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KEY FINDINGS FROM ENGAGIOUS-AXIOS FOCUS GROUP WITH 12 “OBAMA-TRUMP” AND “ROMNEY- CLINTON” VOTERS IN CANTON, OH ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2018

CONTEXT:

In conjunction with [Axios](#), our firm conducted a two-hour focus group session with a cross-section of six “Obama-Trump” voters and six “Romney-Clinton” voters in Canton, OH. Five women and seven men participated in the session, ranging in age from 20s to 70s. All said they are “extremely likely” to vote in November. Respondents used hand-held dials to answer a wide variety of multiple-choice and zero-to-10 scale questions, and those scores were used as a touchstone for discussion. The session was moderated by [Rich Thau](#), President of [Engagious](#).

1) CHASM EXISTS ON AMERICA’S DIRECTION:

When asked in which direction America is moving on a scale from zero (“totally wrong direction”) to 10 (“totally right direction”), the average score for “Romney-Clinton” voters was 2.3, compared to 6.3 for “Obama-Trump” voters. By comparison, there was only a modest difference in the perceived direction Ohio is moving; 4.5 for “Romney-Clinton” voters vs. 5.3 for “Obama-Trump” voters.

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Evidence given for America's right direction:

- ✓ Job growth
- ✓ The economy is picking up from cutting taxes and regulations, which helps
- ✓ businesses
- ✓ Borrowing money from China has "ceased"
- ✓ Trade agreements are being redone so they are more favorable to the U.S.
- ✓ The Supreme Court

Evidence given for America's wrong direction:

- ✗ The unpredictable Administration—not knowing what will come next is "frightening"
- ✗ The tax cuts benefited corporations, but will not benefit individuals
- ✗ We're being run "like a South American banana republic, and I'm very concerned"
- ✗ The U.S. is bailing out a Chinese company, ZTE, for devices that are not supposed to
- ✗ be used anymore on military bases—Trump is spending money on things he shouldn't be spending money on

2) THESE SWING VOTERS ARE NOT SENDING TRUMP A MESSAGE WITH UPCOMING U.S. SENATE ELECTION:

Only two of 12 respondents say they plan to convey their feelings about President Trump with their vote in November. Both of these respondents are "Romney-Clinton" voters who would vote for Sherrod Brown whether Trump was President or not. Nonetheless, they still feel a vote for Brown sends a message about their displeasure toward Trump.

3) DEMOCRATIC CONTROL OF CONGRESS IN '19: "ROMNEY-CLINTON" VOTERS WANT IT AND "OBAMA-TRUMP" VOTERS NEUTRAL:

When asked, "On a scale from zero to 10, how would you feel if in 2019 Democrats were in charge of at least one branch of Congress? Zero is much less pleased; 10 is much more pleased," "Romney-Clinton" voters scored at 7.8; "Obama-Trump" voters scored at 4.7.

4) MORE WOMEN IN OFFICE IS A GOOD THING, BUT NOT TERRIBLY IMPORTANT:

