

## Swing Voters In Swing States Hold Balance In 2016

In this era of political polarization, it is tempting to assume the political center no longer exists. If this were true, it would certainly simplify things for political candidates and their strategists. They could stop worrying about how to persuade unaligned voters and concentrate exclusively on mobilizing their core partisans. However, this is not the case. As this new Progressive Policy Institute (PPI) poll by veteran Democratic pollster Peter Brodnitz shows, Swing voters exist, and they hold the balance of power in key 2016 battleground states. For Democrats especially, this survey yields a clear lesson: To hold the White House, recapture the Senate, and reduce the Republican House majority, candidates must craft messages that appeal beyond the party's base to a substantial body of voters who are not in a fixed ideological camp.

This survey examined the outlook and attitudes of Swing voters in four critical Swing states: Florida, Ohio, Colorado, and Nevada. Constituting about a fifth of the electorate in those states, Swing voters come at today's major challenges with a perspective different from that of either party. In general, they are less ideological, less partisan, and less angry than base voters. They are pragmatists who are focused mainly on economic growth and competitiveness.

Swing voters give low approval ratings to both parties in Congress, but slightly higher approval ratings to Democrats (32% approve, 59% disapprove), than to Republicans (28% approve, 65% disapprove). While Republicans give their own Members of Congress better marks than Democrats, Republicans in Congress are underwater among their own voters by eleven points (43% approve, 54% disapprove). Democrats, on the other hand, largely approve of the jobs their Members of Congress are doing (73% approve, 24% disapprove).

There is widespread agreement among battleground voters on a number of matters:

- Most battleground voters rate the economy as fair or poor as opposed to excellent or good. They believe that improving the economy should be the priority, that moving jobs overseas is a key economic problem, and that increasing access to education and job training is essential.
- Most of them also believe that America's economy is still strong, and that if people work hard, they can get ahead.
- Almost all believe it is essential that American companies can compete globally and that workers benefit from that competition and success.
- While Democrats are the most likely to believe the United States is the strongest economic power in the world (81% agree), most Swing voters (58% agree) and Republicans (61%) hold this view.
- Despite all the populist rhetoric deployed in both parties' nominating contests, the voters we interviewed don't seem particularly angry. Swing voters tend to be worried about the economy and Democrats tend to be optimistic, but few described themselves as angry.

Most believe global competition – more than trade agreements – is the force driving away jobs. There is little support among Swing voters for ending trade agreements, and most believe the benefits of trade agreements outweigh the costs.

- Almost all believe “most” Americans are not prepared for retirement.
- Almost all believe increased investments in infrastructure, like roads and bridges, would improve the U.S. economy.

In general, Swing voters are attracted to new ideas for stimulating growth – regulatory improvement, low corporate taxes intended to increase competitiveness and keep jobs from moving overseas, and a robust career pathways system that’s always there to help workers acquire marketable skills.

The table below compares swing, Democratic, and Republican voters and shows which party swing voters’ personal beliefs coincide with more.

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with that statement?						
Ranked by Strongly Agree	All		% Total Agree			Swing Voters Side With
	Str. Agree	Agree/Disagree	Swing	Party ID		
				Dem	Rep	
Most Americans are <b>not prepared for retirement</b>	64	91/7	87	91	89	BOTH
It is important to create an environment that allows American companies to be <b>competitive with foreign businesses</b>	63	90/9	91	90	90	BOTH
Getting ahead in the new American economy will require <b>higher levels of education and job training</b>	60	87/11	87	93	84	BOTH
Increased <b>investments in infrastructure</b> , like our roads and bridges, would improve the U.S. economy	49	85/13	77	92	81	GOP
Reducing the <b>gap between the rich and poor</b> should be a priority for the next President and Congress	44	64/33	70	88	36	DEM
If we had <b>fewer government regulations</b> , small businesses would have a much easier time growing and being successful	42	72/25	70	57	84	BOTH
Most people who want to get ahead in America can <b>make it if they work hard</b>	38	73/26	67	70	86	DEM
To have a strong economy, the U.S. must <b>rely heavily on trade</b> with other countries, which makes trade agreements with other countries important	33	75/24	73	82	73	GOP
America is the <b>strongest economic power in the world</b>	29	64/34	58	81	61	GOP
The deck is <b>stacked against people like me</b>	19	39/56	39	47	33	BOTH
Government policies reward those who <b>work hard and play by the rules</b>	14	36/63	33	46	28	GOP

Swing voters largely differ from Democrats on how to achieve these goals. Swing voters are more focused on growth than fairness, more concerned about spending, less optimistic about the economy, more interested in finding ways to help companies be successful, and more interested in reducing regulatory burdens than Democrats.

