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SUBJECT: University of Austin (UATX) October 2024 Pennsylvania Survey Results
TO:
CC: Morgan Marietta, Dean of the Center for Economics, Politics & History, University of Austin (UATX)
FROM: Ross Hunt, Hunt Research
DATE: 10/9/2024

Executive Summary:

- In the University of Austin's first battleground state survey in the state of Pennsylvania, Former President Donald Trump holds a narrow lead over Vice President Kamala Harris.

- Trump leads by 1% in a head-to-head matchup against Harris, 48.4% to 47.4%. Trump's lead is inside the survey's 3% margin of sampling error. **Pennsylvania is statistically tied.**

- In a full ballot matchup that includes Libertarian and Green candidates Chase Oliver and Jill Stein, Trump leads by just .2%, 46.8% to Harris's 46.6%.

- **Inflation and the economy** are by far the top concern of likely voters (32%), followed by concerns about immigration and the border (13%). Pennsylvania voters also cite concerns about the size and corruption of government (7%), divisive partisanship (6%), threats to democratic institutions (6%) and abortion and healthcare (5%).

- **Educational attainment** remains a powerful predictor of voting behavior: PA voters with a bachelor's degree or a higher degree are voting for Harris 56% to 39%, while those who have not attained a bachelor's degree favor Trump by a similar margin, 57% to 39%.

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Pennsylvania voters are skeptical of institutions of higher education

- The electorate is divided over how much they trust colleges and universities:
    - Over a third **do not trust colleges and universities overall** (38.5%); similarly, more than a third do not trust them to provide accurate and unbiased research (39.3%).
    - A plurality of likely voters (49%) do not trust colleges and universities to provide students with an education free of political bias.
    - Overall, **55% of Pennsylvania voters distrust higher education** for at least one reason.
- Among voters who distrust institutions of higher education, a strong majority (62%) distrust them either because they believe they have **too much ideological or partisan bias** (42%) **or** because they place **too much emphasis of race, gender and identity** (20%).
- **Trust and distrust of higher education** are highly predictive of the Presidential ballot:
    - Voters who trust institutions of higher education are voting 81% for Harris and 16% for Trump;
    - Voters who distrust institutions of higher education voting 76% for Trump and 20% for Harris.
- Strong pluralities of Pennsylvania **agree that specific reforms of higher education** would increase trust: prohibiting colleges from considering race, ethnicity, religion or gender in admissions (46%), balancing the faculty with conservative and liberal professors (45%), and encouraging students to speak their minds, regardless of whether their views are popular (59%).
- A majority of likely **voters (53%) disapprove of pro-Palestinian campus protests against Israel**.
- While 88% favor allowing peaceful protests on campus, 72% believe that universities should punish students who interrupt classes; 90% believe protesters who threaten Jewish students should be punished.
- A strong plurality of voters (47%) believe universities have allowed the protesters too much leeway.

The electorate is divided:

- A majority of voters who support Vice President Harris (52%) say that they do so because they do not want Donald Trump to be President; only 45% say they do so because they want Harris to be President.

- A supermajority of voters who support former President Trump (68%) say they do so because they want him to be President; only 28% say they do so because they do not want Kamala Harris to be President.

- Vice President Harris is winning new voters (those with no previous history of voting in a General Election since 2012) by a margin of 51% to 43% and winning low-propensity voters (those with only one or two votes since 2012) 55% to Trump's 39%; but former President Trump is winning high-propensity General Election voters (three or more votes since 2012) 53% to 44%.

- Partisans have rallied to their nominees, but **independent voters remain divided, leaning left**:
    - 87% of registered Democrats and Green Party voters support Harris; only 10% are voting for Trump; similarly, 87% of registered Republicans and Libertarians support Trump, and only 8% are voting for Harris.
    - Among registered independents, the ballot is statistically tied with a narrow lead for Vice President Harris—49% Harris to 46% Trump.
    - When voters are asked how they would describe their party (irrespective of their registration), 20% of registered Democrats and 17% of registered Republicans identify as independents.
    - Among stated independents, Harris leads inside the margin of error, 46% to 45%.

- There is a large **gender gap**: women support Harris 55% to 41% and men support Trump 57% to 39%.

- Harris leads among voters under 35 by more than two to one and among those 35-49 by 8%; Trump leads by 15% among voters 50-64 and is up 18% with seniors 65+.

- Trump is winning white voters by 6%; Harris leads among non-white voters by 16%. The exception to this rule is **Hispanic voters, who favor Trump by more than two to one**.

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Voters' childhood education, income, and religious experience predict how they will vote today:

- Voters' childhood **expectations about going to college** predict their current Presidential vote:
    - Pennsylvania voters who grew up in communities in which *most* of their peers expected to go to college lean strongly towards Harris (54% Harris to 42% Trump);
    - Those who grew up in communities in which only *some* of their peers expected to go to college lean towards Trump, 52% to 44%;
    - Voters who grew up in communities in which very few of their peers expected to go to college lean strongly towards voting for former President Trump and his running mate Senator J.D. Vance, by a margin of 60% to 36%.
- Similarly, voters' **recollections about how wealthy they were** when they were children reveal a divide in the vote among voters who are currently upper middle class or upper class:
    - Overall, voters who are middle class, upper middle class or upper class (defined for the purposes of this survey as reporting >$80k annual household income) favor Harris 53% to 44% for Trump.
    - However, among such higher-income voters, those who recalled growing up middle class or affluent favor Harris strongly, 61% to 37%,
    - While those higher-income voters who recall growing up poor or working-class support Trump, 52% to 44%.
- **Religious attendance** has changed dramatically in Pennsylvania over the last generation:
    - Only 9% of voters say they never attended church or other religious celebrations as children; among voters today, 40% report that they never attended.
    - Among the roughly one third of the electorate that attended as children but never attend today, Harris leads 62% to 36%; among the 58% of voters who attended as children and still attend today, Trump leads 38% to 58%.

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Methodology:

- On 10/2/2024-10/7/2024, Hunt Research surveyed 1,037 likely 2024 General Election Voters in Pennsylvania on behalf of the University of Austin (UATX).

- 52% of interviews were conducted via text to web, 29% via live cellphone and 19% via live landline.

- Respondents were dialed from a voter file; each respondent was required to confirm their identity, and respondents' self-described sex and age were matched to the voter file record.

- Respondents were screened by self-described likelihood to vote; respondents who indicated they would not vote, would probably not vote, or refused to answer were screened out.

- Respondents were representative of the likely electorate.

- Weights were used to ensure the weighted sample optimally reflects the electorate.

- Weights were constructed using a turnout model based on Pennsylvania 2020 and 2016 General Elections, using voter file and exit polling data, and including factors such as participation in previous elections, gender, age, region, income, education, race, and registered party.

- The survey's margin of sampling error is +/- 3.04%.