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DATE: August 21, 2020
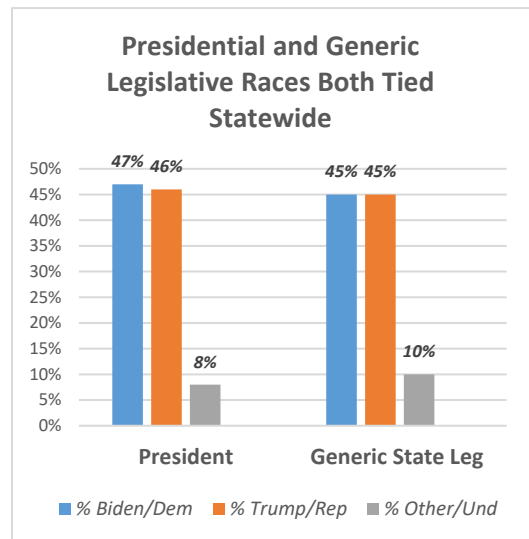
TO: ProgressOhio

FROM: Ben Lazarus, TargetSmart

RE: Incredibly competitive contests for president and down-ballot races in Ohio today

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Our recent poll of Ohio likely 2020 general election[1] voters shows an incredibly competitive race for President, although voters appear primed for change, as 72 percent say things in the United States are pretty seriously off on the wrong track. Joe Biden captures 47 percent of the vote, while Donald Trump takes 46 percent with 5 percent of voters volunteering another candidate and 3 percent undecided.

Trump is viewed a bit less favorably by Ohio voters (43 percent favorable – 51 percent unfavorable) than Biden (44 percent favorable – 48 percent unfavorable), but both candidates are relatively divisive, and the contest is highly charged along partisan lines, although it is tied among self-identified independents (43 to 43 percent).

The contest is tied in suburban census blocks (46 to 47 percent), while Biden leads in urban census blocks (58 to 35 percent) and trails Trump in rural census blocks (38 to 55 percent) across the state. White voters are split evenly between Biden and Trump (46 to 48 percent), while voters of color back Biden by a wide margin (65 to 28 percent). Biden also leads among women (52 to 40 percent), particularly college educated women (58 to 36 percent) and suburban women (52 to 39 percent), while Trump has an edge among men (42 to 52 percent), particularly non-college men (38 to 56 percent). The race for president is tied among both non-college women (48 to 44 percent) and college educated men (47 to 46 percent).

In addition to measuring the race at the top of the ticket, this poll also checked in on a generic state legislative match-up, and the trends are similarly competitive down-ballot with unnamed Democratic and Republicans candidates for state legislature each receiving 45 percent of the vote. Notably, message testing about Democrats and Republicans in the Ohio state legislature reveals widespread voter anger about the Householder corruption scandal, as six-in-ten voters report it makes them less likely to support a Republican candidate for the state legislature. The partisan polarization and key demographic trends that underpin the race for president also underpin the contest for state representative, and broadly all of this data suggests Ohio is a competitive battleground state once again.

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[1] Fielded July 28-August 3, 2020, n=946 representative base sample, n=1,249 total sample including regional oversamples, MoE = +/- 3.6%, blended methodology live phone + web.