



**GREENBERG** RESEARCH

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# A Historic and Consequential Debate

Dial meter viewers' reactions to the first debate

June 27, 2024

CAMPAIGNS | CORPORATIONS | ADVOCACY | WORLDWIDE

## Methodology

On behalf of *PSG Consulting*, Democracy Corps on June 27, 2024, conducted online dial meter research during President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump's live debate, among 374 registered voters nationally.

Key line groups include:

- Dual haters
- Third Party voters
- Black voters
- Hispanic voters
- White Unmarried Women
- White Millennial/Gen Z

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.\****

## Methodology

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### What's unique?

- A controlled experiment where participants watch the debate and complete pre- and post-interviews
- Open-ended responses to key items
- Introduction of attributes on racial priorities and whites become a minority
- Questions on current events like abortion, Donald Trump's New York felony conviction, and the Gaza-Israel conflict
- Questions on the issues worries around the candidates
- Questions on trust of government and trust in people

# Key Findings - 1

- President Biden was hurt badly by the debate, but Donald Trump didn't benefit on any measure, except the vote. In the past, the polls have almost always reflected the direction and vulnerabilities that we identified.
- The dial was conducted with large samples of dual haters and third-party voters and the so-called base of Blacks, Hispanics, white unmarried women, and GenZ and millennials. These are all strongly leaning Democratic voters whose give Biden 65% of their vote in two-way ballot. Yet only half have warm feelings for Biden or Harris.
- Responses of Blacks, Hispanics and GenZ-white millennials show why they seem to be underperforming for Biden. White unmarried women surprise on level of support for Biden and resistance to the idea of another Trump term.
- Dual haters play an important part in Biden's fortunes, but it was because Biden not Trump. He didn't raise his approval with these voters.
- Before the debate they are hoped he would see their economic concerns and affordability, have a plan on immigration, show he has the mental fitness, address the foreign conflicts, and protect women's rights.
- The debate dropped Biden's already low approval by 2 points but hit his vote lead dropped by 8 points. He took his biggest hit with Black voters and Hispanics, as well as third-party voters.

## Key Findings - 2

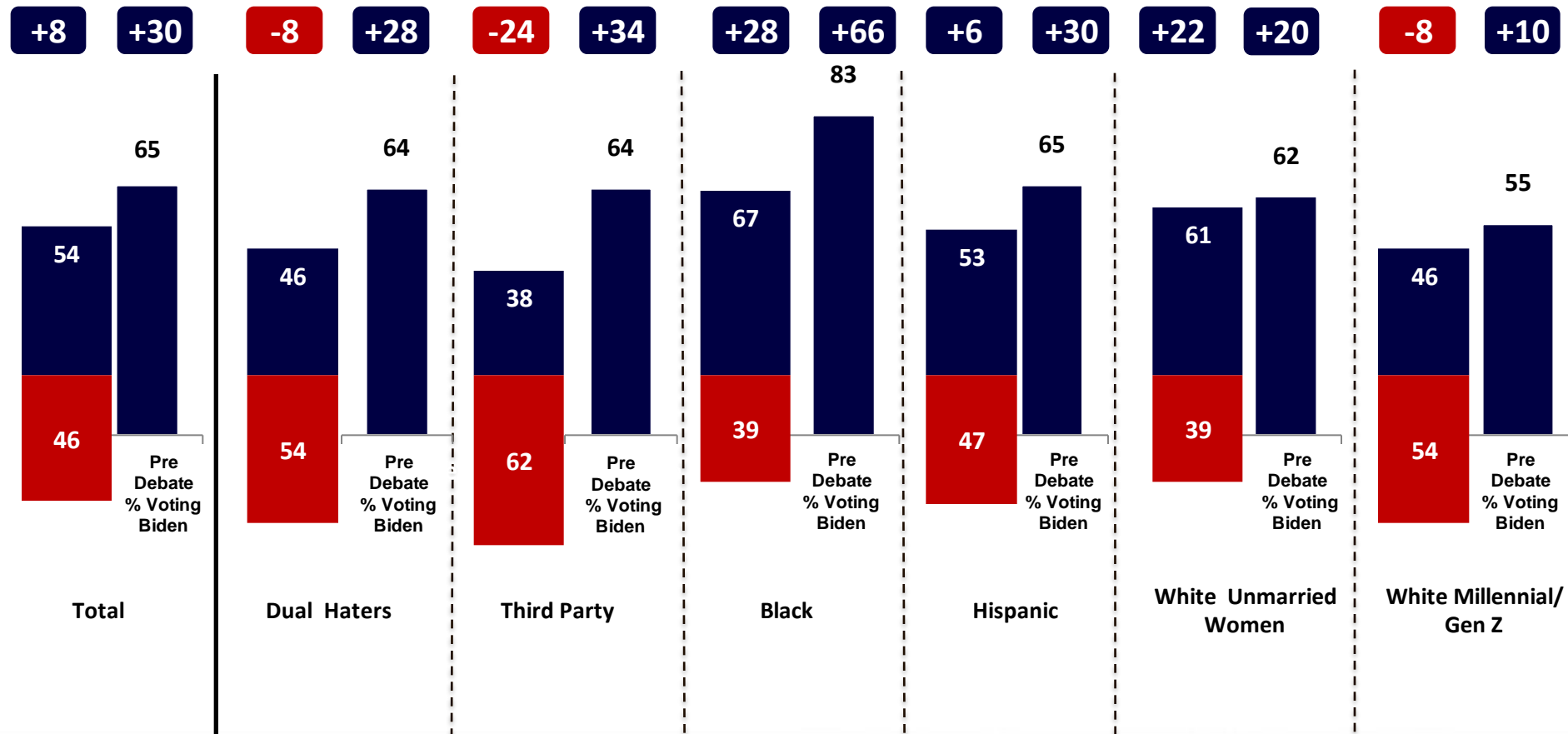
- When asked the overall impression, the first was on his cognitive and physical fitness, expressing concern about his age, mental acuity, saying words, “confused” and “frail.” Then, they commented on difficulty articulating his thoughts and his train of thought. Some respondents spoke of honesty.
- And after debate, Biden did well on cares for people, honesty, representing the middle class & being for forgotten Americans. But a majority of these base and target voters disagree with strongest economy, and Biden being mentally fit or strong. Almost 60% reject that he’s getting the border under control or doing well in Gaza. And two-thirds (with 43 percent strongly) say, he’s too old to be president.
- When comparing Biden and Trump, these voters give Biden big margins on price gouging, health care affordability, protecting democracy, and being for working people. At the end of the debate, 65 percent preferred Biden on abortion (48 percent strongly). Trump gained only 3 points on abortion
- Remembering these voters give Biden 2/3rds of their vote in a two-way, but only a bare majority choose Biden before and after the debate on helping with the cost of living and the economy or re-invigorating American manufacturing.
- But something more fundamental happened. The biggest shifts against Biden started at 5 points and came on the border, common sense, getting higher wages and salaries, infrastructure, controlling inflation, being strong, and making me safer.

# 54% say Biden won the debate, but well below 65% 2-way vote. Biggest gap for dual haters and Blacks. White unmarried women who make it equal

Thinking about the election for President in November 2024, will you vote for – (ROTATE) Democrat Joe Biden or Republican Donald Trump?

■ Joe Biden

■ Donald Trump



# Please describe your overall impression of Donald Trump in the debate tonight.

*Please describe your overall impression of Donald Trump in the debate tonight. Anything that comes to mind.*

The main themes from the responses regarding Donald Trump's performance in the debate are:

1. **\*\*Confidence and Composure\*\***: Many respondents noted that Trump appeared strong, confident, and more composed compared to previous debates. He was seen as mentally sharp and in control, which some found surprising and impressive.
2. **\*\*Evasion and Deflection\*\***: A significant number of respondents criticized Trump for not directly answering questions. He often deflected or avoided the questions posed to him, instead focusing on attacking Biden or rehashing previous points.
3. **\*\*Lying and Misinformation\*\***: Numerous respondents accused Trump of lying and spreading misinformation. They felt he repeated false claims and exaggerated his accomplishments while denigrating Biden.
4. **\*\*Hostility and Arrogance\*\***: Some respondents described Trump as hostile, arrogant, and egotistical. His demeanor was seen as aggressive and disrespectful, with a focus on personal attacks rather than substantive debate.
5. **\*\*Impact on Voters\*\***: Opinions were polarized; some respondents felt more confident in voting for Trump after the debate, while others were further alienated by his performance. His ability to sway undecided voters appeared limited due to his perceived dishonesty and evasiveness.
6. **\*\*Policy and Substance\*\***: There was a general consensus that Trump failed to provide detailed policy answers. Instead, he often reverted to broad statements and avoided discussing specific plans or solutions to issues like child care, immigration, and the economy.

