

voterparticipation  
CENTER

CENTER FOR  
voterinformation



# Biden's speech produces impressive gains

## Dial meter viewers reaction to Biden's Acceptance Speech

August 27, 2020

CAMPAIGNS

CORPORATIONS

ADVOCACY

WORLDWIDE

## Methodology

On behalf of the *Center for Voter Information* and the *Voter Participation Center*, *Democracy Corps* on August 20, 2020, conducted online dial meter research during Vice President Joe Biden's acceptance speech for the Democratic nomination for President, among 201 registered voters nationally.

Key line groups include:

- African Americans
- Latinos
- White millennials
- White unmarried women
- White working-class women
- White college women
- White working-class men

To ensure each line was as representative as possible, these lines were individually recruited. Surveys were administered before and after the live dial meter session.

***\*This research is qualitative, and results are not statistically projectable onto a larger population.\****



## Key Findings:

- The acceptance speech that produced an exceptional response with the Rising American Electorate, college women and white working-class voters — one that advanced his strategy, defined him as a leader, weakened Donald Trump and raised his vote margin.
- The biggest shift in this dial meter exercise was on personal warmth — which jumped 16 points from 59 to 75 percent when people were interviewed before and after the speech. It is hard to believe that won't endure at some level, particularly when he continues to speak to the country.
- Biden's speech only produced small changes in Donald Trump's approval and most Trump attributes, but it produced a much bigger shift — around 10 points on describes well/very well — on “works only to help his own party.” Biden's vision for the whole country led voters to see the president as just a partisan leader.



## Key Findings Continued:

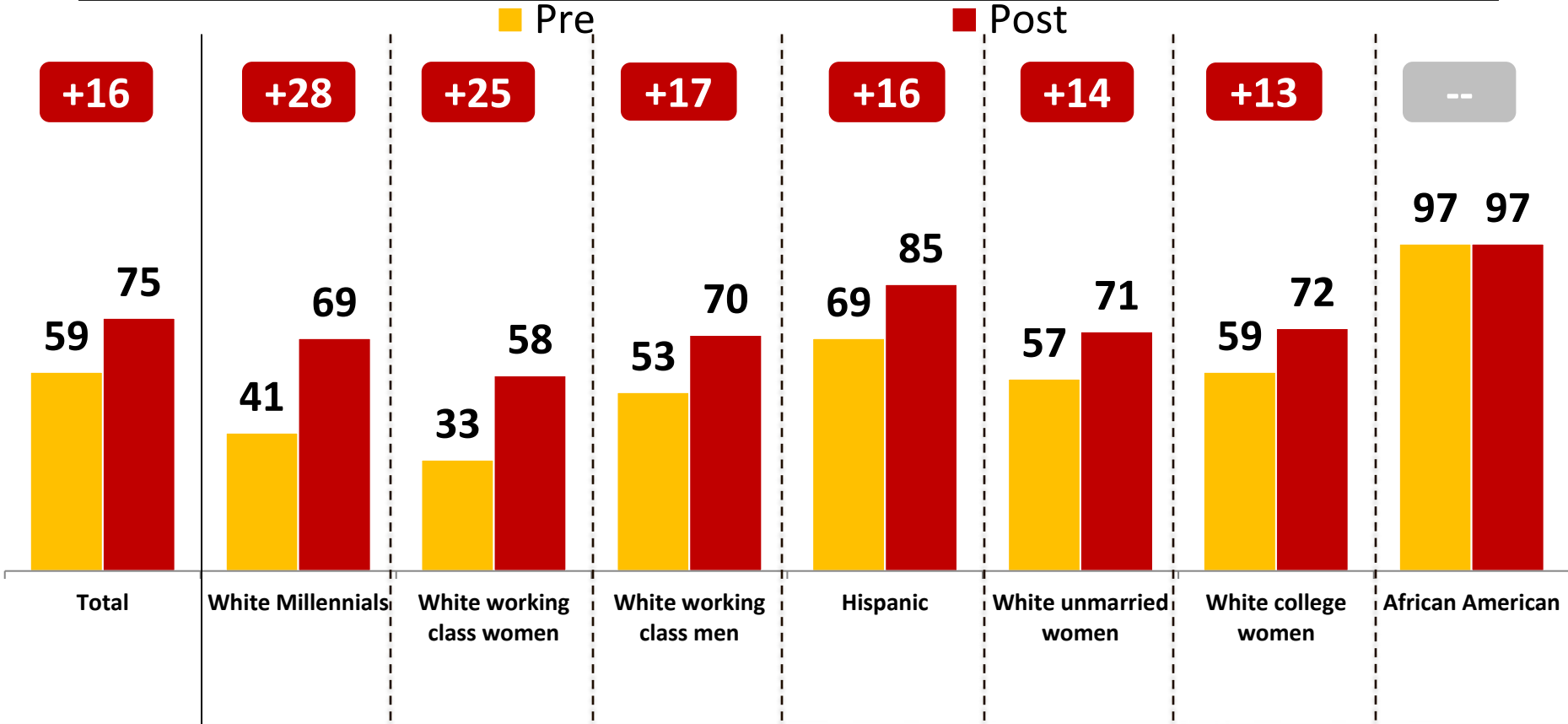
- When comparing who would do a better job on an issue, the speech produced a 10-point increase in margin for Biden on most issues, but the biggest, double digit changes in intensity for “dealing with racial strife,” “uniting the country,” and “improving things for the middle class.”
- The speech produced a big 10-point shift in the vote margin, driven by a 23-point shift across the Rising American Electorate. It took Biden’s base vote up from almost two-thirds to three quarters. But Biden also pushed down Trump’s vote with Republicans — again, a fracturing that could be maintained in weeks ahead.
- The election is boiling down to a battle for the middle class — Biden’s upbringing, values and not governing for the top 1 percent vs. Trump’s “forgotten Americans,” trade agreements, outsourcing and manufacturing. This speech produced a 13-point shift in Biden’s margin in this battle.