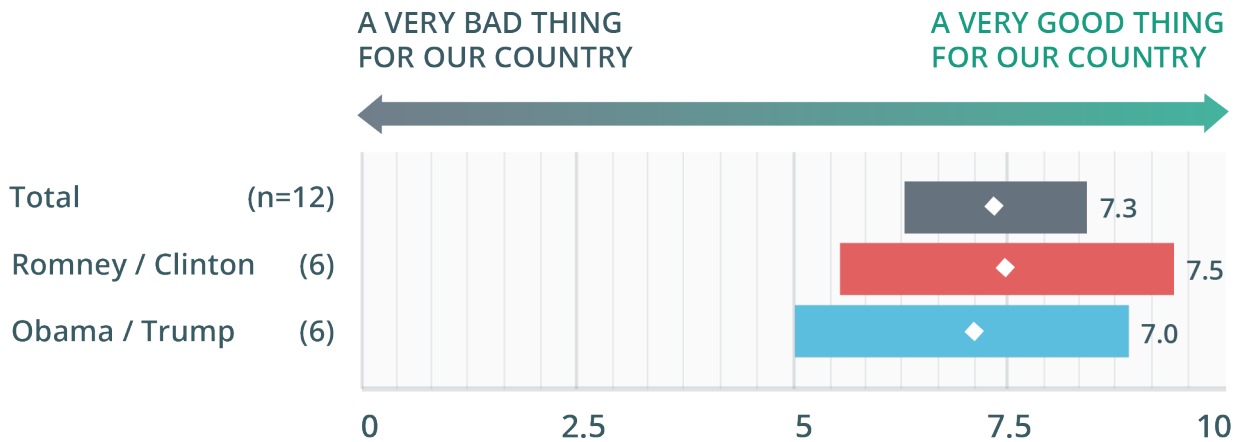
Eight of 12 respondents perceive more women to be running for office this year than in previous years. On a scale from zero to 10, with zero being having more women run for office is a very bad thing for our country and 10 being a very good thing for our country, the average score was 7.3 (men at 6.9; women at 7.8). Yet, when told that "in 2017, 105 women held seats in Congress, which is roughly 1/5 of all 535 seats" and then asked, "how important is it to you that America get to the

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point where half of all seats are held by women?,” the average score was 4.4 (4.1 for men; 4.8 for women). It was even less of an imperative to have a female president in respondents’ lifetimes. The importance score for women was 4.2; for men, just 3.4.

One “Romney-Clinton” female explained: *“I am very much for women’s rights, based upon education, based upon experience. I would demand the same treatment in the workplace as a male. However, when it comes to the political arena, I don’t care whether you’re male, female, or chimpanzee. I care about your competency and what you’re going to do. Where is your honor? I want to see that.”*

In general, on the scale from zero to 10, is having more women run for office...



5) TWO OF 12 SWING VOTERS WOULD CHANGE THEIR 2016 VOTE:

Of our evenly-split sample of 12, one “Romney-Clinton” voter would vote for Trump if another election were held today, and one “Obama-Trump” voter would shift to Clinton.

The respondent who would vote for Trump this time, instead of Hillary Clinton, told us there’s “a lot more corruption” with Clinton, and he does not see as much with Trump. He believes more of her corruption has been exposed by the media since the 2016 election.

The respondent who would switch from Trump to Clinton voted for “the lesser of two evils” in 2016. He believes Trump takes credits for his successes and blames everyone else when something doesn’t go his way—and he’s sick of it. He thinks Trump cannot take the blame for anything he has done.

6) TRUMP VIEWED AS HAVING FAILED TO DRAIN THE SWAMP IN DC:

On a scale from zero to 10, with zero being “totally failed” and 10 being “totally succeeded,” “Romney-Clinton” voters give Trump a 1.7 on his success in “draining the swamp” in DC; “Obama-Trump” voters give Trump a 4.3. The latter group said they hoped he would do it, but originally had low expectations he’d be successful; Trump met those low expectations.

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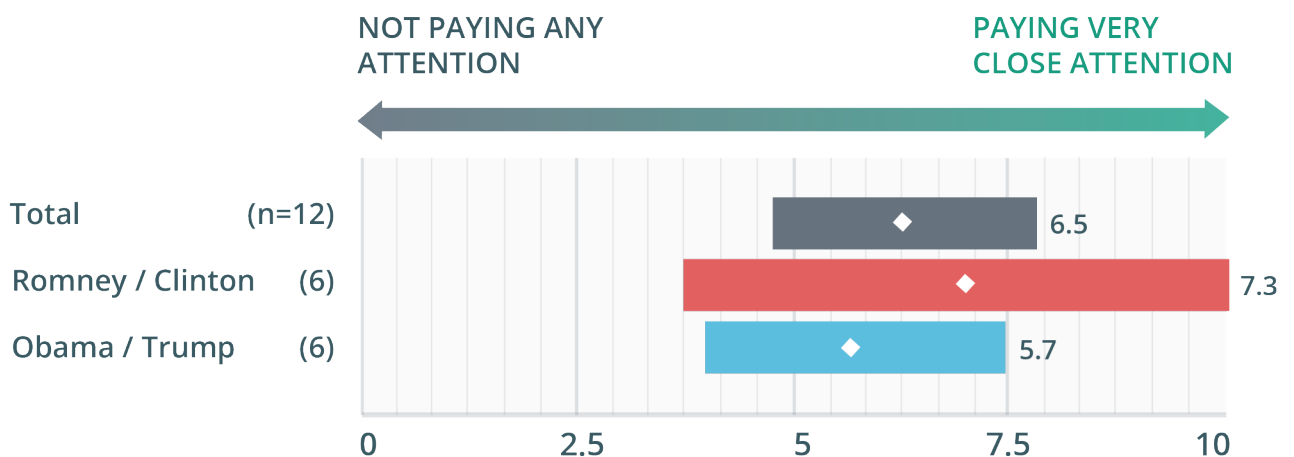
7) THESE SWING VOTERS ARE PAYING ATTENTION TO NEWS ABOUT THE MUELLER INVESTIGATION, AND DISAGREE WHEN TRUMP CALLS IT A “WITCH HUNT”:

