he continues to withhold his plan to withhold the tax on Social Security, Social Security will be bankrupt by 2023, with no way to pay for it. This is a guy who's tried to cut Medicare. So I don't know. I mean, the idea that Donald Trump is lecturing me on Social Security and Medicare? Come on.
- **[B] (Biden)** The idea that the stock market is booming is his only measure of what's happening. Where I come from, in Scranton and Claymont, the people don't live off of the stock market. Just in the last three, three years during this crisis, the billionaires in this country made, according to the Wall Street, \$700 billion more dollars. \$700 billion more dollars. Because that's his only measure. What happens to the ordinary people out there? What happens to them?
- **[C] (Biden)** Look, they passed this act all the way back in the beginning of the summer. This is like -- it's not new. It's been out there. The HEROES Act has been sitting there. And look at what's happening. When I was in charge of the Recovery Act with \$800 billion, I was able to get \$145 billion to local communities that have to balance their budget to states that have to balance their budgets, so then they have to fire fire -- they have to fire firefighters, teachers, first responders, law enforcement officers, so they can keep their cities and counties running.
- **[D] (Biden)** All right, if I get elected, I'm not gonna -- I'm running as a proud Democrat, but I'm gonna be an American president. I don't see red states and blue states. What I see is American United States. And folks, every single state out there finds themselves in trouble. They're going to start laying off, whether they're red or blue. Cops, firefighters, first responders, teachers -- because they have to balance their budget. And the founders were smart. They allowed the federal government to deficit spend to compensate for the United States of America.

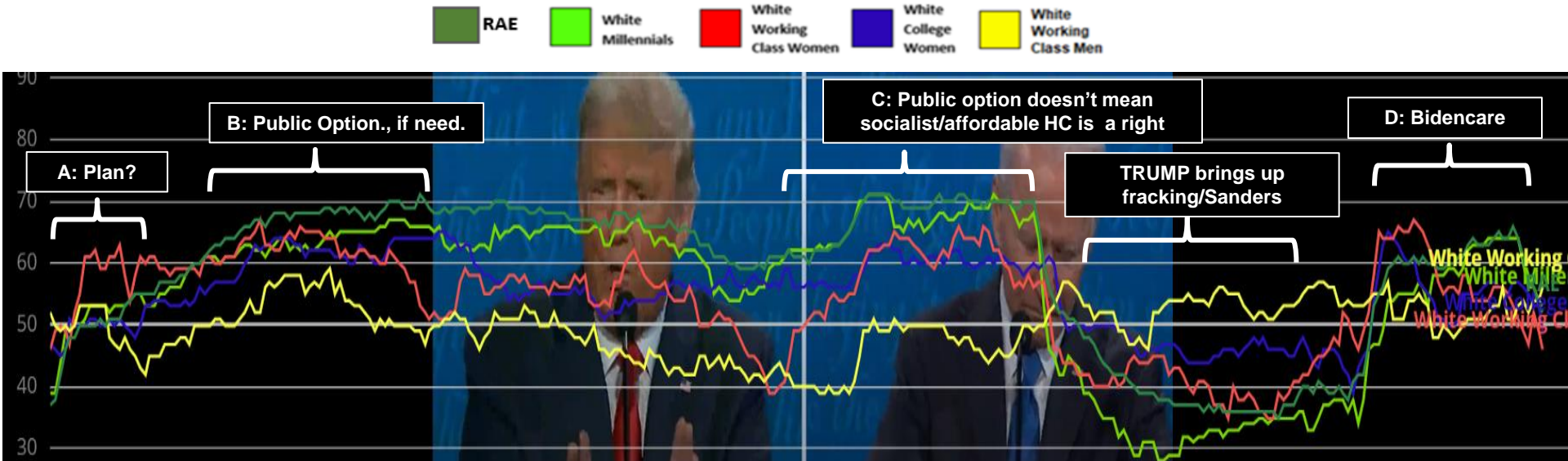
\*Rising American Electorate (RAE) refers to voters of color, millennials, and white unmarried women.

