

Memorandum

To: Pinpoint Policy Institute

From: Bob Ward, Partner
Fabrizio Ward

Date: August 28, 2024

Re: Blue Wall States Survey

In three states that could likely decide which party controls both the White House and the U.S. Senate – the so-called Blue Wall states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin – our survey shows how pro-growth policies can motivate the Republican base and ticket-splitters. Economic angst is defining this election. Policies aimed at getting the economy moving again by letting the private sector lead and the government step back resonate.

Issues Driving the Election

Economic issues are driving this election, far more than any other issue set. Blue Wall state voters say that rising prices brought by inflation is the single biggest issue that will determine their vote this election, topping the list of thirteen issues in each state. Inflation is picked by 24% voters as the top issue, and 40% pick it as either the top or second most important issue. When combined with “economy and jobs” which is picked by 23% as a top two issue, and “taxes, government spending, and debt” picked by 14%, 62% of voters in these states pick at least one of these issues as their first or second most important issue.

Other issues are also at play. Immigration and border security is the second highest rated issue, with 28% picking it as their top or second most important issue. It matches inflation among Republicans in importance. Democrats prioritize “abortion and reproductive rights” and “threats to democracy” as their vote motivating issues.

The Pro-Growth Majority

Elections are about energizing your base and connecting and motivating enough of the center to win a majority. In these states, 37% of voters identified themselves as voters who always or mostly voted for Republicans. This means successful Republican wins must include support from voters who do not consider themselves reliable Republicans. An additional 16% of voters in these states identify as voters who either voted Republican a little more than voted Democratic or voted equally for Democrats and Republicans. Combined, these base Republicans and ticket-splitters account for 53% of the electorate.

The survey shows that these key voter segments, both reliable Republican voters and ticket-splitters, prioritize pro-growth policies. **For example, 91% of all voters – and fully 88% of reliable and lean-Democratic voters across the Blue Wall states favor “promoting pro-growth economic policies.”** Given the economic backdrop of this election, policies that address

high taxes, job stifling red tape, high energy costs, and wasteful government spending are exactly the things candidates should be talking about to build a winning coalition. This runs counter to a narrative that a populist policy agenda has displaced traditional conservative policy priorities.

Eighty percent or more of reliable Republican voters identify each of the following issues as a priority for the next Congress and President to address. Super majorities of ticket-splitters also prioritize these issues. Even significant numbers of voters who vote reliably Democrat would prioritize all but one of these issues.

% Priority for next Congress & President to Address	All Voters (1,200)	Reliable GOP (n=439)	Ticket- Splitters (n=196)	Reliable and Lean Dem Voters (n=519)
Identifying and cutting wasteful government spending	91%	97%	95%	85%
Promoting pro-growth economic policies	91%	95%	95%	88%
Lowering federal income tax rates	83%	95%	85%	73%
Make it easier to produce American oil and gas to meet our energy needs	80%	95%	88%	64%
Ensure hiring and employment policies are based on merit and not political correctness	83%	93%	88%	73%
Reforming federal regulations to promote investment and innovation	81%	89%	84%	73%
Reforming the tax code with a flatter, simpler one	79%	88%	82%	71%
Cutting red tape to make it easier to start a business	80%	87%	85%	72%
Promoting trade policies that open foreign markets to U.S. goods	85%	86%	87%	85%
Reducing corporate tax rates to spur growth and promote competitiveness abroad	59%	82%	61%	39%

Voters also tell us that they do not prioritize higher taxes, more government regulation in their lives, and, with the exception of most Democrats, bans on fracking.

% Priority for next Congress & President to Address	All Voters (1,200)	Reliable GOP (n=439)	Ticket- Splitters (n=196)	Reliable and Lean Dem Voters (n=519)
Create more opportunities for the federal government to regulate our daily lives	23%	18%	18%	28%
Raising federal income tax rates	31%	19%	25%	45%
Ban fracking for American natural gas and oil	48%	26%	36%	71%

Policy Choices

Some have argued that today's Republican Party has moved away from the traditional pro-growth, free market Republican agenda. This survey demonstrates that a winning GOP coalition is still rooted in policies that support lower taxes, less government, and more free markets.

Federal Government's Role in Commerce

A majority of Blue Wall state voters believe the federal government needs to *reduce* its role in commerce and let the free market work. This view is supported by the overwhelming majority of reliable GOP voters and ticket splitters and more than one out of four Democrats. This survey suggests that the popularity of government-heavy populist policy agenda is overstated.

Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion regarding the role of the federal government? (Rotate top-to-bottom)	All Voters (n=1,200)	Reliable GOP (n=439)	Ticket- Splitters (n=196)	Reliable and Lean Dem Voters (n=519)
The federal government's role should expand to shape and manage commerce in America	23%	10%	20%	35%
The federal government's current role is just about right and does enough	23%	9%	19%	37%
The federal government's role should be reduced to allow the free market to shape commerce in America	54%	80%	62%	29%

Federal Government & Manufacturing

At a time when the left is advocating for government massive government spending to prop up industries, voters in the Blue Wall states send a clear message that the private sector, not federal government subsidies, should be what drive U.S. manufacturing – a view also shared by a majority of Democratic voters. These results should dissuade Republican policymakers from pursuing a federal industrial policy.

Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion regarding the role of the federal government? (Rotate)	All Voters (n=1,200)	Reliable GOP (n=439)	Ticket- Splitters (n=196)	Reliable and Lean Dem Voters (n=519)
The federal government should spend billions of taxpayer dollars to support manufacturing in the US	28%	10%	26%	44%
The federal government should let the private sector and the free-market drive manufacturing in the US	71%	90%	74%	54%

Trump Tax Cuts

A majority of Blue Wall state voters support extending the Trump tax cuts, including overwhelming (9-to-1) support among GOP voters, and 2-to-1 support among ticket-splitters.

Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion regarding extending the Trump tax cuts, which expire in 2025? (Rotate)	All Voters (n=1,200)	Reliable GOP (n=439)	Ticket- Splitters (n=196)	Reliable and Lean Dem Voters (n=519)
Congress should extend the Trump tax cuts	52%	89%	64%	16%
Congress should let the Trump tax cuts expire	48%	11%	35%	83%

Taxes on Businesses

A plurality of voters in the Blue Wall states think Congress should lower taxes on businesses, a view shared by a majority of GOP voters. Few GOP voters and ticket-splitters believe Congress should increase taxes on business, something a plurality of Democrats believe. Populists that advocate for higher taxes on business appear to be out-of-step with the Republican base.

Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion regarding federal taxes on businesses? (Rotate top-to-bottom)	All Voters (n=1,200)	Reliable GOP (n=439)	Ticket- Splitters (n=196)	Reliable and Lean Dem Voters (n=519)
Congress should increase taxes on businesses	29%	8%	24%	48%
Congress should keep the tax rate on businesses the same	34%	30%	41%	35%
Congress should lower taxes on businesses	37%	62%	35%	16%

Right to Work

By a more than 4-to-1 margin, voters in the Blue Wall states think workers should have a right to work whether represented by a union or not, rejecting the idea that forcing workers into unions is ok. The right to work viewpoint is shared by virtually all GOP voters, more than 4-out-of-5 ticket splitters and two-out-of-three Democrats. These results make clear that a pro-worker agenda remains rooted in the right to work, not increased unionization.

Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion regarding labor unions? (Rotate)	All Voters (n=1,200)	Reliable GOP (n=439)	Ticket- Splitters (n=196)	Reliable and Lean Dem Voters (n=519)
It's okay to force workers to be represented by a labor union	18%	3%	16%	32%
Workers should have a right to work whether they're represented by a labor union or not	82%	97%	84%	68%

State of the Races

There are close races for President and U.S. Senate in each of the Blue Wall states:

- In Pennsylvania, Donald Trump leads Kamala Harris by one point, 47%-46%, while Democratic incumbent, Bob Casey Jr., leads Republican challenger, Dave McCormick, by three points, 46%-43% for the U.S. Senate.
- In Michigan, Trump leads Harris by two points, 48%-46%, while Republican Mike Rogers is tied with Democrat Elissa Slotkin at 43% each for the open U.S. Senate seat.
- In Wisconsin, Harris has a four-point lead over Trump, 49%-45%, and Democratic incumbent Tammy Baldwin leads Republican challenger Eric Hovde by five points, 48%-43%, for the Senate.

In each state, views of the presidential candidates are polarized, and each has slightly more voters viewing them unfavorably than favorably. Still, the perception of Donald Trump's performance as President resonates with roughly half of voters in each state, even though his personal unfavorable rating is over 50%.

As the new Democratic nominee, Harris is in a much better position than Joe Biden, whose unfavorable ratings are, on average, seven points higher than Harris's. In each state, Democratic Vice-Presidential nominee Tim Walz enjoys a more favorable image than Republican VP nominee J.D. Vance.

Methodology

Fabrizio Ward conducted three statewide surveys of N=400 likely 2024 voters in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin from August 19-21, 2024. The interviews were conducted via a mixed mode collection process from text-to-web of registered voters from the voter file (50%) and from an online panel (50%). Geography was matched to votes cast in previous elections. Gender, age, race/ethnicity, party, recalled 2020 vote and education were weighted to profiles of likely voters based on exit polling, voter file data, and past research. The margin of sampling error at the 95% confidence interval is $\pm 4.9\%$ for the N=400 statewide data and is $\pm 2.83\%$ for the overall N=1200 data.

###