On a scale from zero to 10, with zero being “not paying any attention” to the investigation, and 10 being “paying close attention,” “Romney-Clinton” voters scored this at a 7.3; “Obama-Trump” voters score it a 5.7. As for the witch hunt, “Romney-Clinton” voters strongly disagree, scoring it at 1.5; “Obama-Trump” voters averaged at neutral, scoring it at 5.2.

When we asked respondents who strongly disagree this is a “witch hunt” why they feel that way, one explained: *“I look at the evidence that is surfacing and it’s never-ending. I fully expect that the Republican Congress will ignore the facts that Mueller reveals in his report. Based on the convictions, based on the indictments—to say that this is a ‘witch hunt’ is nonsensical.”* – “Romney-Clinton” Male

One “Obama-Trump” respondent strongly agrees that it is a “witch hunt.” He argued people were paid to find “dirt” on Trump, and the people associated with Trump have not been tried on anything related to the Russia investigation, only on personal matters.

On a scale from zero to 10, how closely are you paying attention to news about special counsel Robert Mueller and his investigation into the Trump Administration?

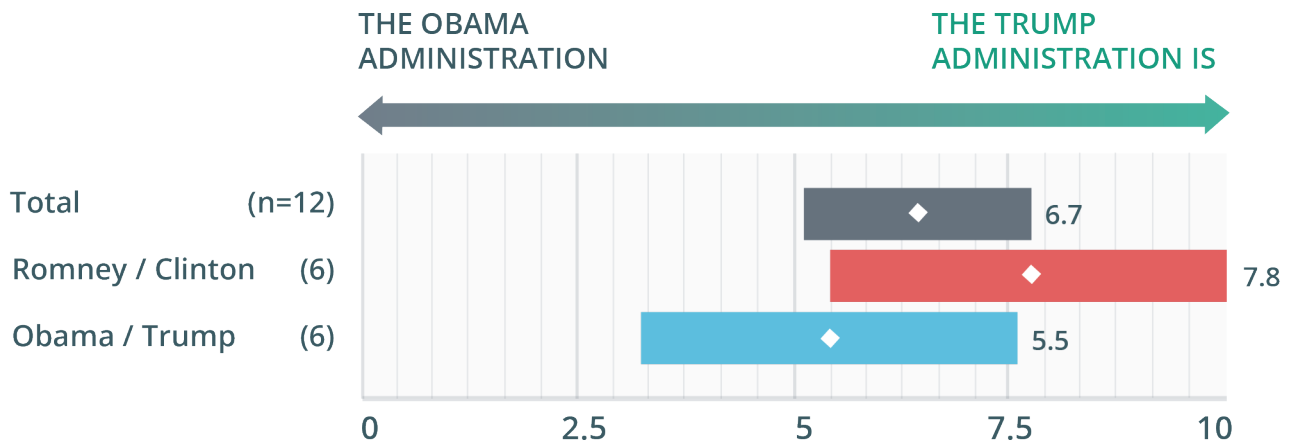


8) TRUMP ADMINISTRATION VIEWED AS MORE CORRUPT THAN OBAMA ADMINISTRATION:

When asked, “On a scale from zero to 10, in comparing the last two Administrations, would you say: Zero is ‘The Obama Administration was much more corrupt than the Trump Administration’ and 10 is ‘The Trump Administration is much more corrupt than the Obama Administration,?’” “Romney-Clinton” voters scored this at a 7.8; “Obama-Trump” voters score it a 5.5.