# Please describe your overall impression of Joe Biden in the debate tonight.

*Please describe your overall impression of Joe Biden in the debate tonight. Anything that comes to mind.*

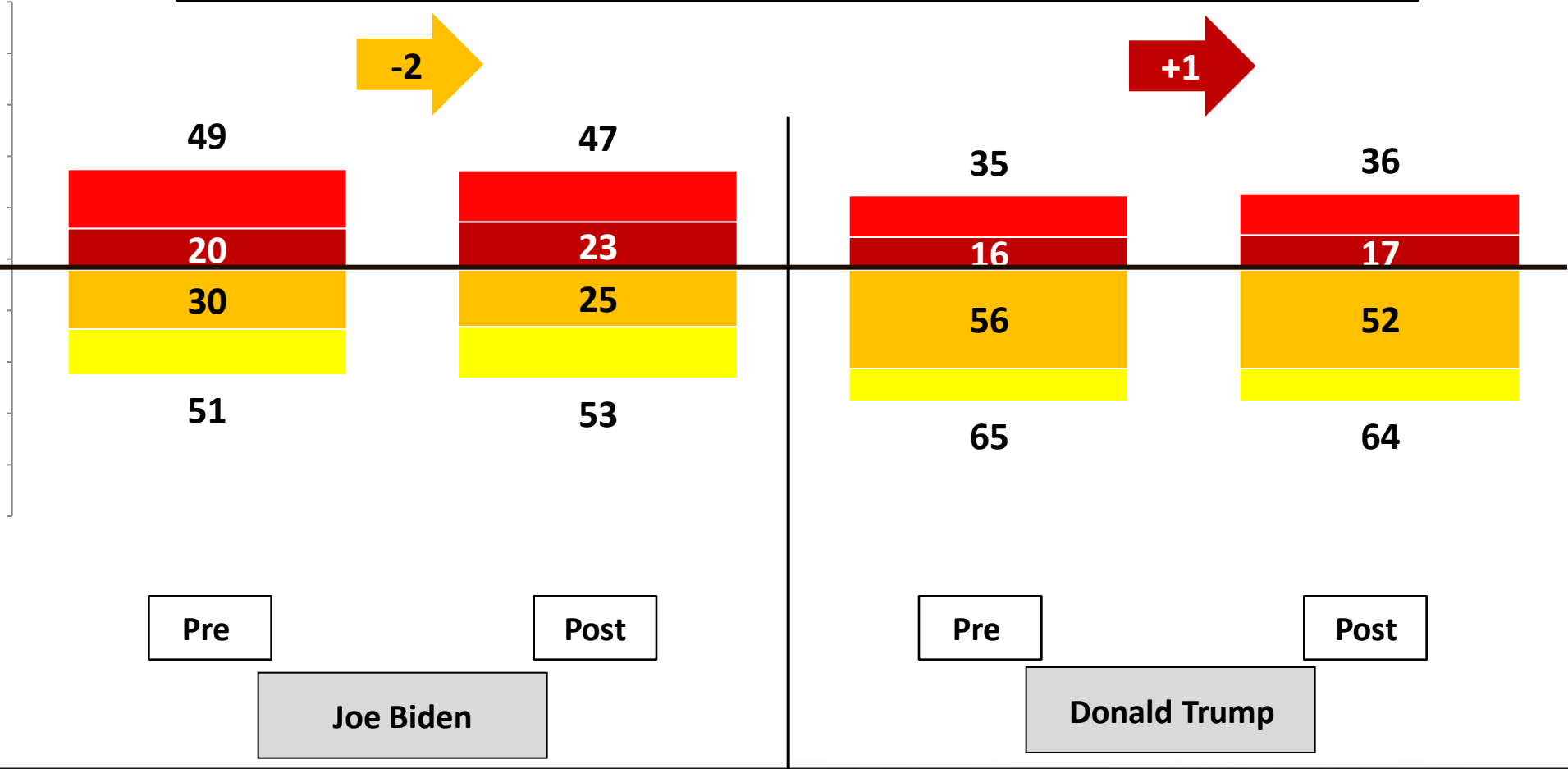
1. **\*\*Cognitive and Physical Fitness\*\***: Many respondents, across political affiliations, expressed concerns about Biden's age, mental acuity, and physical appearance. Words like "confused," "frail," "old," "tired," and "dementia" were frequently mentioned, indicating a perception that he struggled to maintain coherence and energy.
2. **\*\*Communication and Clarity\*\***: A significant number of respondents noted Biden's difficulty in articulating his thoughts clearly. Issues such as stuttering, mumbling, and losing his train of thought were commonly cited, making it hard for some to follow his arguments.
3. **\*\*Performance and Debate Tactics\*\***: Opinions were mixed on Biden's overall debate performance. Some felt he did a decent job answering questions and staying on topic, while others believed he was too focused on attacking Trump rather than presenting his own policies. His ability to handle Trump's interruptions and maintain composure was also a point of discussion.
4. **\*\*Honesty and Integrity\*\***: Several respondents, particularly Democrats, praised Biden for his honesty, sincerity, and commitment to addressing issues. They appreciated his straightforward answers and his focus on policy, despite his communication struggles.
5. **\*\*Comparisons to Trump\*\***: Many respondents compared Biden's performance to Trump's, often concluding that while Biden showed signs of age and struggled at times, he was still seen as a better option than Trump.



# The debate dropped Joe Biden's approval dropped more than it raised Donald Trump's

Do you approve or disapprove of the job that Joe Biden is doing as President/Donald Trump did as President?

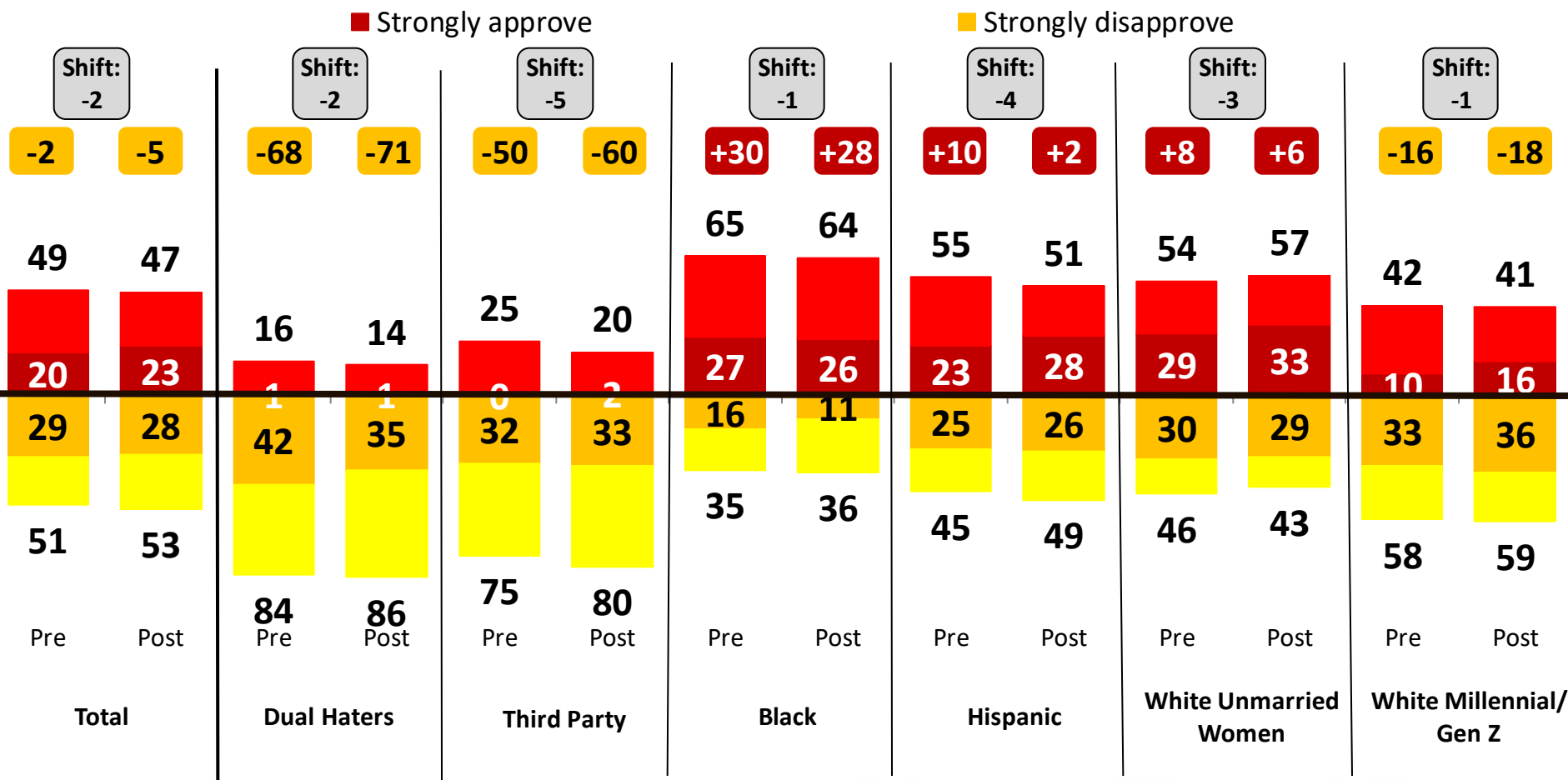
## TRUMP VS BIDEN APPROVAL: PRE & POST DEBATE



# Biden gains on approval with white unmarried women, holds steady with dual haters, Black voters, and white Gen Z/millennials, but hurt with Hispanics & Third Party

Do you approve or disapprove of the job that Joe Biden is doing as President?

