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President Trump's State of the Union 2020 Dial meter test shows campaign trial run will disappoint Trump

On behalf of the *Voter Participation Center* and the *American Federation of Teachers*, *Democracy Corps* conducted live dial-meter testing of the 2020 State of the Union address among the Rising American Electorate, white working-class women and men, and white college women.¹ Here are some of the key findings:

President Donald Trump gave a deeply divisive State of the Union Speech that produced lame gains in his job approval and personal favorability, the defining issues in the election, and with the white working class that made his abrupt ascent to the presidency possible. The speech included an unrivaled spectacle of Americans living through tragedy. Yet after the speech, over 60 percent across these base and swing groups said Trump was divisive, self-dealing, and governing for the rich and big money elites.

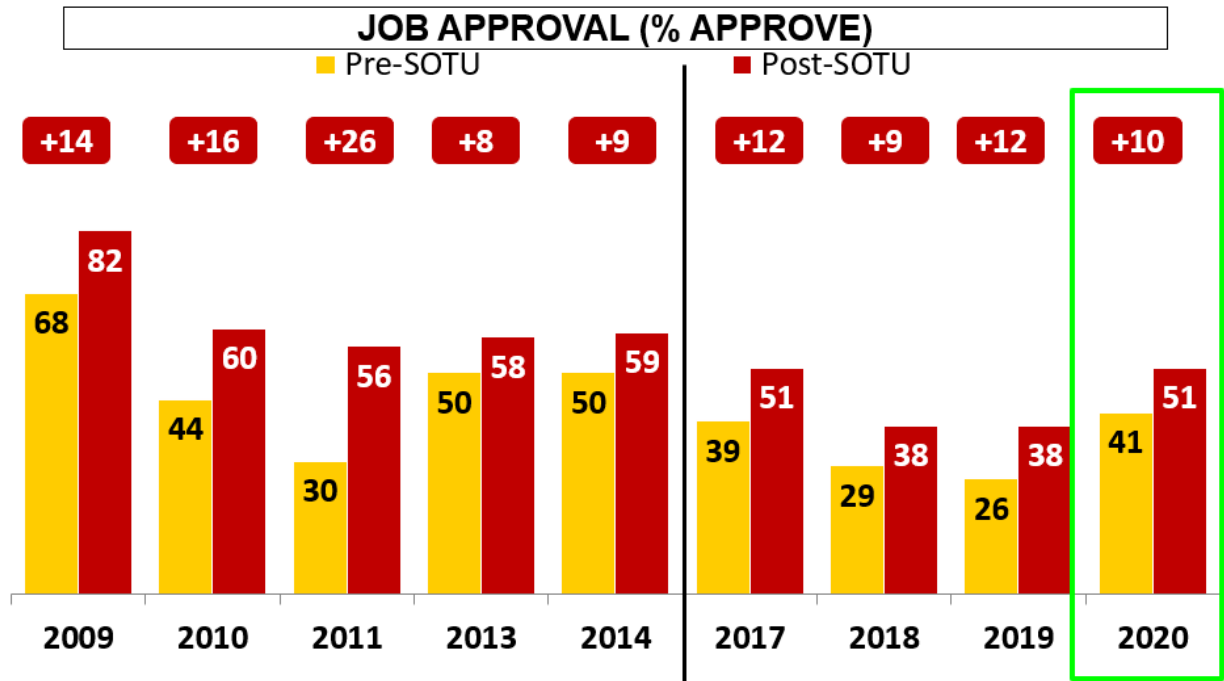
These findings are based on the responses of 257 participants — African Americans, Hispanics, white millennials, white unmarried women, white college women, and white working class men and women — who filled in pre and post-speech surveys and reacted to the speech in real time with ratings on a 1-to-100 scale, with 50 the mid-point.