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On a scale from zero to 10, in comparing the last two Administrations, would you say...



9) “ROMNEY-CLINTON” VOTERS ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO VOTE FOR 2018 CANDIDATES ADVOCATING TRUMP’S IMPEACHMENT; “OBAMA-TRUMP” VOTERS ARE MUCH LESS LIKELY:

On a zero-to-10 scale, “Romney-Clinton” voters score this at 8.0 (much more likely to vote for a candidate advocating impeachment); “Obama-Trump” voters score this at 2.7 (much less likely).

Respondents who would be much more likely to vote for someone who advocates for impeachment suggested Republicans impeached President Clinton for less. One “Romney-Clinton” female remarked, “I don’t care for Trump and I want him out of there.”

To better understand their thinking, we asked why they would want to vote for someone supporting impeachment knowing it is very unlikely Trump would be removed from office, given the likely composition of the Senate in 2019. The group was split—6 to 6—as to whether it is OK under some circumstances to use the impeachment process to highlight what a President has done wrong, knowing very likely actual removal is remote.

One “Romney-Clinton” voter said proceeding in this fashion would be a “moral correction” for this country. Those objecting to the idea cited the cost of going through the process, the harm it could do to the President in his role as Commander in Chief, and believed the charges may be political—pursued by his opponents to harm him, rather than having valid proof the President has done something wrong.

Ten of 12 respondents—including all the “Romney-Clinton voters”—said they believe Democrats would file articles of impeachment if they were to win the House in 2019. They also said Democrats have it already set in their mind that they will do that if they gain control.

10) MOST BELIEVE SEPTEMBER 11 IS BEING COMMEMORATED APPROPRIATELY:

Eight of 12 respondents believe America is doing the right amount to commemorate September 11. Three of 12 believe we should move on from September 11 because it was a long time ago. One told us we should be doing more to commemorate the day. Those who said we should move on from September 11—it was a long time ago—said we mourned and should move on, but we should not forget. Some compared it to having a “grieving period” like after the loss of a family member, and said they feel we have had our grieving period.

Given a choice of four threats—illegal immigration, terrorists from overseas, an attack from a country with nuclear weapons, and a domestic mass shooter—eight of the 12 respondents said terrorists from overseas remain a first or second concern.

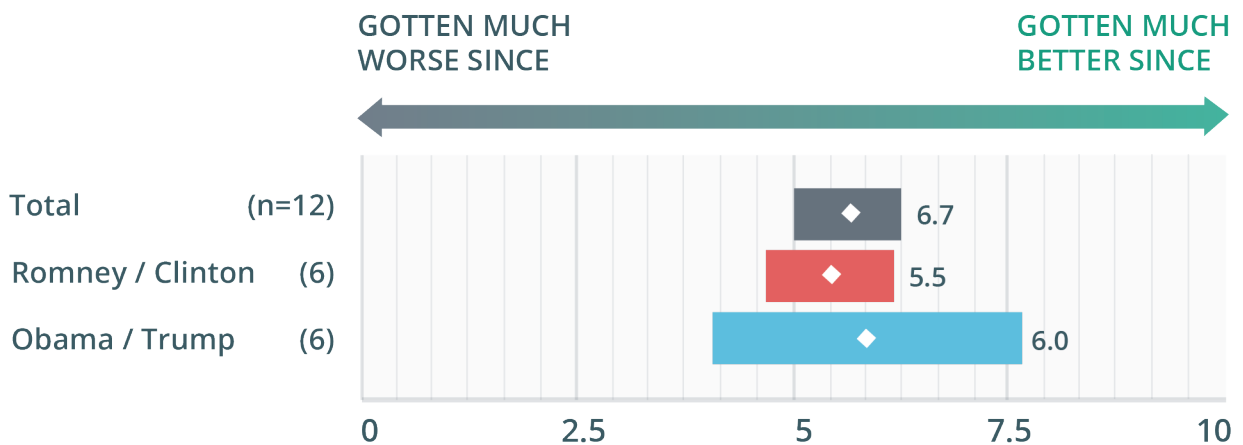
11) BOOMING ECONOMY? WHERE?:

