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## It's Far Too Early to Write Donald Trump Off

By Matt A. Mayer

Too many pundits are ready to call the 2020 presidential race with a month to go. Four weeks is a lifetime in politics, especially in the age of technology where news travels faster than the facts. With both candidates in their seventies, health issues are always going to cause things to shift quickly. A couple of weeks ago, Joe Biden offered further evidence that all is not well upstairs when he [claimed](#) that 'it's estimated 200 million people have died of COVID'.

Sure, the debate last week appeared to be a debacle for Donald Trump who then ended the week by coming down with COVID — though Hispanic Telemundo viewers thought Trump won the debate soundly. Ronald Reagan's first debate against Walter Mondale was widely panned, too, and he ended up with the greatest win in modern history. Trump getting COVID certainly wasn't good for his campaign, but his quick recovery is yet another reminder to voters that he is strong. You don't think anyone is wondering how an almost 78-year-old Joe Biden will fare should he catch COVID or pneumonia this winter?

Trump has been pounded relentlessly for more than four years by the media and Democrats, including being accused of colluding with Russia and getting impeached. Still, [RealClearPolitics has him running ahead](#) of the 2016 polling numbers in the battleground states. It actually is a miracle that Trump isn't down by double-digits in properly-weighted polls.

The fact is, the two core elements that truly matter in politics are the enthusiasm of supporters and the execution of your get-out-the-vote plan. The former helps you win, as enthusiasm turns out the vote and gives you the energy to get across the finish line. The latter is how you win. On those items, Trump is crushing Biden.

Poll after poll has shown that Republican enthusiasm for Trump is far greater than Democrat enthusiasm for Biden. One reporter went searching for Biden enthusiasm and discovered that 'there wasn't a whole lot of [it] for Joe Biden', but that Trump voters 'say Trump walks on water'. [Trump beats Biden on the enthusiasm issue](#) by 16 points or more. That is why Trump has [registered more voters](#) in the battleground states than Biden over the last few months.

It also is why even in [polls that show Biden winning](#) comfortably, the same voters when asked who they think will win still pick Trump. While the media cover every utterance by a NeverTrump Republican, they don't report the surge in Democrats, unaffiliated voters, and people who didn't vote in 2016 at Trump rallies. For example, at the Duluth, Minnesota,

rally, 60 percent of attendees weren't Republicans and 17 percent didn't vote in 2016. We have to assume people who don't like Trump aren't wasting their evenings at Trump rallies. If Trump's campaign can get those people to vote, then winning is possible.

Most importantly, winning the enthusiasm battle matters because it impacts the ground game enormously. Enthusiastic supporters become enthusiastic volunteers who spend long hours every day knocking on doors to identify and get supporters to vote. On that front, Biden has not had a ground game in months, opting instead to shut down all face-to-face voter contact. The Trump campaign, however, has pushed as aggressively as possible to reach as many voters as they could, as they've always seen this election as a turnout election.

By October 1, the Trump campaign had knocked on over 14 million doors in battleground states to roughly zero by the Biden campaign. That delta will matter come Election Day. In fact, we are already seeing the results in early voting activities. Ohio is an excellent example.

Specifically, Hillary Clinton won Cuyahoga County (Cleveland and its suburbs) 66 percent to 31 percent in 2016. Likewise, she won Franklin County (Columbus and its suburbs) 61 percent to 35 percent in 2016. Biden will need even larger vote margins in those two counties, as Clinton won those counties by roughly 340,000 votes and still lost Ohio by 8 percent. Absentee ballots are expected to strongly favor Biden, with Trump voters waiting until Election Day to vote.

As of October 2, the numbers for Biden don't look good. For example, in heavily-Democratic Cleveland and East Cleveland, only 23 percent and 22 percent of registered voters have requested absentee ballots. In contrast, in the Republican cities of Pepper Pike and Rocky River, 53 percent and 45 percent of voters have requested absentee ballots. The story in Franklin County is similar. In the urban center of Columbus and Whitehall, only 25 percent and 21 percent of voters have requested absentee ballots whereas in the more Republican-friendly cities of Dublin and Hilliard, 37 percent and 34 percent of voters have requested absentee ballots. Those numbers don't bode well for a Biden victory in Ohio.

It is my understanding that similar trends are happening in other battleground states where the Trump campaign has been working feverishly in the trenches while the Biden team

remained AWOL. Four weeks from today, we hopefully will get the election results in enough states to declare a winner. If Trump wins, it will be because his enthusiastic base voted and won the ground game in the battleground states.

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