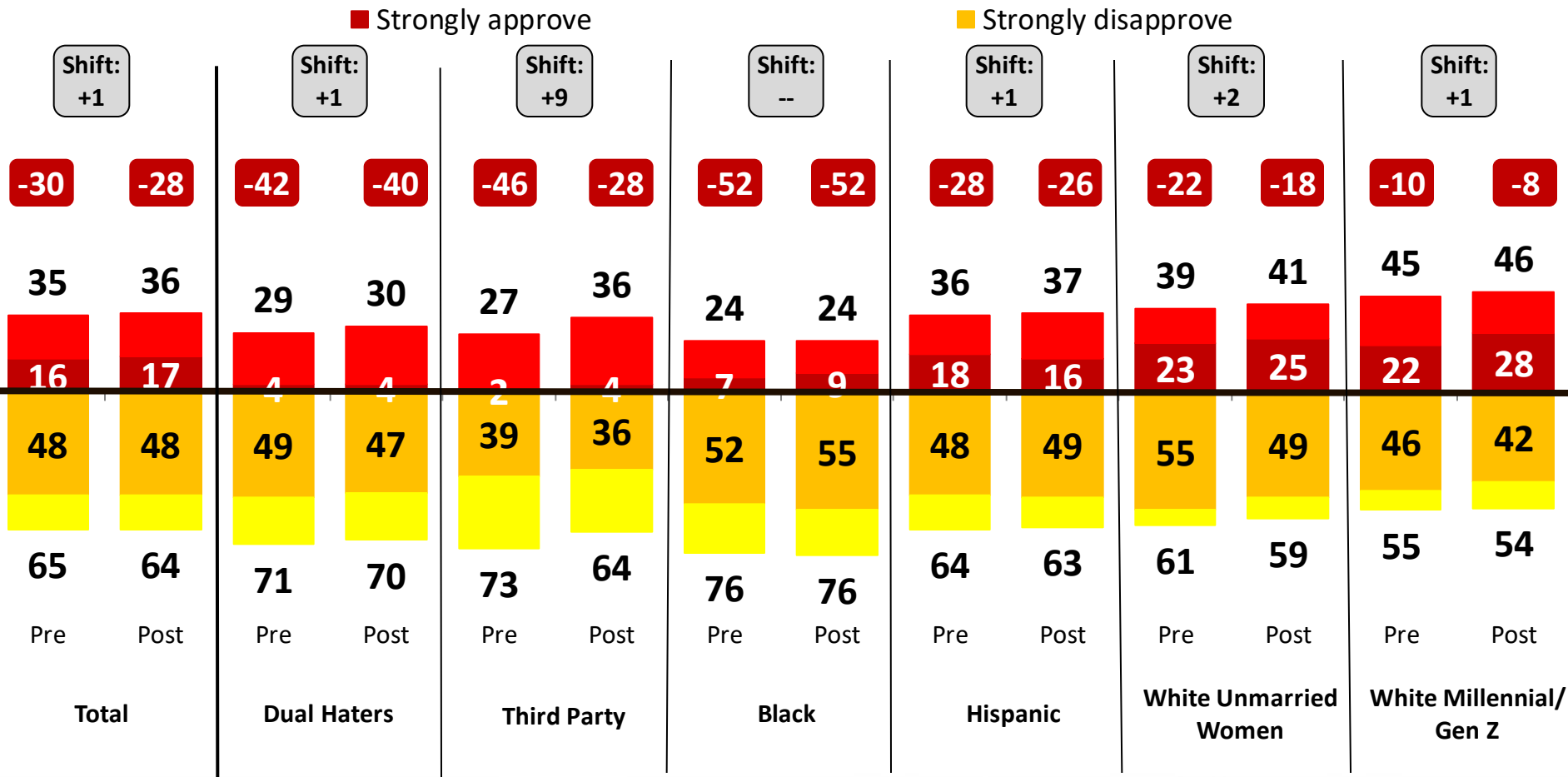
## BIDEN APPROVAL: PRE-/POST DEBATE



# Trump gained with no base groups or dual haters; gained only with third party

Do you approve or disapprove of the job Donald Trump did as President?

## TRUMP APPROVAL: PRE-/POST DEBATE

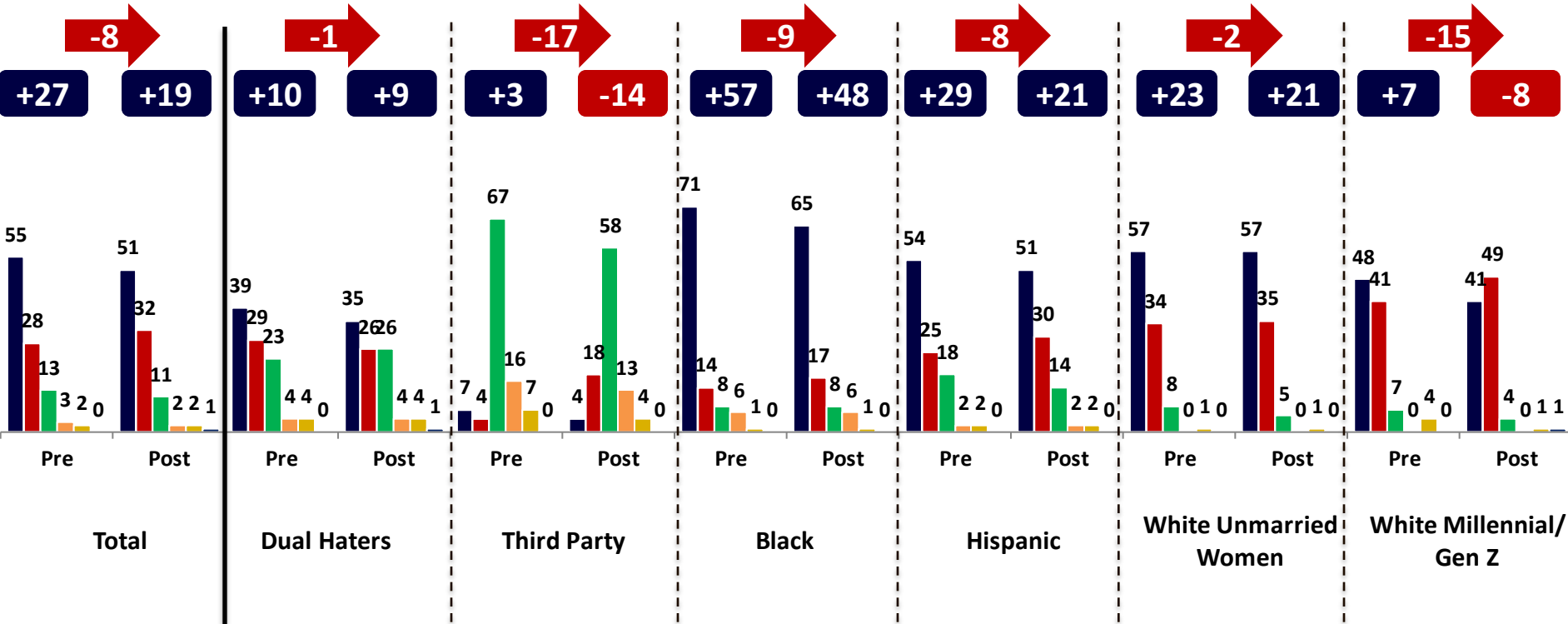


# Biden lost vote margin to Trump, most with third party, Black voters, and Hispanics

Now thinking again to the upcoming election for President in November 2024. If the election for president were held today, for whom would you vote?