During our session, we asked respondents on a zero-to-10 scale how much better or worse the economy has gotten for them and their family under President Trump, and how it’s performed for America overall. Zero means much worse; 10 means much better. For them and their families, the overall average was 5.8. For America overall, the average score was 6.0.

Significantly, only three of 12 respondents agree the U.S. economy is “booming.” In the group, some said they are still living paycheck to paycheck. One “Obama-Trump” male respondent remarked: *“I don’t feel that it’s booming. It’s booming for a certain demographic. I don’t think it’s booming for most people. I think the people that are extremely wealthy are benefiting the most, and for me, it’s not [beneficial].”*

For both types of voters, the Federal tax cuts signed into law last December have been only slightly positive for them and their family, averaging 5.3/10 overall.

For you and your family, on a scale of zero to 10, has the economy...



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12) MUCH STRONGER SUPPORT FOR NAFTA RENEGOTIATION THAN FOR NEW TARIFFS:

“Obama-Trump” voters were much more supportive of the President’s trade policies than “Romney-Clinton” voters. The “Obama-Trump” voters scored their support for NAFTA renegotiation at 7.5 and for new tariffs on overseas goods at 6.2; the “Romney-Clinton” voters expressed their opposition to NAFTA renegotiation with a score of 4.2, and for new tariffs on overseas goods at 3.3.

We learned the generally lower scores for new tariffs were due to the complexity of dealing with dozens of countries overall (as opposed to the ease of dealing with just two others with NAFTA); concerns about higher prices in the U.S.; and questions about our ability to start making things in the U.S. Supporters for higher tariffs would like to see less dependence on countries such as China, whose products are viewed to be often dangerous and inferior.

13) BIG GAP ON CLIMATE CHANGE ATTITUDES:

“Romney-Clinton” voters strongly agree (8.2 on a zero-to-10 scale) that “Compared to when you were much younger, the weather in recent years seems weird” and “Compared to when you were much younger, summers in America seem hotter.” (7.0). “Obama-Trump” voters’ scores on those two statements, by contrast, were 4.5 and 3.3, respectively.

Asked for examples of how the weather now is weird, respondents cited:

- “Buckets” of two to three inches of rain, instead of less rain over a longer period of time
- Seasons now have less consistent temperatures—there could be large swings between highs and lows
- Less snow now, compared to when growing up
- The devastation from natural disasters and their impact on people has gotten worse over time

“Romney-Clinton” voters think President Trump should be taking climate change more seriously and promoting more clean energy solutions. “Obama-Trump” voters modestly disagreed.