Democracy Corps and Stan Greenberg conducted these sessions each year during the Bill Clinton presidency and in collaboration with Women's Voices Women Vote, and during the presidencies of Barack Obama and Donald Trump. This year, the effort was made possible by the collaboration with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

President Trump was so self-confident, clear in his message and attack on the socialist Democrats and illegal immigrants and his unashamed praise for the greatest economy imaginable and his accomplishments, including the tax cut, tariffs on China and new trade agreement with Mexico and China — so clear in telegraphing the campaign he will run to November — that it is hard to imagine this State of the Union 2020 is a flop. But Trump raised his positive job approval by only 10 points after voters watched the 78 minute speech. That is almost identical to the increases he got in his first three State of the Unions and

¹ These online dial meters were conducted during President Trump's State of the Union address among 257 registered voters nationally: 37 African Americans, 34 Latinos, 38 white millennials, 37 white unmarried women, 39 white working-class women, 38 white working-class men and 34 white college women. To ensure each demographic group was as representative as possible, they were individually recruited. Surveys were administered before and after the live dial-meter session. When displaying 2018 results, the total is among the lines for African Americans, Latinos, white millennials and white unmarried women only. This research is qualitative, and results are not statistically projectable onto a larger population.

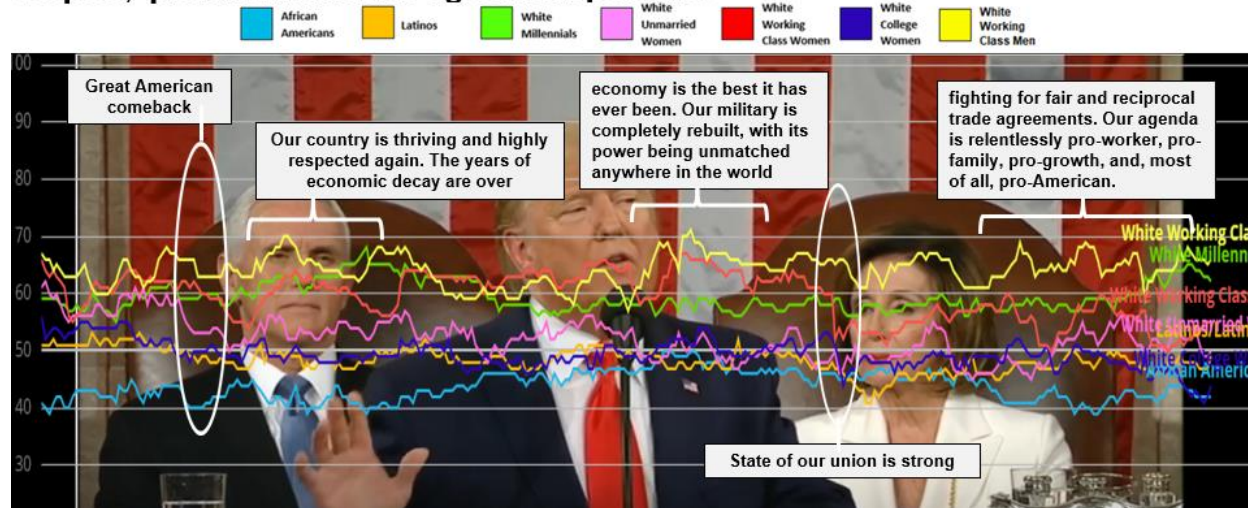
below President Obama in his first term. And while Obama’s produced a short rise in job approval in the real national polls, Trump’s speeches never raised his standing.



Trump raised his favorability in this speech by 16 points, but that was just a few points short of his 19 point gain in 2019.

Most telling was the speech’s impact on the white working-class voters. They were much more favorable to Trump to begin with and responded enthusiastically in real time to his messages on immigration, sanctuary cities, and tariffs on China, so it was surprising that approval rose only 8 points for both the working class men and women — a touch below other voters. They were not blown away by the speech, despite their lines being pushed so high.