## 2024 FULL PRESIDENTIAL VOTE

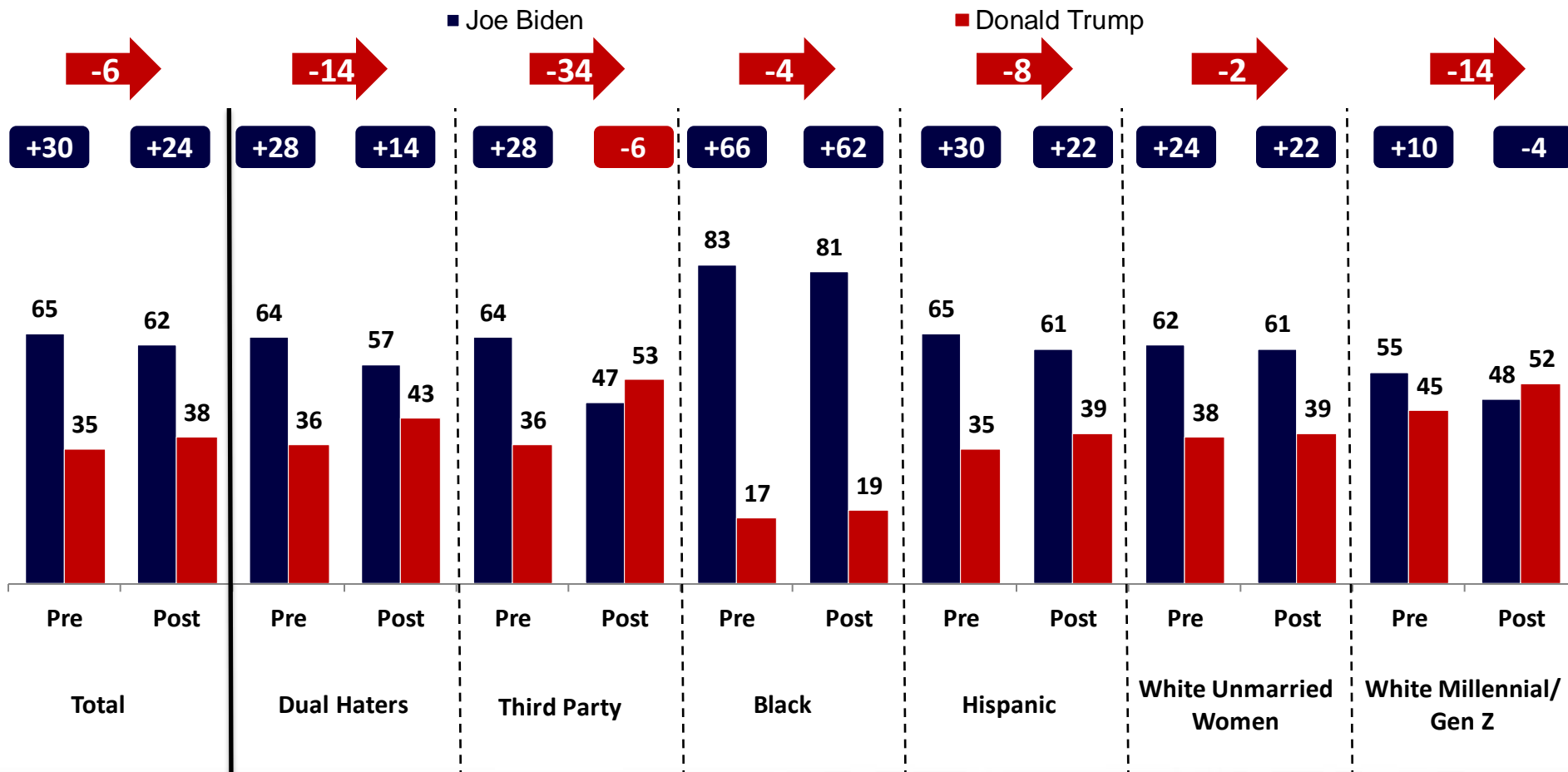
- Democrat Joe Biden
- Republican Donald Trump
- Independent Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
- Cornel West
- Green Party Candidate Jill Stein
- Libertarian Chase Oliver



# On pushed two-way, lost 6 points, most with dual haters, third party, and Hispanics

Thinking about the election for President in November 2024, will you vote for – (ROTATE) Democrat Joe Biden or Republican Donald Trump?

## 2024 Two-Way Presidential Vote



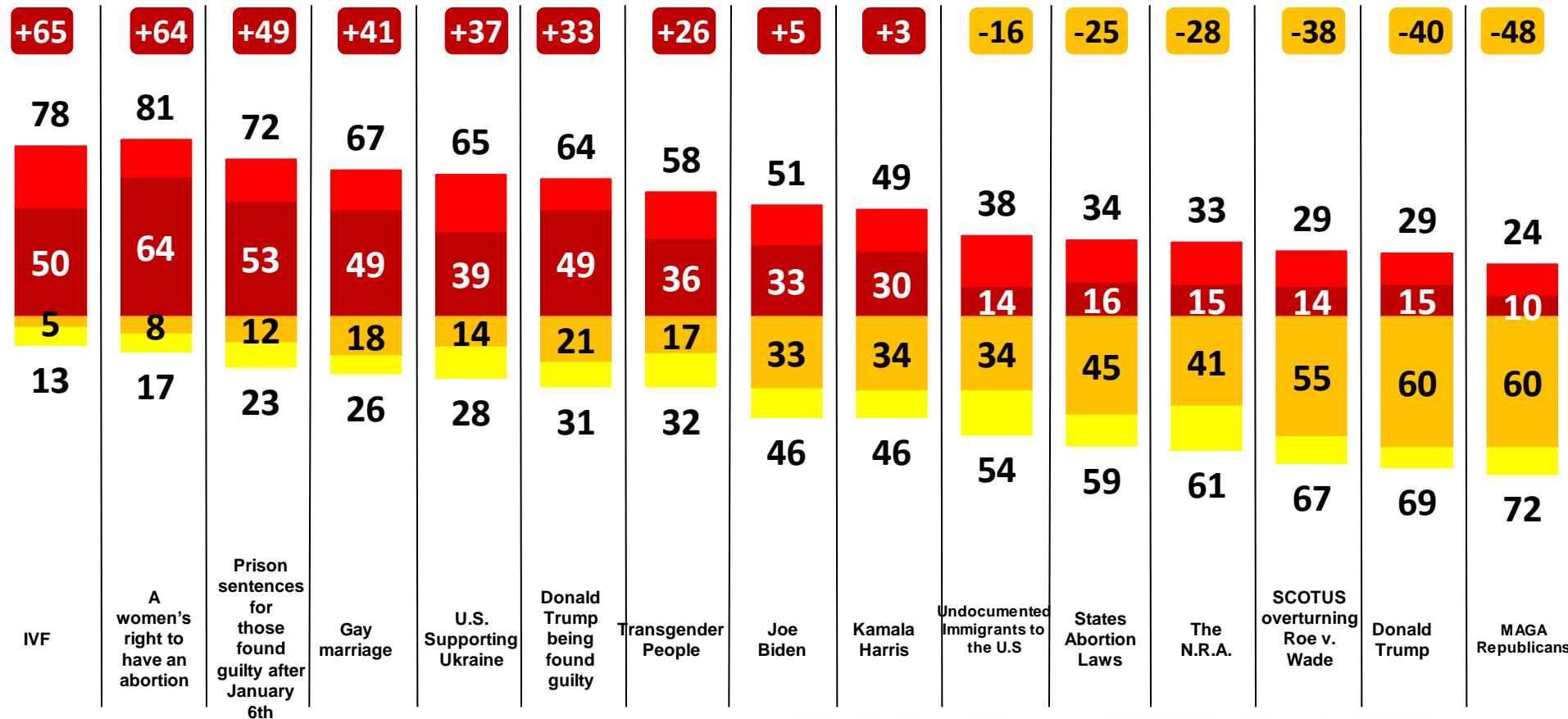
The base and target voters have deeply negative views of MAGA Republicans, Trump, Roe being repealed & very positive of IVF, abortion rights January 6th prison sentences; Biden & Harris approval at 50%

I'd like to rate your feelings toward some people and organizations with one hundred meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; zero meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold.

THERMOMETER

Very Favorable

Very Unfavorable



# Pre: what does Joe Biden need to say during the debate to increase or would decrease support?

*What does/would Joe Biden need to say during the debate to increase/decrease your support?*

## Increase support for Biden

1. **Economic Concerns**: Many respondents want Biden to address inflation, the cost of living, and economic policies that support the middle class and lower-income families. Specific mentions include lowering gas prices, improving housing affordability, and curbing corporate price gouging.
2. **Immigration and Border Control**: Several respondents emphasize the need for Biden to present a clear plan on immigration, including securing the borders and managing the influx of illegal immigrants.
3. **Mental and Physical Fitness**: A recurring theme is the concern over Biden's mental and physical fitness for the presidency. Respondents want him to demonstrate coherence, strength, and mental acuity during the debate.
4. **Student Loan Forgiveness**: Some respondents express a desire for Biden to commit to eliminating or significantly reducing student loan debt.
5. **Foreign Policy and Military Support**: There are calls for Biden to address U.S. involvement in foreign conflicts, with some advocating for reduced military support to countries like Israel and Ukraine, and focusing on domestic issues instead.
6. **Social Issues and Rights**: Respondents want Biden to reaffirm his stance on women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and healthcare access. There is also a call for him to address abortion rights and support for marginalized communities.
7. **Criticism of Trump**: Some respondents suggest that Biden should highlight the failures and corruption

## Decrease support for Biden

1. **Foreign Policy and War**: Many respondents expressed concerns about Biden's support for foreign wars, particularly in Ukraine and Israel, and his focus on international issues over domestic problems.
2. **Economic Issues**: A significant number of responses highlighted worries about inflation, rising costs, and Biden's handling of the economy. Some mentioned potential tax increases as a point of contention.
3. **Immigration**: Several respondents were critical of Biden's stance on immigration, particularly the perception of open borders and policies that they believe exacerbate the issue.
4. **Mental and Physical Fitness**: Concerns about Biden's age, mental clarity, and physical fitness were frequently mentioned, with some respondents worried about his ability to perform presidential duties effectively.
5. **Social Issues**: Some responses indicated opposition to Biden's support for LGBTQ+ rights, abortion rights, and other progressive social policies.
6. **General Discontent**: A portion of respondents expressed a general lack of support for Biden, indicating that nothing he could say would change their opinion, while others were critical of his communication style and perceived incoherence.