**Sharp rise as Biden hits Trump on COVID (A/C). Steepest drop possible with, “not my fault” (B), rise for Biden on “capacity to open safely” (D) & steep drop on Dem shutdown killing cities**



- **[A] (BIDEN)** People are learning to die with it. You folks home will have an empty chair at the kitchen table this morning. That man or wife going to bed tonight and reaching over to try to touch, there out of habit, where their wife or husband was, is gone. Learning to live with it. Come on. We're dying with it, because he's never said. See, you said, "It's dangerous." When's the last time? Is it really dangerous still? Are we dangerous. You tell the people it's dangerous now. What should they do about the danger? And you say, "I take no responsibility."
- **[B] (TRUMP)** It's not my fault that it came here. It's China's fault. And you know what? It's not Joe's fault that it came here either. It's China's fault[C] Trump minimized, not in control
- **[C] (BIDEN)** The fact is that when we knew it was coming, when it hit, what happened? What did the President say? He said, "Don't worry. It's going to go away. It'll be gone by Easter. Don't worry. Warm weather. Don't worry. Maybe inject bleach." He said he was kidding when he said that, but a lot of people thought it was serious. A whole range of things the President has said, even today, he thinks we are in control. We're about to lose 200,000 more people.
- **[D] (BIDEN)** But when you do open, give the people the capacity to be able to open and have the capacity to do it safely. For example, schools. Schools, they need a lot of money to be open. They need to deal with ventilation systems. They need to deal with smaller classes, more teachers, more pods, and he's refused to support that money, or at least up to now
- **[E] (TRUMP)** Look, all he does is talk about shut downs. But forget about him. His Democrat Governors, Cuomo in New York, you look at what's going on in California, you look at Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Democrats, Democrats all, they're shut down so tight and they're dying. They're dying. And he supports all these people. All he talks about is shut downs.

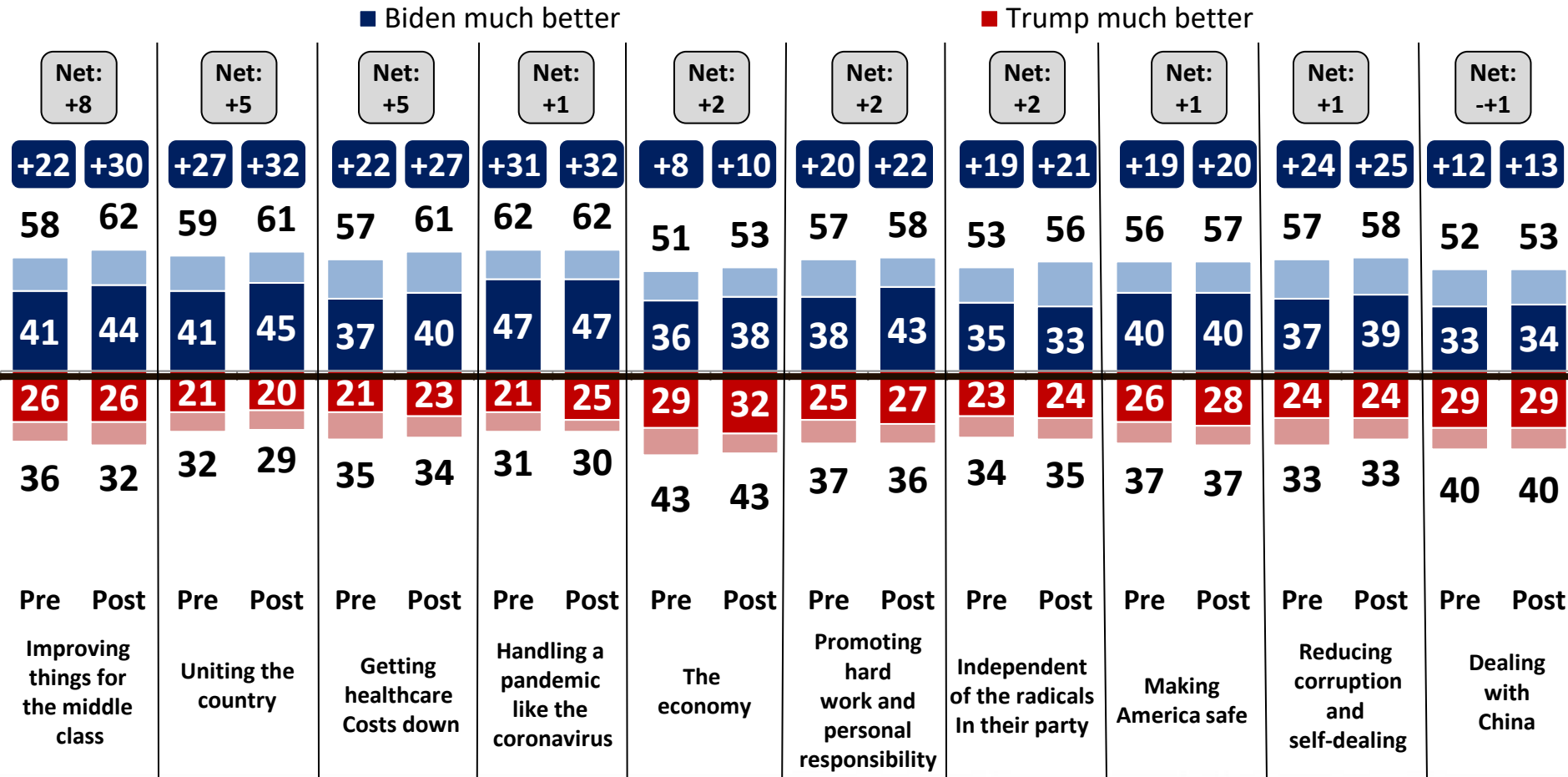
**Welker asking Biden for post-court ACA plan spikes WWC women (A). Biden lays out a clear health care plan for the first time – with huge response at every turn (B/C/D).**