# Biden gets huge shift in favorability among key groups in this election, especially among white millennials and white working-class women

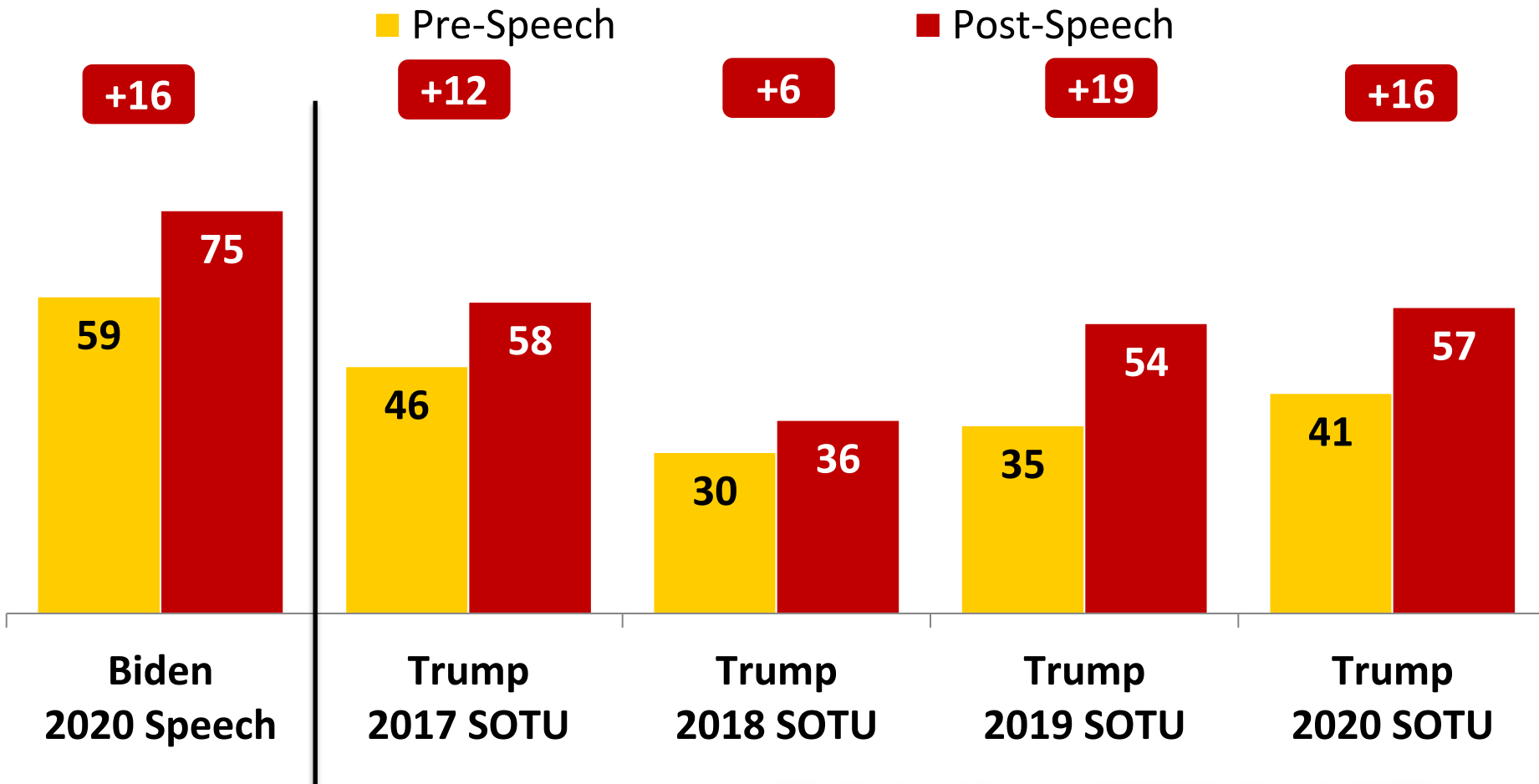
I'd like to rate your feelings toward some people and organizations with 100 meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; 0 meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and 50 meaning not particularly warm or cold.