Looking ahead to the general election, this poll’s findings suggest that to be responsive to the concerns of Swing voters in crucial swing states, Democrats will have to transcend the limits of populism and fashion a pro-growth message. A Democratic message that fails to acknowledge that American workers can’t thrive unless U.S. companies succeed will likely repel these voters. When asked how voters think the U.S. will do well in the future economically, Swing voters are more like to say people will do well if we help people grow their businesses and turn new ideas into business than they are to say people will do well if we stop allowing companies and special interests to take advantage of workers.

Conversely, a Trumpian message that trashes America's economy will similarly fail, as will a more conventional Republican approach that fails to recognize climate change and wages as problems that need to be addressed.

In general, Democrats have an advantage in reaching these voters when it comes to support for affordable college and job training and the need for trade agreements that make us more competitive while enacting labor and environmental protections.

Republicans have a general advantage in reaching these voters if they can show that Democrats are more focused on protecting the jobs of yesterday than creating the jobs of tomorrow, standing in the way of success for American companies that are trying to compete against foreign businesses, or promoting policies that do not reward hard work or are overly expensive.

### Who Are The Swing Voters In 2016?

All four of the states we polled are traditional Presidential battleground states, and this year, they feature competitive contests for Senate and Congress.<sup>1</sup> One-fifth (21%) of the electorate in these states is made up of voters who lend their support equally to Democrats and Republicans, do not strongly identify with either party, and did not vote for the same party in the last two elections. In 2012, this group sided with President Obama over Mitt Romney, and in 2014, they sided with Congressional Republicans over Congressional Democrats.

Swing voters sometimes do not vote; a little more than half (55%) of this group voted in just one of the last two elections, but because this is a Presidential election year, when turnout is high, we estimate they will make up a fifth of this electorate.

In each election cycle, political analysts identify specific demographics or sociological groups that supposedly hold the key to victory, but Swing voters can't be so neatly categorized. Their most defining characteristics, however, are independence and moderation. Fully 84% identify themselves as independent and 57% consider themselves moderates.

Some demographic characteristics of Swing voters include:

- They are 48% men and 52% women. This makes them more likely to be men than Democrats, among whom only 39% are men, and more likely to be women than Republicans, among whom only 47% are women.
- They are less likely to have a college education than voters overall – 44% have a college degree vs. 48% of all voters in the battleground.
- Almost a third (29%) of Swing voters are non-white. This group includes fewer African Americans than the overall battleground population (7% of poll but only 2% of Swing voters) but about the same percentage of Latino voters (13% of Swing voters and 12% of all battleground voters). At 29% the percentage of Swing voters who are non-White is higher than among Republicans (22%) and lower than among Democrats (35%).
- Only 11% are liberal, making them much less liberal than Democrats, among whom 49% identify as liberal. They are also much less conservative than Republicans with only 24% calling themselves conservative compared to 69% of Republicans.

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews were conducted in Colorado, Florida, Nevada, and Ohio (800 interviews with general election voters and an oversample of 200 voters who do not always vote for one party).

- Half (51%) of Swing voters are married, this is less than Republicans among whom 62% are married, but more than Democrats among whom 44% are married.
- Over one in four (28%) Swing voters are married women while 22% are unmarried women, 23% are married men and 25% are unmarried men.

**How Swing Voters Are Different Than Democrats**

As one would expect from their voting history, Swing voters lean toward the Democrats on some issues and toward Republicans on others. The question for Democratic candidates is how to speak to the concerns of Swing voters as well as core partisans. The failure to do so will open the door for Republican candidates to highlight those areas where Swing voters tend to lean in their direction. Therefore, it’s important to grasp important differences in the outlook of Swing and partisan Democratic voters.

Compared with the latter, Swing voters are more worried about the economy, more focused on growth, more supportive of efforts to help companies succeed, more in favor of regulatory reform, and more likely to see the value in lowering corporate tax rates.

Swing voters do not believe the economy is fundamentally broken or that it needs to be restructured. They want to see companies, government, and workers pulling together to help businesses compete and increase wages. This includes improving education, training, and retirement benefits, enacting trade agreements with strong labor and environmental protections, building infrastructure, and reforming regulatory and tax structures.