- **[A] (WELKER)** Okay. Vice President Biden, yes, this is for you. Your healthcare plan calls for building on Obamacare. So my question is, what is your plan if the law is ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court? You have two minutes uninterrupted.
- **[B] (BIDEN)** What I'm going to do is pass Obamacare with a public option - and become Bidencare. The public option is an option that says that if you in fact do not have the wherewithal, if you qualify for Medicaid and you do not have the wherewithal in your state to get Medicaid, you automatically are enrolled, providing competition for insurance companies. That's what's going to happen. Secondly, we're going to make sure we reduce the premiums and reduce drug prices by making sure that there's competition, that doesn't exist now, by allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices with the insurance companies. Thirdly, the idea that I want to eliminate private insurance, the reason why I had such a fight with 20 candidates for the nomination was I support private insurance.
- **[C] (BIDEN)** I say it's ridiculous. It's like saying that the fact that there's a public option that people can choose, that makes it a socialist plan. Look, the difference between the president and I think healthcare is not a privilege, it's a right. Everyone should have the right to have affordable healthcare, and I am very proud of my plan. It's gotten endorsed by all the major labor unions, as well as a whole range of other people who, in fact, are concerned in the medical field. This is something that's going to save people's lives. And this is going to give some people an opportunity to have healthcare for their children. How many of you at home are worried and rolling around in bed tonight, wondering what in God's name you're going to do if you get sick, because you've lost your health insurance and your company's gone under? We have to provide health insurance for people at an affordable rate, and that's what I do
- **[D] (BIDEN)** My response is, people deserve to have affordable healthcare, period. Period, period, period. And the Biden care proposal will in fact provide for that affordable healthcare, lower premiums. What we're going to do is going to cost some money. It's going to cost over \$750 billion over 10 years to do it. And they're going to have lower premiums. You can buy into the better plans, the cheaper plans, lower your premiums, deal with unexpected billing, and have your drug prices drop significantly. He keeps talking about it. He hasn't done a thing for anybody on healthcare. Not a thing

# Biden scores gains on improving for middle class, uniting country and cutting health care costs down

Now you will read some issues. For each issue, please say whether you think Joe Biden or Donald Trump would do a better job with handling that issue.



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