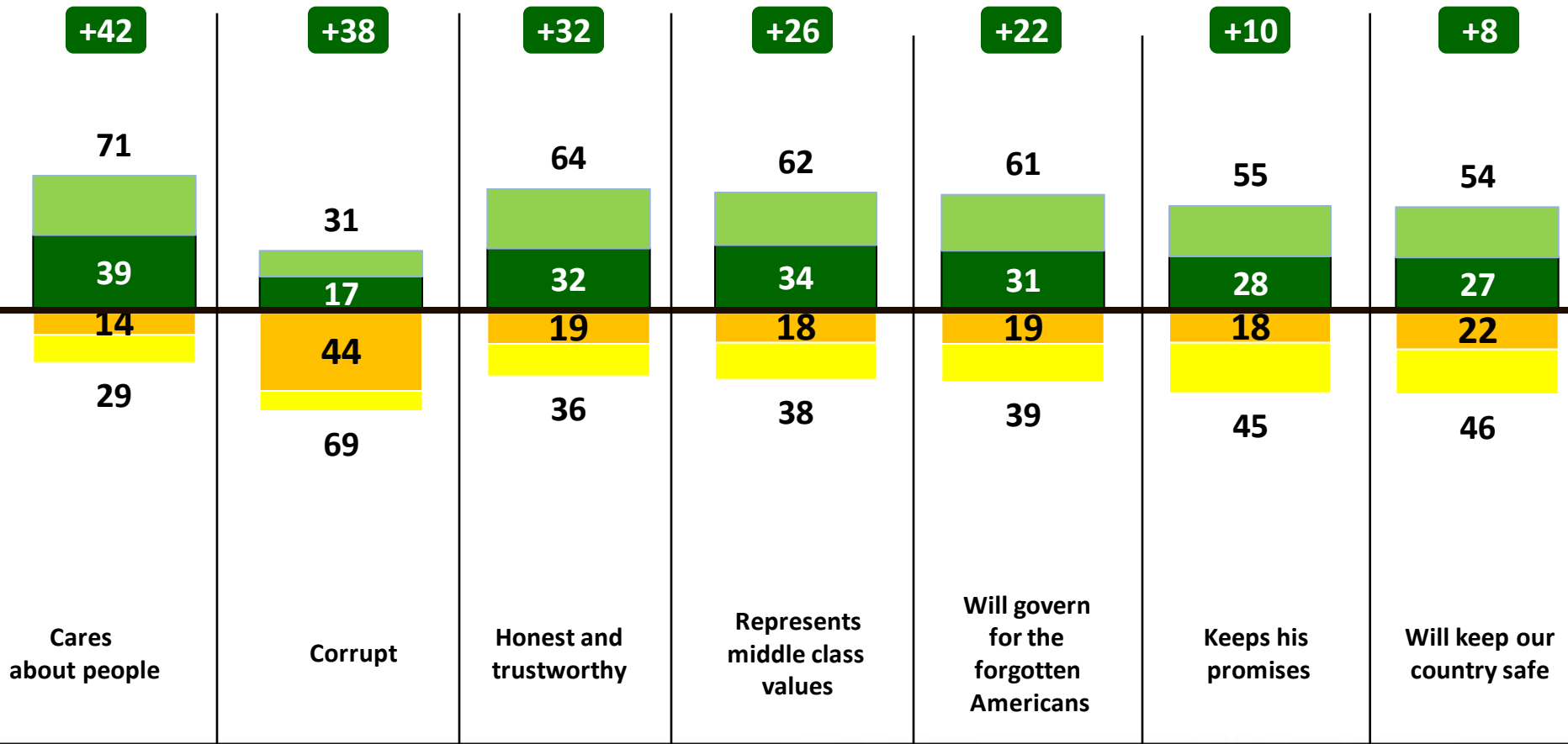
# After debate, Biden does well on cares for people, honesty, representing the middle class.

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

## BIDEN ATTRIBUTES: POST

Very well

Not well at all





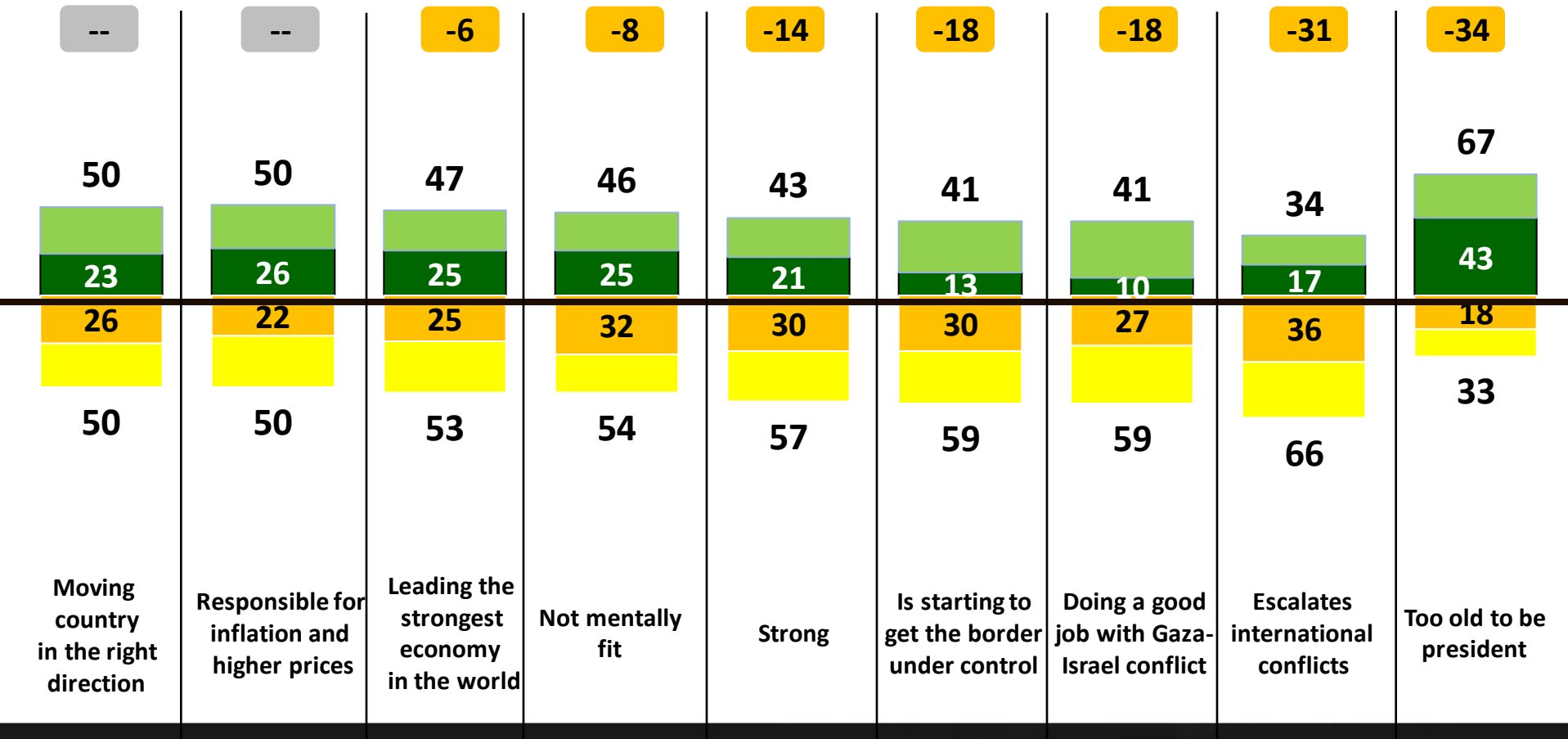
# Majority reject lead strongest economy, big majority that strong, near 60% on border under control; 2/3rd too old