Some areas where Swing and core Democratic voters see things differently:

- **SWING VOTERS ARE DECIDEDLY MORE WORRIED ABOUT THE ECONOMY.** 56% of Swing voters are worried about the future of the U.S. economy, while only 30% are optimistic. Among Democrats, 48% of say they are optimistic about the future of the U.S. economy, while 42% say they are worried. There is likely a partisan element to this. Democratic optimism is driven in part by support for President Obama. The same thing happened under President Bush. Republicans were more likely to believe the country was headed in the right direction.
- Almost all (90%) agree we need to create an environment that lets American companies be more competitive, but **SWING VOTERS WANT TO SEE A FOCUS ON ECONOMIC GROWTH AND STRENGTH, WHILE DEMOCRATS STRESS ECONOMIC FAIRNESS ALONG WITH GROWTH.** Swing voters say the U.S. needs a growing (38%) and strong (27%) economy. On the other hand, a third (33%) of Democrats say we need a growing economy, but nearly three-in-ten (29%) say we need a fairer economy. This underscores the importance Democrats place on the need to address income inequality.

*Describe U.S. Economy We Need*

Thinking of the economy overall, which best describes the kind of economy we need?				
Ranked by All	All	Swing	Party ID	
			Dem	Rep
A <b>growing</b> economy	36	38	33	43
A <b>strong</b> economy	28	27	22	30
A <b>more dynamic</b> economy	18	17	16	17
A <b>fairer</b> economy	16	15	29	4
Don't know	3	2	0	7

- **SWING VOTERS AGREE WITH DEMOCRATS THAT REDUCING INEQUALITY SHOULD BE A PRIORITY FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT, BUT WITH FAR LESS INTENSITY.** 70% of Swing voters say (40% strongly agree) reducing the gap between the rich and the poor should be a priority for the next President. This view is nearly universal among Democrats, among whom 88% agree (72% strongly agree).
- **SWING VOTERS PRIORITIZE SPURRING ECONOMIC GROWTH OVER THE POPULIST GOAL OF RESTRAINING CORPORATE BEHAVIOR.** 55% of Swing voters say the U.S. economy will be successful if we help our people grow their businesses and turn their ideas into new enterprises. 40% say the economy will be successful if we stop the special interests and corporations from taking advantage of people. Democrats are almost evenly split with 48 percent giving top priority to fairness and 45% to growth.

*U.S. Economy – Grow Business v. Stop Special Interests*

Which best describes how you feel about the future of the U.S. economy?				
Ranked by All	All	Swing	Party ID	
			Dem	Rep
<b>Difference</b>	<b>+20</b>	<b>+15</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>+42</b>
We will do well if we help our people <b>grow their businesses</b> and turn their new ideas into businesses	56	55	45	67
We will do well if we stop allowing <b>companies and special interests</b> from taking advantage of workers	36	40	48	25
Don't know	8	5	6	8

- **SWING VOTERS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN DEMOCRATS TO FAVOR REDUCING REGULATORY BURDENS ON U.S. BUSINESSES.** While all voters say streamlining government regulations would help businesses, there are strong differences along party lines. 70% of Swing voters agree (35% strongly agree) that if we had fewer regulations, it would be easier for business to grow and be successful. Only 57% of Democrats agree with that statement, though 30% strongly agree.
- **WHEN ASKED THE BEST WAY TO KEEP MANUFACTURING JOBS FROM GOING OVERSEAS, SWING VOTERS AND DEMOCRATS PUT EDUCATING HIGHLY SKILLED WORKERS FIRST, BUT SWING VOTERS PUT LOWERING CORPORATE TAX RATES SECOND.** Among Swing voters, 36% say the best way to keep companies from moving manufacturing jobs overseas is to educate more highly skilled American workers, 30% say the best way is to lower corporate taxes, 23% say the best way is to end trade agreements, and 4% say the best way is to ensure inexpensive energy is available for manufacturing. Among Democrats, 41% name education, and an equal number name lowering corporate taxes (20%) and ending trade agreements (19%) as their second best approach. One in ten say inexpensive energy is the best approach.
  - However, when asked about the potential economic impact of cutting the corporate tax rate to 15%, 79% of Swing voters, 73% of Democrats, and 88% of Republicans believe it would have a positive impact. The perception that it would have a “major impact” is highest among Republicans (62%) and lowest among Democrats (38%), while 45% of Swing voters hold this view.

