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Fr: Trendency Research

Date: December 21, 2018

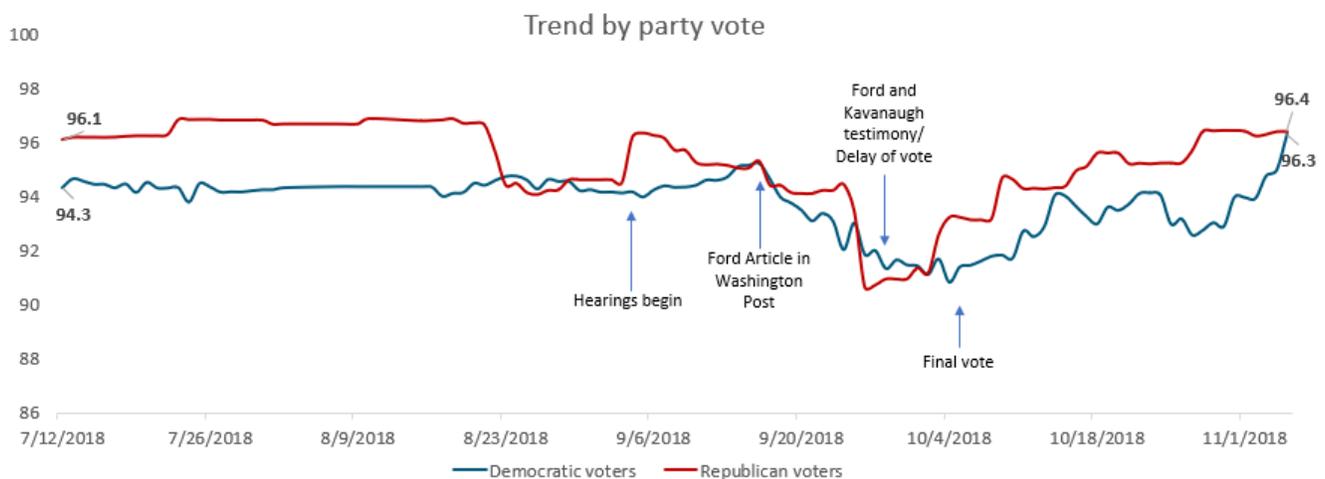
Re: Post-Election Baseline Report Memo

This memo offers a summary some interesting findings of the post-election baseline report. After the 2018 election, we added several questions to the Trendency queue to hopefully provide deeper insight into the November results. Below, we use two of them to break out the data: vote choice for the US House and when they finally decide who they were voting for this year.

Impact of Pivotal Events

In the Trump era news cycle, today’s news is usually yesterday’s news. This year, one event broke through the noise of a busy campaign season and altered voters’ enthusiasm and likelihood of voting, the hearings for Judge Brett Kavanaugh.

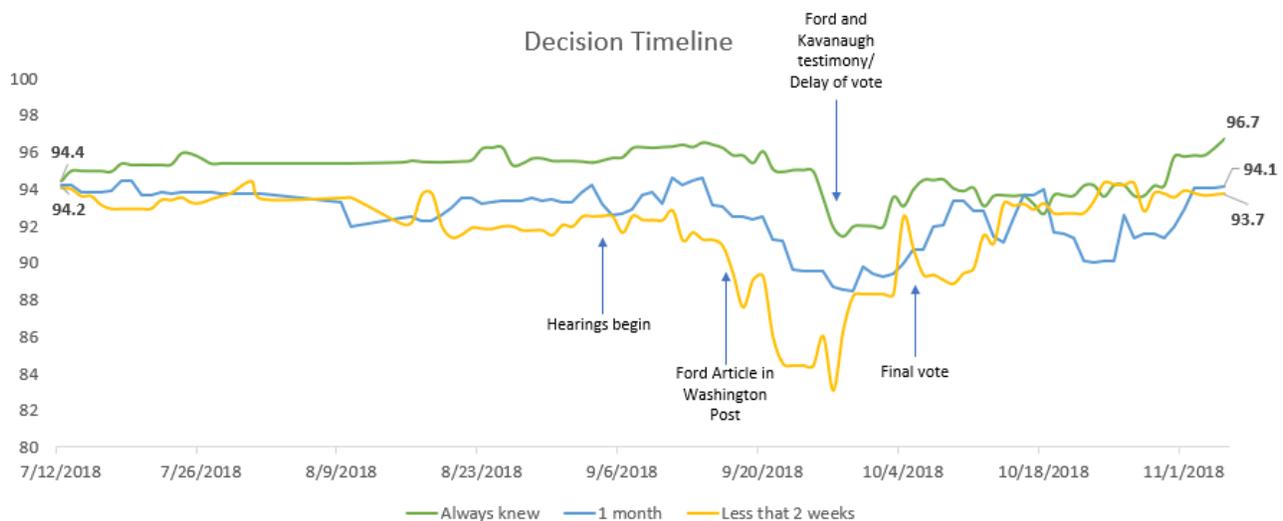
The chart below shows a trendline of answers to our standard vote likelihood question. This question is asked of respondents on a 0-100 scale, and while the values below are self-reported, the movement in likelihood is a valuable clue to voter enthusiasm. Throughout 2017 and 2018, answers to this question did not move rapidly. Instead, they generally slowly increased through 2018. The Kavanaugh and Dr. Ford hearings threw a wrench into voters’ enthusiasm.