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

## BIDEN ATTRIBUTES: POST

Very well

Not well at all



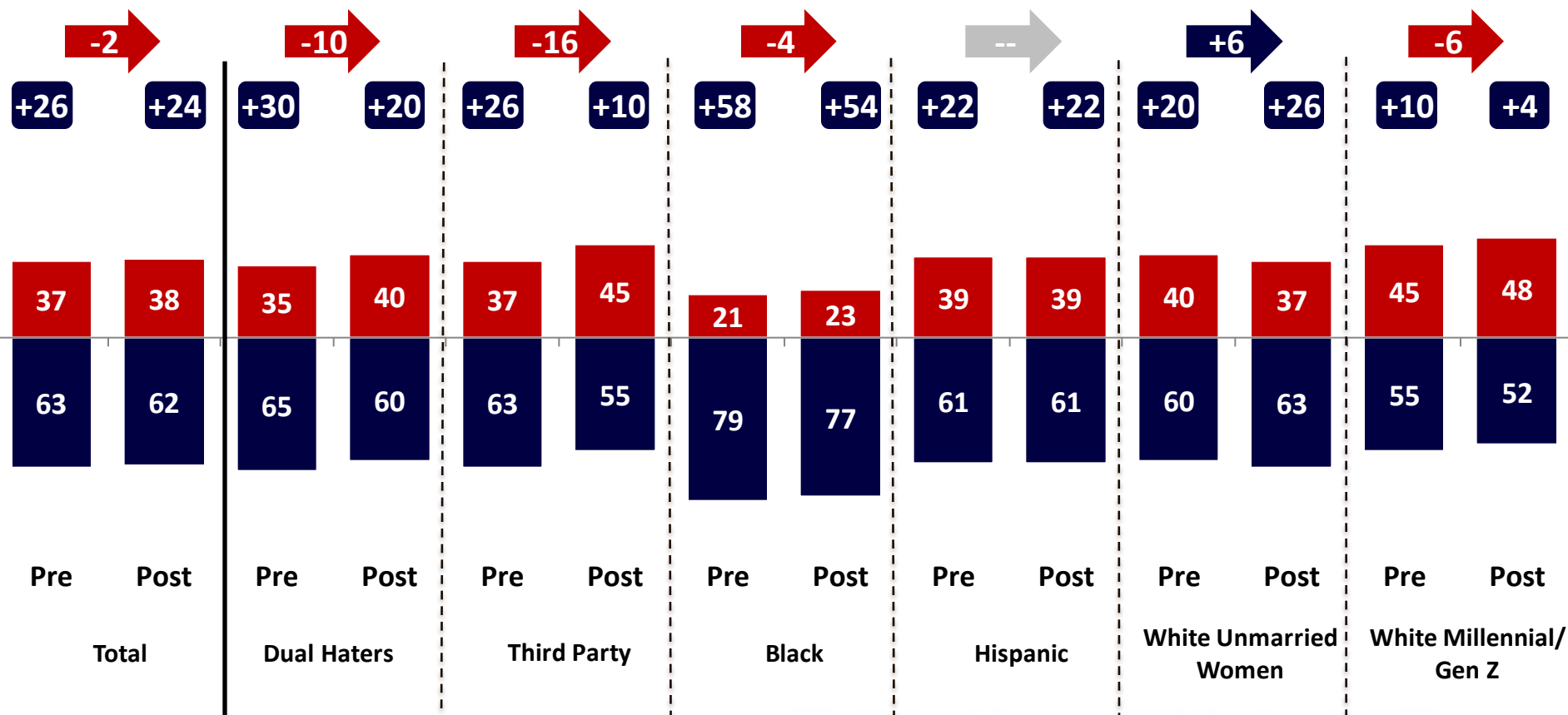
# Importantly, the fear of Trump returning was not diminished by the debate, though not true for dual haters; white unmarried women became more fearful

Thinking ahead to when the election is over, what do you FEAR the most:

## FEAR WHICH CANDIDATE RETURNING – PRE/POST

■ Joe Biden continuing as President

■ Donald Trump returning as President

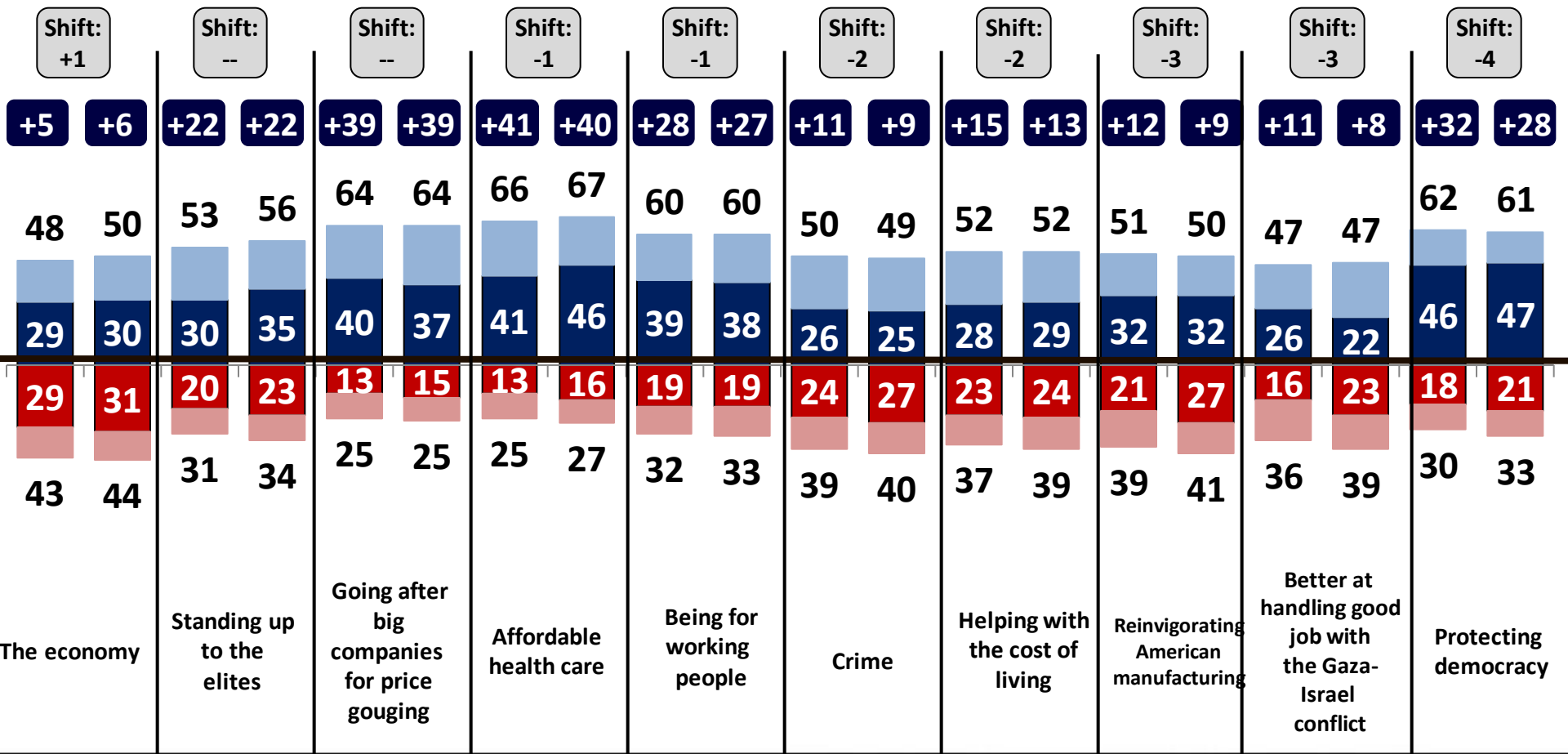


# These strong Biden voters give good marks on price gouging, health care & working class, but just half chose him on economy & cost of living

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

## WHICH CANDIDATE BETTER - PRE & POST

■ Biden much better      ■ Trump much better



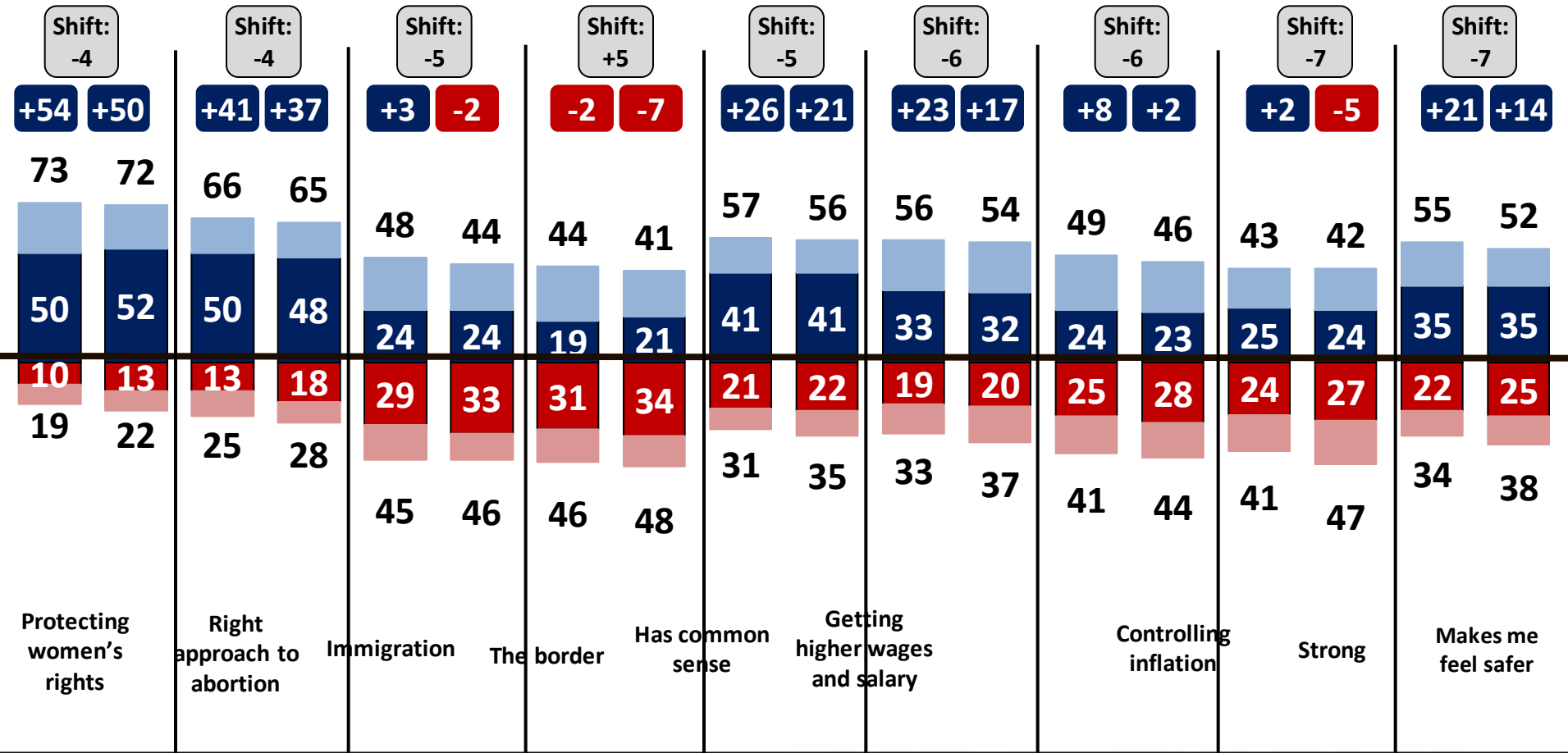
# Biden really got hurt on border, common sense, higher wages and inflation; biggest shift on strong and makes me safe