### How To Stop Jobs From Moving Overseas

Which of the following do you believe would do the most to keep companies from moving manufacturing jobs overseas?				
Ranked by All	All	Swing	Party ID	
			Dem	Rep
Lowering <b>corporate tax rates</b>	34	30	20	55
Educating more <b>highly skilled workers</b> in the U.S.	33	36	41	15
Ending <b>trade agreements</b> with countries such as China	19	23	19	15
Ensuring <b>inexpensive energy</b> is available for manufacturing	7	4	10	6
Don't know	7	7	10	8

- **SWING VOTERS SHOW LESS CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT THAN CORE DEMOCRATS.** Only 33% of Swing voters agree government policies reward those who work hard and play by the rules. Nearly half (46%) of Democrats agree with that statement.
- **SWING AND DEMOCRATIC VOTERS DIFFER ON HOW TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE.** Two-thirds (63%) of voters overall support a carbon tax to slow global climate change. However, when subsequently asked to choose between a tax to spur investment in clean and renewable energy or building on existing incentives to cut carbon emissions, Democrats narrowly favor a carbon tax (49% to 44%), but Swing voters (60% to 30%) and Republicans (67% to 21%) prefer building on existing incentives like fuel economy standards.
  - However, Swing voters side with Democrats when asked if they are more concerned about moving too quickly away from fossil fuels than moving too slowly. Both Democrats (67-24%) and Swing voters (55-32%) are more concerned about moving too slowly. Republicans are more concerned about moving too quickly (52% to 32%).
- **SWING VOTERS ARE MORE FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE THAN DEMOCRATIC VOTERS.** Almost all battleground voters strongly agree increased investment in infrastructure, like roads and bridges, would improve the economy, and 85% say it would have a positive impact on job creation. But Democrats favor taking advantage of low interest rates to borrow to invest by 50% to 46% margin, while Swing voters oppose borrowing by a whopping 60% to 36% margin. Two-thirds of Republicans also oppose borrowing to invest.
- **SWING VOTERS ARE MORE SKEPTICAL THAN DEMOCRATS OF CALLS FOR “FREE” COLLEGE FOR EVERYONE.** When asked to choose between free college paid for by taxing Wall Street speculators and a proposal to offer three-year college degrees, thereby cutting college tuition costs by a quarter, Democrats picked free tuition by 52%-39%, but Swing voters pick three year degrees by a 63% to 29% margin.

Reduce College Costs – 3 Years v. Free College

Thinking about ways to reduce the cost of college, which would you prefer?				
	All	Swing	Party ID	
			Dem	Rep
<b>Difference</b>	<b>+21</b>	<b>+34</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>+46</b>
<b>Make college degrees available in three years</b> instead of four by focusing on competency, not credit hours, reducing tuition costs by as much as 25%	55	63	39	66
<b>Make tuition free at public colleges</b> and universities and pay for it by imposing a tax on Wall Street speculators	34	29	52	20
Don't know	11	9	9	14

- SWING AND DEMOCRATIC VOTERS HAVE DIFFERENT VIEWS ON HOW TO BEST ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF FALLING WAGES.** Swing voters place more emphasis on helping companies compete and win globally, while Democrats say the best way is to focus on killing trade agreements, raising the minimum wage, and taxing financial speculation. By 56% to 34%, Swing voters favor a focus on helping companies compete and win globally and insisting they share the profits with workers, while by 53% to 40%, Democrats favor canceling trade agreements, increasing the minimum wage, and taxing Wall Street speculation.<sup>2</sup>

How To Raise Wages

In the last several years, American workers' wages and family incomes have dropped. Thinking about the solution to this problem, which is the best approach?				
	All	Swing	Party ID	
			Dem	Rep
<b>Difference</b>	<b>+19</b>	<b>+22</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>+40</b>
Middle class American workers do best when the companies they work for compete effectively and make profits. Government should <b>help American companies compete and win on the global front</b> and insist they share the profits with workers.	54	56	40	64
Increased corporate profits have not helped middle class American workers. Government should <b>cancel trade agreements, raise the minimum wage, and tax financial speculation by Wall Street</b> to invest in good-paying jobs and help end income inequality.	35	34	53	24
Don't know	11	9	7	12

<sup>2</sup> Note: As outlined later, this result appears to be driven by support for the minimum wage and taxing speculation, not by support for ending trade agreements. Both Democratic and Swing voters favor keeping trade agreements, not cancelling them.

## Where Do Swing Voters And Democrats Have Similar Views?

Both Swing and Democratic voters see the economy as the top challenge facing the country. While Swing voters put creating economic growth above fairness, both Democrats and Swing voters believe reducing the income gap between rich and poor should be a priority for the next President.

Among both groups, most believe that with hard work you can get ahead and that the United States is the strongest economic power in the world.

Among both groups, most believe it is important to create an environment that allows American companies to be competitive with foreign businesses, and to have a strong economy, we must rely heavily on trade, which makes trade agreements important.