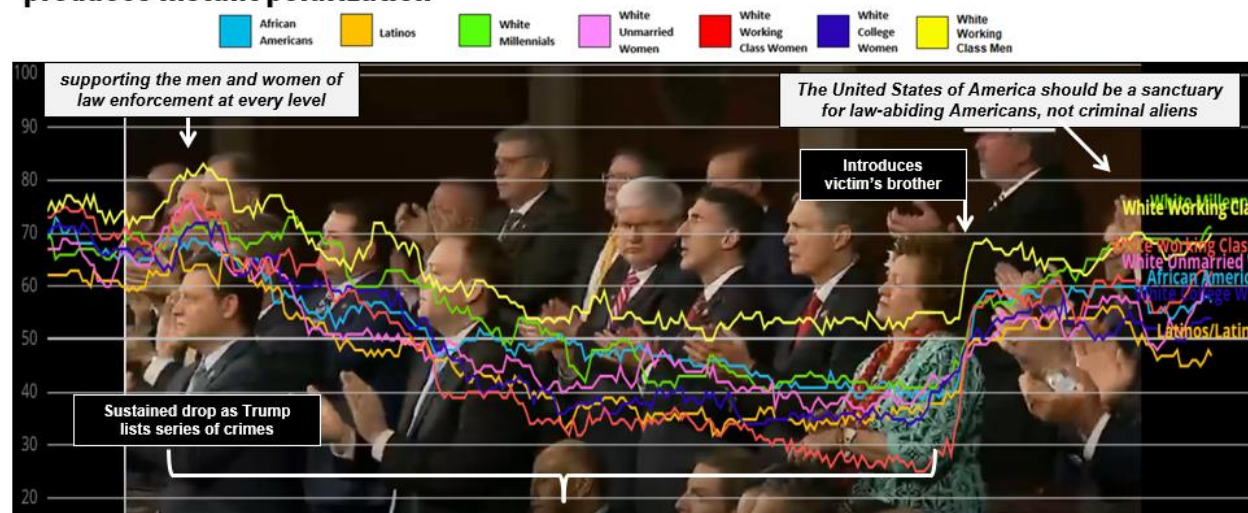
Great American comeback very flat, though better when combined with military and respect; pro-American trade agreement polarizes



At the end of the survey, Trump was ahead of the generic Democrat by 16 points among white working-class women, well below the 27 point margin Trump actually achieved in the 2016 election. Among the white working-class men, he led the Democrat by 18 points in the dials, but that was well short of the 48 point margin Trump achieved in the working class revolt in 2016.

Trump would have hoped to have moved voters against Speaker Pelosi, impeachment, the Affordable Care Act, and for the border wall. He did not succeed.

Strong for law enforcement, but falls off on criminal aliens, but sanctuary cities produces instant polarization



There were some key findings that are worrisome for the progressive efforts to defeat Donald Trump.

- Trump is producing a gender tsunami — with overwhelming Democratic voting among African American, Hispanic, unmarried and millennial women in our polls for VPC, but evidence of Trump erosion of African American, Hispanic and white millennial men. In this experiment watching the SOTU speech, Trump makes visible gains with the African American and white millennial men.
- Healthcare is a pervasive issue in the dial research, it constitutes a huge vulnerability for Trump. He is doing the opposite of what he declared, which is why voters were so pleasantly surprised. That won’t stand in the real world.
- The attack on a socialized take over of health care is effective and free health care for illegal immigrants is one of the few attacks in the speech that land.

But healthcare pervades every response in the survey — as people struggle with healthcare costs as the main challenge that puts them on the edge of life.

President vulnerable with hyped support for health care reform; Democrats vulnerable on socialized and illegal immigrant health care



After the speech, over 60 percent of these base and swing voters, say that the President is divisive. It is that increased polarization that makes it difficult to say, four more years. And 65 percent say he is self-dealing and 63 percent, governing for the rich and big money elites. That is a powerful potential branding of the Trump presidency and Republicans.

While a big majority of the Democrats’ base comes out of the impeachment believing we have a president who acts like he is above the law and invites foreign interference, a majority of the white working-class wants to get on addressing those challenges.

Divisive speech – only confirms Trump still governs for the richest

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

TRUMP ATTRIBUTES			
Pre and Post Shift	% Describes well		
	Pre	Post	Diff
Self-dealing	63	65	2
Governing for billionaires and big money elites	63	63	0
Dividing the country	61	60	-1
Out of touch with working people	54	52	-2