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## WHICH CANDIDATE BETTER - PRE & POST

■ Biden much better

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## LiveRead Dial Meters

LiveRead dial meters as conducted by Stratallys are a quantitative feedback platform that enables second-by-second evaluation of any live video event by a large-sample target audience. Tools for this research include:

- High-quality quantitative sample
- Real-time results dashboard
- Subgroup tracking
- Pre/post shift measurement

Key line groups include:

- Dual haters
- Third Party voters
- Black voters
- Hispanic voters
- White Unmarried Women
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### First Release:

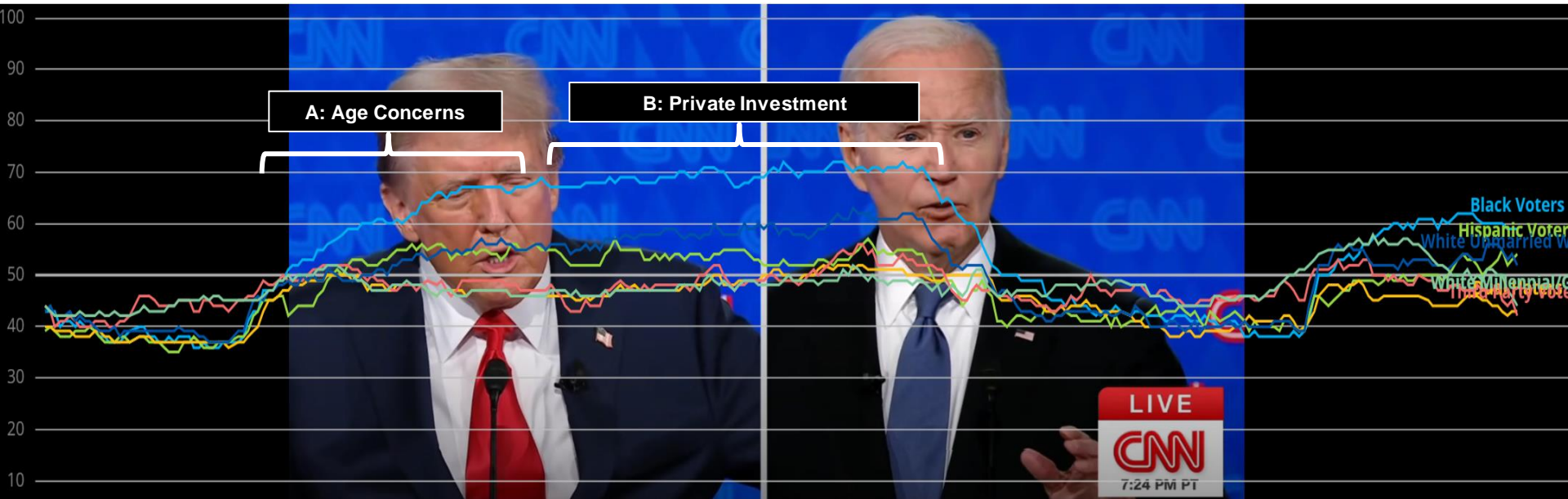
- **Age Concerns**
- **January 6**
- **Trump Convictions**
- **Abortion**

***More coming soon***

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# Age Concerns Biden



- **[A] Biden:** Well, first of all, I spent half my career being – being criticized being the youngest person in politics. I was the second-youngest person ever elected to the United States Senate. And now I’m the oldest. This guy’s three years younger and a lot less competent. I think that just look at the record. Look what I’ve done. Look how I’ve turned around the horrible situation he left me.
- **[B] Biden:** As I said, 50 million new jobs, 800,000 manufacturing jobs, more investment in America, over millions – billions of dollars in private investment and – and enterprises that we are growing. We’ve – by the way, we brought an awful a lot of people – the whole idea of computer chips. We used to have 40 percent of the market. We invented those chips. And we lost it because he was sending people to cheap – to find the cheapest jobs overseas and to bring home a product. So I went – I went to South Korea. I convinced Samsung to invest billions of dollars here in the United States. And then guess what? Those fabs, they call them, to – to build these chips, those fabs pay over \$100,000. You don’t need a college degree for them. And there’s billions, about \$40 billion already being invested and being built right now in the United States, creating significant jobs for Americans all over – from all over the world.

# Age Concerns Trump



- [A] Trump: Well, I took two tests, cognitive tests. I aced them, both of them, as you know. We made it public. He took none. I'd like to see him take one, just one, a real easy one. Like go through the first five questions, he couldn't do it. But I took two cognitive tests. I took physical exams every year. And, you know, we knock on wood, wherever we may have wood, that I'm in very good health. I just won two club championships, not even senior, to regular club championships. To do that, you have to be quite smart and you have to be able to hit the ball along way. And I do it. He doesn't do it. He can't hit a ball 50 yards. He challenged me to a golf match. He can hit a ball 50 years.*

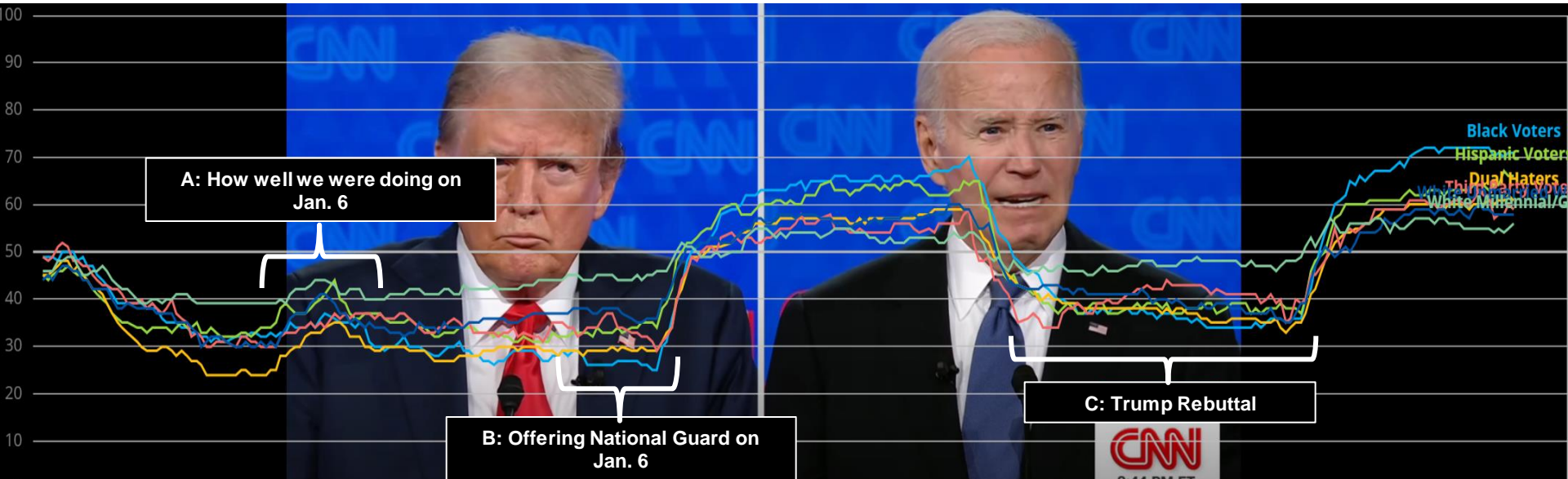
# January 6<sup>th</sup> Biden



- **[A] Biden:** In fact, he says he'll not forgive them for what they've done. They've been convicted. He says he wants to commute their sentences and say that, no, he went to every single court in the nation, I don't know how many cases, scores of cases, including the Supreme Court. And they said they said – they said, no, no, this guy, this guy is responsible for doing what is being – was done. He didn't do a damn thing. And these people should be in jail. And they should be the ones who are being held accountable. And he wants to let them all out.
- **[B] Biden:** When I asked him about first of two debates we had – debates we had the first time around, I said, will you denounce the Proud Boys. He said, no, I'll tell them stand by. The idea he's refusing – will you denounce these guys? Will you denounce the people we're talking about now? You denounce the people who attacked that Capitol? What are you going to do?.