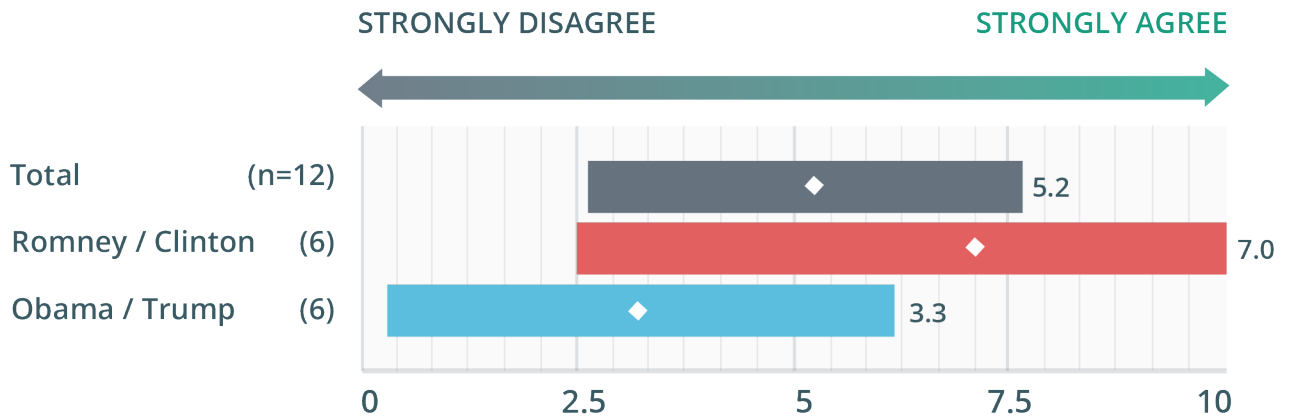
Overall, in the group, nearly all respondents agree that human activities are affecting the climate in some way. As one Obama-Trump voter explained:

“There’s a direct correlation between population, consumption of resources, and affecting the environment around it. If the population goes from this many to [a higher number], and then it goes from this [higher number] to [an even higher number], chances are the environmental effects are roughly going to correlate with that. If we just keep popping kids out, 30 years from now, there’s twice the population...For example, if I take a tree, that one tree is going to supply 10 people with oxygen. If I multiply that to 30 people for that same tree, that tree is not going to be able to keep up, and therefore, it’s going to offset and it’s going to start causing problems. The cure to that would be to plant more trees or to cut back on the people...There has to be a balance between things for things to start going back to the way that they were, or at least to prevent it from going any further. Instead of us trying to

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find a balance, it just seems like everybody is just going hard right and wants to keep going and going and going and going."

On a scale from zero to 10: How strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement: "President Trump should be taking the problem of climate change more seriously."



14) IN THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE NFL, AND THE HOMETOWN OF THE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME, HAVING NFL PLAYERS “TAKE A KNEE” CAUSED A SIX-SIX SPLIT AMONG RESPONDENTS (BUT NOT BY PRIOR VOTING BEHAVIOR)

Respondents offered very different views on the protests. One in favor said this:

"It's not a disrespectful form [of protest]. It's bringing awareness to the fact that there are people being gunned down in the streets. There is clearly a race issue in this country. That's why Colin Kaepernick decided to take a knee to say, 'I'm not disrespecting the flag or the military. I'm actually trying to bring awareness to people and give them information about something that's happening to the people that I align with.'" - "Romney-Clinton" Female

One opposed said this:

"I strongly disagree. I come from a military family. I am a former soldier...If I would do that at my job, I would not be carrying my license. I think there's a time and a place for that. I just think it's very inappropriate. It's not the right place. I'm not saying it's wrong. It's absolutely correct; it's the correct thing, but not then [at an NFL game]." - "Obama-Trump" Female

Whether they agreed or disagreed, most weren't troubled by Nike giving Colin Kaepernick a contract to represent the "Just Do It" campaign.

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15) WIDELY DIVERGENT VIEWS ON WHETHER THE MEDIA IS THE “ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE.” WHAT’S NEARLY UNIFORM IS THE BELIEF THAT PRESIDENT TRUMP SHOULD STOP SAYING IT:

Respondents ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with little uniformity based upon prior voting behavior. One “Obama-Trump” male complained: *“They’re not putting out the news. They’re generating the news. They’re manipulating the news, and they’re fabricating the news. You can’t trust them.”*

But one “Romney-Clinton” male disagreed: *“I think it is freedom of the press. I think it’s important to be informed. It’s important to gather news from various sources because I know if I turn on MSNBC and I watch Rachel, I know where she is. If I turn on Fox, it’s like it’s two different universes, but I know that...Information should never be the enemy.”*

Yet when asked whether the President would be better off not saying that the media is the enemy of the people, almost all agreed. One explained, *“What good does it do?”* Another said, *“It’s like crying wolf.”*

Four of the respondents say they get some news from Facebook, but none said it’s their primary source. None of them would describe Facebook as “news source.”

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