## Shared Focus On The Economy And Belief In The American Economy's Strength

- **MOST VOTERS REJECT THE CLAIM THAT “THE DECK IS STACKED AGAINST PEOPLE LIKE THEM.”** Just 39% of Swing voters see the deck as stacked against them. It's a closer call for Democrats with 47% agreeing. Only a third of Republicans agree.<sup>3</sup>
- **ALL VOTERS GIVE TOP PRIORITY TO JOBS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH.** However, Swing voters and Democrats put the economy first by large margins, followed by health care, education, and security. Republicans rank security and defense as almost as important as the economy.

## Economic Approaches

- **THE CONSENSUS BEHIND MORE INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE IS BROAD AND DEEP.** Among Democrats, 92% agree (56% strongly agree) increased infrastructure investment would be good for the economy. 81% of Republicans and 77% of Swing voters also endorse that view.
- **ALL VOTERS, PARTICULARLY DEMOCRATS, AGREE GETTING AHEAD WILL REQUIRE HIGHER LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING.** 71% of Democrats strongly agree getting ahead in the new American economy will require higher levels of education and job training. Among Swing voters, 60% strongly agree, and among Republicans, 56% strongly agree.

## Broad Backing For Trade And Trade Agreements

All voters express concern about U.S. jobs moving overseas. In fact, they rank it higher on their list of concerns than regulation, inequality, and slow economic growth. Notwithstanding the prevalence of anti-trade rhetoric in the presidential campaign, three in four battleground voters agree that to have a strong economy, the U.S. must rely on trade with other countries. A solid majority (55%) believes new trade agreements with strong labor and environmental standards can help the economy and reject the idea that the costs of such agreements outweigh the benefits.

It is important to note that Democrats and Swing voters mostly believe trade agreements are not the cause of jobs moving overseas, and they show little interest in protectionism. On the contrary, these voters believe trade agreements are essential to economic growth.

- **THERE IS WIDESPREAD AGREEMENT ON THE NECESSITY OF TRADE AND TRADE AGREEMENTS.** Regardless of party, voters agree the U.S. must rely on trade to have a strong economy. Contrary to conventional wisdom, Democrats are actually more likely to agree this is true. Three in four

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<sup>3</sup> While less than half of voters said the deck is stacked against people like them, by a 65-31 margin, Americans say the economic system favors power interests, not that it is generally fair to most Americans. Pew Survey, 2/10/16



(75%) battleground voters, including 73% of Swing voters and 82% of Democrats, say to have a strong economy, the U.S. must rely heavily on trade with other countries, which makes these agreements important.

- **STRONG MAJORITIES OF VOTERS, REGARDLESS OF PARTY, SAY THE CAUSE OF LOST MANUFACTURING JOBS IS COMPETITION FROM CHEAPER LABOR – NOT BAD TRADE AGREEMENTS.** 65% of Swing voters and 72% of Democrats point to competition from cheaper labor, not trade agreements, as the cause of lost jobs. A solid majority of Republicans (59%) agree though they are somewhat more likely to blame trade agreements.

*Cause Of Lost Jobs*

Do you think labor-intensive industries, like furniture and textile manufacturing, are facing challenges and cutting jobs?				
	All	Swing	Party ID	
			Dem	Rep
<b>Difference</b>	<b>+39</b>	<b>+36</b>	<b>+49</b>	<b>+27</b>
Because of <b>competition from overseas</b> as other countries build their own industries that use lower priced labor	66	65	72	59
Because the United State has <b>negotiated bad trade agreements</b>	27	29	23	32
Don't know	8	6	5	9

- **TWO-THIRDS OF DEMOCRATS AND A MAJORITY OF SWING VOTERS SAY TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH TOUGH LABOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS HELP THE ECONOMY – NOT THAT THEY ARE BAD EVEN IF THEY MEET THESE STANDARDS.** A majority of Democrats (66%) and Swing voters (54%) say new trade agreements can help the economy and create good paying jobs if we ensure strong labor and environmental standards. They disagree that the costs of trade agreements outweigh the benefits even if we ensure strong labor and environmental standards.

*Trade Agreement Support*

Which is closer to your view on trade agreements that have been passed in the United States?				
	All	Swing	Party ID	
			Dem	Rep
<b>Difference</b>	<b>+23</b>	<b>+19</b>	<b>+41</b>	<b>0</b>
New <b>trade agreements can help the economy</b> and create good paying jobs if we ensure strong labor and environmental standards	55	54	66	40
The <b>costs of trade agreements outweigh the benefits</b> even if we ensure strong labor and environmental standards	32	35	25	40
Don't know	12	11	9	20

## Technology

- VOTERS EXPRESS POSITIVE VIEWS ON THE OVERALL IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE. ACROSS PARTY LINES, MORE VOTERS SAY TECHNOLOGY HAS BEEN GOOD FOR THE U.S. ECONOMY BECAUSE OF THE GOOD PAYING JOBS IT HAS CREATED THAN THAT IS HAS BEEN BAD BECAUSE OF THE DISPLACEMENT AND DISRUPTION IT CAN CAUSE.** Unsurprisingly, college educated and younger voters are the most uniformly positive about the role of technology. While most non-college and older voters also see technology as positive, roughly a third of each of these groups sees technology as a negative force on the economy.