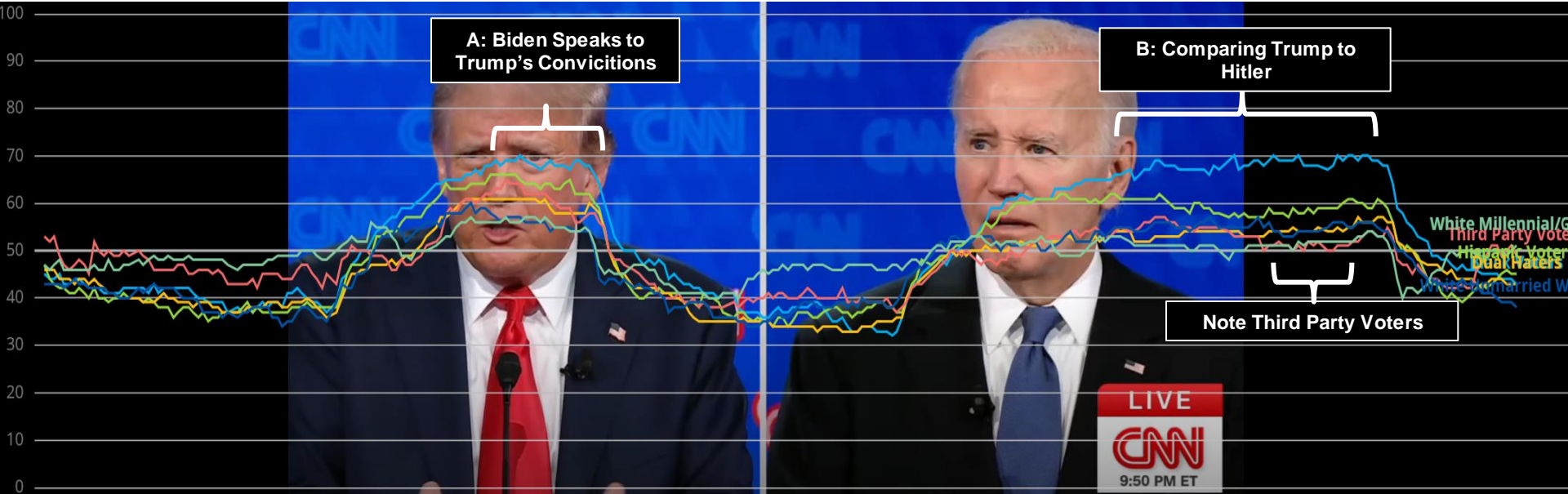


# January 6<sup>th</sup> Trump



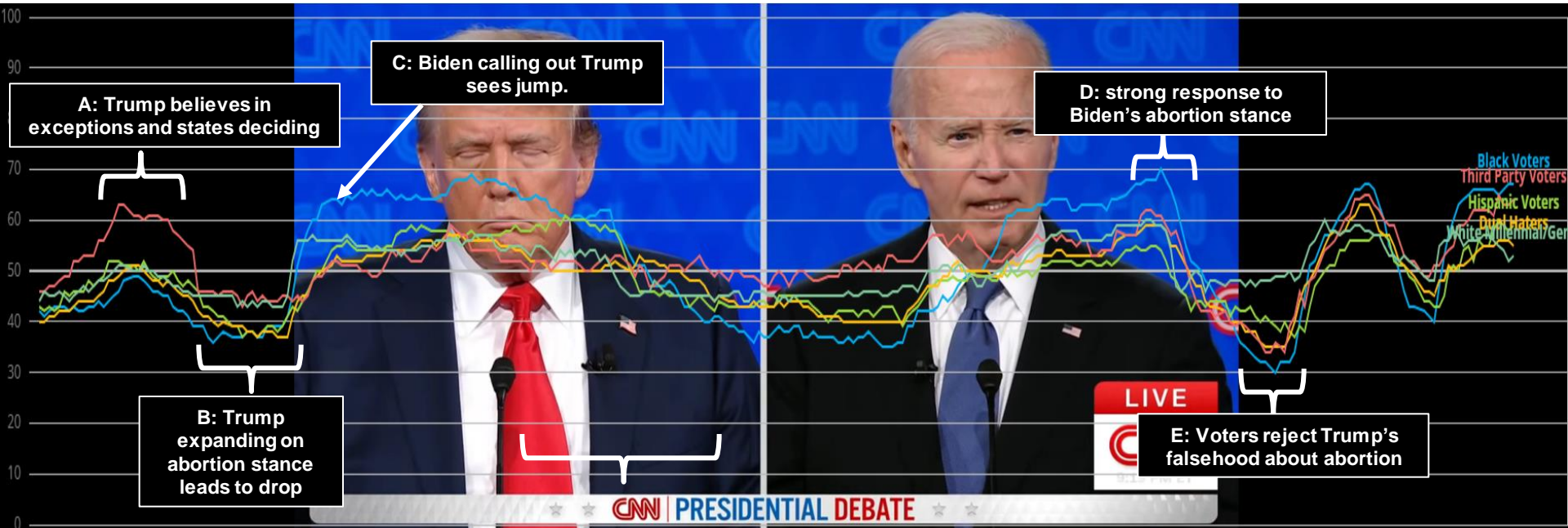
- [A] Trump:** On January 6th, we had a great border, nobody coming through, very few. On January 6th, we were energy-independent. On January 6th, we had the lowest taxes ever. We had the lowest regulations ever. On January 6th, we were respected all over the world, All over the world we were respected. And then he comes in and we're now left at, we're like a bunch of stupid people. What happened to the United States' reputation under this man's leadership is horrible.
- [A] Trump:** They asked me to go make a speech. I could see what was happening. Everybody was saying they're going to be there on January 6th. They're going to be there. And I said, you know what, that's a lot of people coming, you could feel it. You could feel it too. And you could feel it. And I said, they ought to have some National Guard or whatever. And I offered it to her. And she now admits that she turned it down. And it was the same day.
- [B] Trump:** What they've done to some people that are so innocent, you ought to be ashamed of yourself, what you have done, how you've destroyed the lives of so many people. When they ripped down Portland, when they ripped down many other cities, you go to Minnesota, Minneapolis, what they've done there with the fires all over the city, if I didn't bring in the National Guard, that city would have been destroyed. I was all set to bring in the National Guard. They heard that. They saw them coming and they left immediately. What he said about this whole subject is so off. Peacefully patriotic.

# Trump Convictions Biden



- **[A] Biden:** *The idea that I did anything wrong relative to what you're talking about is outrageous. It's simply a lie, number one. Number two, the idea that you have a right to seek retribution against any American, just because you're a president, is wrong, is simply wrong. No president's ever spoken like that before. No president in our history has spoken like that before. Number three, the crimes that you are still charged with. And think of all the civil penalties you have. How many billions of dollars do you owe in civil penalties for molesting a woman in public, for doing a whole range of things, of having sex with a porn star on the night – and while your wife was pregnant?*
- **[B] Biden:** *What American president would ever say, Nazis coming out of fields, carrying torches, singing the same anti-Semitic bile, carrying swastikas, were fine people. This is a guy who says Hitler's done some good things. I'd like to know what they are. The good things Hitler's done, that's what he said. This guy has no sense of American democracy.*

# Abortion



- **[A] Trump:** The states control it. That's the vote of the people. Like Ronald Reagan, I believe in exceptions. I am a person that believes. Frnakly, I think it's important to believe in exceptions. You have to follow your heart. Some people don't believe in that, but I believe in exceptions for rape, incest, the life of the mother.
- **[B] Trump:** The problem they have is they're radical because they will take the life of a child in the eighth month, the ninth month, and even after birth – after birth. If you look at the former governor of Virginia, he was willing to do this. He said, we'll put the baby aside and we'll determine what we do with the baby. Meaning, we'll kill the baby.
- **[C] Biden:** It's been a terrible thing, what you've done. The fact is that the vast majority of constitutional scholars supported Roe when it was decided, supported Roe. And that was – that's – this idea that they were all against it is just ridiculous.
- **[D] Biden:** A doctor should be making those decisions. That's how it should be run. That's what you're going to do. And if I'm elected, I'm going to restore Roe v. Wade.
- **[E] Trump:** So that means he can take the life of the baby in the ninth month and even after birth, because some states – Democrat-run – take it after birth. Again, the governor – former governor of Virginia: put the baby down, then we decide what to do with it. So he's in – he's willing to, as we say, rip the baby out of the womb in the ninth month and kill the baby.

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