One of post-election Trendency questions asked users who they voted for US House of Representatives. Again, this is self-reported, but provides important insights since we can append this new information to old data, such as vote likelihood. For people who ended up voting for Republican candidates, there was a little volatility before the hearings, but it’s apparent they didn’t like what

they were hearing for most of September and early October. This includes a large drop in vote likelihood after the Washington Post published its article about Dr. Ford. When it looked like Kavanaugh would be approved by the Senate (and after the vote itself), their vote likelihood increased as dramatically as it had dropped.

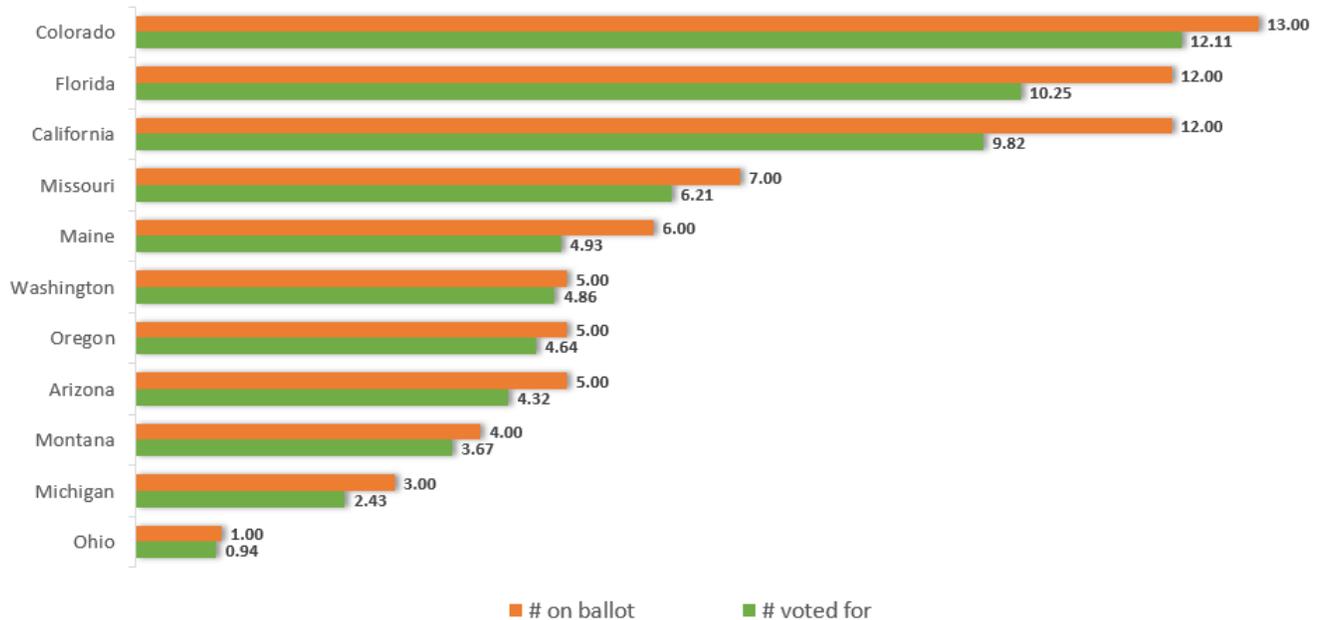
For future Democratic voters, the week following the beginning of the hearings actual saw the vote likelihood increase slightly. Almost to the day that the Dr. Ford article hit newsstands/internet Democratic enthusiasm waned. This seems perhaps a bit counterintuitive, since one might hypothesize that this news would cause an increase in progressive enthusiasm, but that wasn't the case. It wasn't until after the final vote that Democratic voters regained their vote likelihood. Furthermore, it wasn't until the last week that their vote likelihood surged again, bringing it up to a tie with Republican voters.



Above is another interesting finding from the Tendency data, although this one perhaps more intuitive. We asked respondents post-election when they made up their mind about who they were voting for (again, House of Representatives). The later a voter made up their mind, the more volatile their likelihood of voting. The Kavanaugh hearings had an extremely large impact on voters who didn't make their voting decision until the final 2 weeks. For those who always knew which candidate they would support, the hearing moved the needle, but to a far lesser extent. Undecided voters and late deciders appear more susceptible to large news events, something to keep in mind for future campaigns.

Ballot Measures

One of the overriding concerns for supporters of ballot measures is drop-off rates. On Tendency, we posed a question after the election that asked respondents to estimate the number of measures they voted on and how many they skipped. This data is self-reported, but we believe offers some interesting takeaways when we compare across various states and by vote choice.



Above, we graphed a comparison between the number of measures on the ballot in each state to the number Tendency respondents claimed they voted for. Clearly, differences exist from state to state. Some of the drop-offs are quite large, others close to non-existent. Numerous studies have attempted to explain why voters skip down-ticket races or ballot measures and our data doesn't answer this question. But it does show that voter actions are not homogeneous, states don't act the same.

When we look at the state-level data by reported 2018 Congressional vote choice, large intrastate differences appear. In only two states do Democratic voters have a higher self-reported rate of voting for measures. Several states (Michigan, Florida, Arizona, and Missouri) have much higher voting rates for Republican voters. While not every ballot initiative receives votes strictly along party lines, this gap is one that either must be addressed or one that simply is inherent and must be overcome.

Percent voted for by Congressional Vote (reported)