### Views of Technology

When it comes to the <b>role technology plays in the economy</b> , which is closer to your view?								
	All	Swing	Age		Education		Party ID	
			<50	50+	<Coll	Coll+	Dem	Rep
<b>Difference</b>	<b>+37</b>	<b>+29</b>	<b>+49</b>	<b>+28</b>	<b>+19</b>	<b>+54</b>	<b>+36</b>	<b>+39</b>
Technology has been <b>good for the U.S. economy</b> . It has created millions of good paying jobs in industries that didn't exist before, like app development, robotics, information technology and data analysis	66	60	73	61	57	75	66	67
Technology has been <b>bad for the U.S. economy</b> . It has replaced American workers with automation, disrupted industries, and made it easier for companies to move jobs overseas	29	31	24	33	38	21	30	28
Don't know	5	10	3	6	5	4	3	5

- DEMOCRATS AND SWING VOTERS WANT TO FOCUS ON INCREASING JOB TRAINING FOR HIGH-TECH MANUFACTURING, NOT BRINGING BACK LOWER-SKILLED JOBS.** When looking at the future of manufacturing, most Americans say the government should focus on increasing the skill level of the work force, so people can work in high-tech manufacturing, instead of working to bring back manufacturing jobs that do not require advanced education. Even non-college voters prefer a focus on training; however, the margin is narrower (46 to 42). Democrats are the most likely to say the focus should be on high-tech manufacturing – 57% prefer this, while Swing voters prefer this approach by a smaller 50-40 margin. Younger voters are also much more likely to prefer a focus on high-tech manufacturing jobs.

### Manufacturing Jobs

Thinking about <b>manufacturing jobs</b> , which would you prefer the government do?								
	All	Swing	Age		Education		Party ID	
			<50	50+	<Coll	Coll+	Dem	Rep
<b>Difference</b>	<b>+9</b>	<b>+10</b>	<b>+20</b>	<b>+3</b>	<b>+4</b>	<b>+17</b>	<b>+22</b>	<b>+2</b>
Increase efforts to <b>educate and train workers</b> for jobs in high-tech manufacturing, so the U.S. has high-skilled labor force that will attract and keep new employers	49	50	56	46	46	54	57	47
Work to <b>bring back manufacturing jobs</b> that do not require advanced education or training, like textiles or automobiles, that have moved overseas	40	40	36	43	42	37	35	45
Don't know	10	10	7	11	12	9	8	8

- **DEMOCRATS AND SWING VOTERS BELIEVE MORE JOB TRAINING WILL KEEP COMPANIES FROM MOVING JOBS OVERSEAS.** Democrats say more highly skilled workers (41%) would do the most to keep companies from moving jobs overseas. Swing voters want both job training (36%) and lower corporate tax rates (30%).

### Where Do Republicans And Swing Voters Have Similar Views?

Swing voters, by definition, are up for grabs. If Democrats fail to speak directly to their concerns, that will give Republicans an opportunity to stress those issues on which Swing voters tilt slightly more in their direction. So far, populist themes have dominated the Democratic nomination battle. While Swing voters respond to some elements of that message, they are much more concerned about a strong, growing, and competitive economy than fairness and redistribution. Looking ahead to the general election, this poll's findings suggest that to be responsive to the concerns of Swing voters in crucial swing states, Democrats will have to transcend the limits of populism and fashion a pro-growth message.

- **LIKE REPUBLICANS, SWING VOTERS ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE ECONOMY.** 56% of Swing voters say they are worried about the future of the U.S. economy as do 60% of Republicans. In contrast, 42% of Democrats say they are worried about the economy, but 48% are optimistic. As noted above, this is probably largely because Democrats have more faith in the President's leadership than Republicans or the less partisan-aligned Swing voters. Despite this, by 62% to 38%, Democrats give the current state of the economy a negative (fair or poor) rating.
- **SWING VOTERS AND REPUBLICANS PRIORITIZE A GROWING AND STRONG ECONOMY.** Swing voters say the U.S. needs a growing (38%) and strong (27%) economy. Like Republicans, few say we need a fairer economy. Democrats place a far higher priority on economic fairness, but even among Democrats, growth is seen as the highest priority.
- **MOST SWING VOTERS WANT TO STIMULATE PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH, NOT PUNISH U.S. BUSINESSES.** By 15 points (55-40), Swing voters say it's better for our economy to help our people grow their businesses and turn their ideas into businesses than to stop special interests and corporations from taking advantage of people. Republicans are also squarely focused on growth with two-thirds (67%) prioritizing it over reining in the special interests.
- **SWING VOTERS AND REPUBLICANS BELIEVE LOWER CORPORATE TAX RATES WOULD HELP U.S. COMPANIES COMPETE INTERNATIONALLY AND PREVENT JOBS FROM GOING OVERSEAS.** A majority of Republicans (55%) say lowering corporate tax rates would do the most to keep companies from moving jobs overseas. Swing voters favor both job training (36%) and lower corporate tax rates (30%).

### Strengthening The Economy: Policy Solutions

We tested economic policies based on a scale to measure how much voters believe they would impact the creation of jobs that pay well. For each policy, voters were asked if it would have a major impact, some impact, little impact, or no impact on creating an economy that has more jobs that pay well. The universal pension system policy was tested on a support scale to measure if voters strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the policy.

- Voters support (84% total support) creating a universal pension system, enabling all workers to open retirement savings accounts when they get their first jobs and take those accounts with them as they change jobs. Democrats, at 94%, are especially enthusiastic.

- Almost all voters (91%) favor a new system of job training, which combines on-the-job training and classroom instruction and enables people to earn credentials that validate their mastery of valuable skills.
- Similarly, a career pathways system that doesn't just help when you are unemployed, but gives you the education and skills you need to find a new job or advance in your current one is nearly universally supported (87% total impact on job creation). This view is slightly more widespread among Democrats (95% total impact on job creation) and Swing voters (90% total impact on job creation) than it is among Republicans (83% total impact on job creation).
- 78% of voters agree cutting the top corporate tax rate to 15% to make American companies more competitive with other countries that have cut their tax rates would have a positive impact on job creation. Democrats are somewhat less likely to see the value in these cuts (73% total impact on job creation) than are Swing voters (79%) or Republicans (88%).
- There is also broad support for reducing the number of occupational licenses needed to start a business and increasing the number of states that recognize other states' licenses, making it easier for entrepreneurs to start a business (79% total impact on job creation).
- Voters also strongly favor a base-closing style commission to prune old regulations that have accumulated over decades. 78% of voters say reducing regulatory burdens would have a positive impact on job creation. Interestingly, Democrats are nearly as supportive of this policy as Republicans, suggesting that dealing with the problem of regulatory accumulation could be a rare issue that garners bipartisan support.
- Voters agree trade agreements that require partners to keep digital trade open and free to allow small businesses to use low-cost digital tools would be an effective job creation policy (66% total impact on job creation). This support is strongest among Democrats (67% total impact on job creation), but a majority of Swing voters (62% total impact on job creation) and Republicans (59% total impact on job creation) also believe it will be effective.
- Nearly three-in-four voters (72% total impact on job creation) believe creating 1 million job apprenticeships for on-the-job training at a cost of \$1 billion a year would be an effective economic policy. This is most true for Democrats, among whom 77% say this will have an impact on job creation, but it is also true among Swing voters (66% total impact on job creation) and Republicans (68% total impact on job creation).
- There is widespread support for limiting environmental reviews to two years for all infrastructure projects to ensure we replace our infrastructure in a timely manner. Support is stronger among Swing voters (81% total impact on job creation) and Republicans (77% total impact on job creation), but even Democrats largely believe it will be an effective policy (74% total impact on job creation).

### Economic Policies – Total Impact

Do you think this would have a major impact, some impact, little impact, or no impact on creating an economy that creates more jobs that pay well?				
Ranked by All	% Total Impact			
	All	Swing	Party ID	
			Dem	Rep
Job Training	91	91	94	93
Career Pathways	87	90	95	83
Licenses	79	74	79	78
Corporate Taxes	78	79	73	88
Regulations	78	75	80	82
Environmental Reviews	75	81	74	77
Apprenticeships	72	66	77	68
Digital Trade	66	62	67	59

### Additional Solutions With Wide Support

We tested policies to measure how much support each policy received from voters. For each policy, voters were asked if they strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the policy.

- A near majority of voters (49%) support more efficiently providing assistance to low-income Americans by letting them use smartphones to get information about government programs and apply for benefits online. This support is largely driven by Democrats, among whom two-thirds (67%) support the idea. Support is weaker among Swing voters (40%) and Republicans (31%).
- There is widespread support (85%) for reforming the rules by which new drugs and medical products are approved to encourage increased innovation and better patient outcomes. This support varies little across party lines with Democrats (90% total support) only slightly more likely to support it than Swing voters (86% total support) and Republicans (84% total support).
- There is widespread support (74%) for making college degrees available in three years instead of four by focusing on competency, not credit hours, reducing tuition costs by as much as 25%. Support is strongest among Democrats (83%) and Swing voters (76%). While weaker, a majority of Republicans (66%) also support this proposal.

### Policies – Total Support

Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose this proposal?				
Ranked by All	% Total Support			
	All	Swing	Party ID	
			Dem	Rep
Drug Approval Process	85	86	90	84
Universal Pension System	84	82	94	79
3 Year College	74	76	83	66
Carbon Tax	63	65	86	39
Online Government Programs	49	40	67	31

## Conclusion

For Democrats, the road to victory in 2016 very likely runs through the four key battleground states surveyed in this poll. Comprising just over a fifth of the electorate, Swing voters will cast the deciding votes in these states. They will determine whether Democrats can accomplish the difficult feat of holding the White House for a third successive term, recapture the Senate, and put themselves within striking distance of winning control of the House in subsequent elections.

Although the Swing Voters in these states voted for Barack Obama in 2012, Democrats cannot take their support for granted in 2016. Overall, they look like the rest of America, but they aren't the angry pitchfork wielding individuals who are often portrayed in the media. They are worried and looking for leaders who offer a path forward. In fact, the polarizing tone of the Democratic and Republican nominating battles is unlikely to appeal to these voters. As self-described independents, they dislike strident partisanship. They are also far less liberal and more moderate than Democratic base voters. This means a winning general election message will need to appeal to those interests and values Swing voters and a candidates' base voters share in common.

The main elements of such a message emerge clearly from this survey. It should put growth first and offer aspiring voters a positive account of how they can get ahead, rather than claiming the economic game is rigged against them. It should include bold proposals to stop jobs from going overseas by lowering business taxes to make U.S. firms globally competitive, and lowering regulatory obstacles to innovation and entrepreneurship. Rather than promising to build a new economy by bringing back old manufacturing jobs, it should emphasize America's advantages in high-tech, advanced manufacturing as well as the benefits of open global markets and trade. It should stress pragmatic ways to make college affordable and, crucially, the need to create "career pathways" that enable U.S. workers to acquire career and technical skills in high demand. It should enable low and middle income families to buy homes and start saving for retirement from their very first jobs. And it should use mobile broadband and smart phones to empower vulnerable Americans to lift themselves out of poverty.

**Text of Economic Policies – Ranked by Major Impact**

**Job Training**

Improve job training by combining classroom training and practical work experience to allow people to earn credentials and make it easier to turn their training into a new job.

**Career Pathways**

Create a career pathways education program that doesn't just help when you are unemployed, but gives you the education and skills you need to find a new job or advance in your current one.

**Corporate Taxes**

Cut the top corporate tax rate to 15% to make American companies more competitive with other countries that have cut their tax rates, so there are fewer incentives for American companies to move overseas.

**Licenses**

Reduce the number of local licenses needed to start a business and increase the number of states that recognize other states' licenses, making it easier for entrepreneurs to start a business.

**Regulations**

The federal government passes new regulation, but never gets rid of old ones. There should be a commission to identify waste and duplication.

**Apprenticeships**

Create 1 million job apprenticeships for on-the-job training, at a cost of \$1 billion a year.

**Environmental Reviews**

Limit environmental reviews to two years for all infrastructure projects to ensure we replace our infrastructure in a timely manner.

**Digital Trade**

Enact trade agreements that require trading partners to keep digital trade open and free to allow small businesses to use low-cost digital tools to trade with other countries.

**Text of Policies – Ranked by Strongly Support**

**Universal Pension System**

Create a universal pension system to enable all workers to save for retirement, making the process simpler and allowing people to take their pensions with them when changing jobs.

**Drug Approval Process**

Reform the rules by which new drugs and medical products are approved to encourage increased innovation and better patient outcomes.

**3 Year College**

Make college degrees available in three years instead of four by focusing on competency, not credit hours, reducing tuition costs by as much as 25%.

**Carbon Tax**

Create a nationwide carbon tax on fossil fuels that produce greenhouse gas emissions that will slow global climate change and generate revenue to invest in technologies that create jobs and produce clean and efficient energy.

**Online Government Programs**

More efficiently provide assistance to low-income Americans by letting them use smartphones to get information about programs they qualify for and apply for benefits online