## BIDEN FAVORABILITY (% FAVORABLE)



**Biden starts and ends higher on favorability, and his shift is still comparable to Trump's largest shifts after the State of Union Address**

**BIDEN VS. TRUMP FAVORABILITY (% FAVORABLE)**



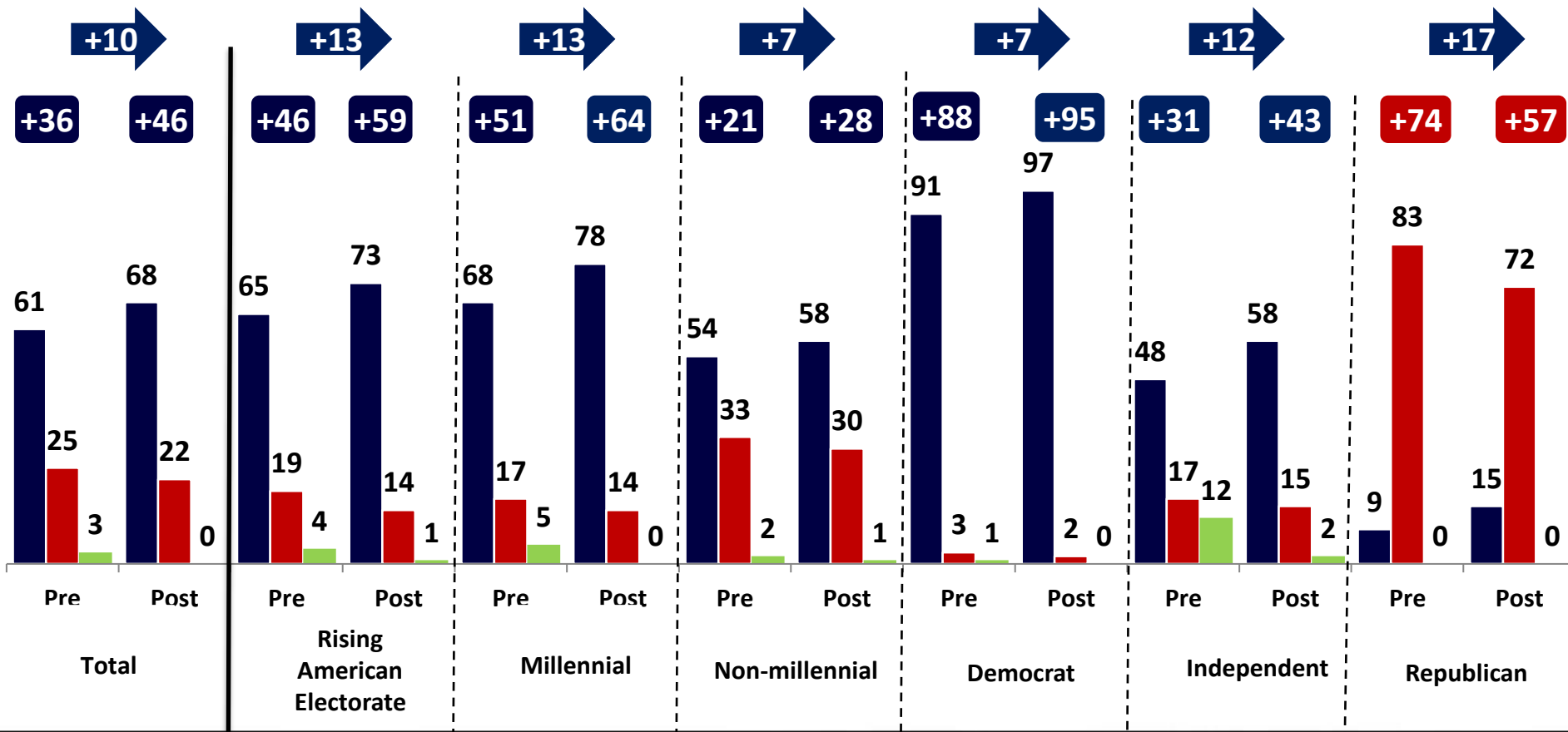
\*2018 dial lines did not include white working-class women and white college women. 2019 dial lines did not include white working-class men.



# Biden's speech gets big rise in vote, particularly with Republicans

## 2020 PRESIDENTIAL BALLOT

■ Democrat Joe Biden    ■ Republican Donald Trump    ■ 3rd Party



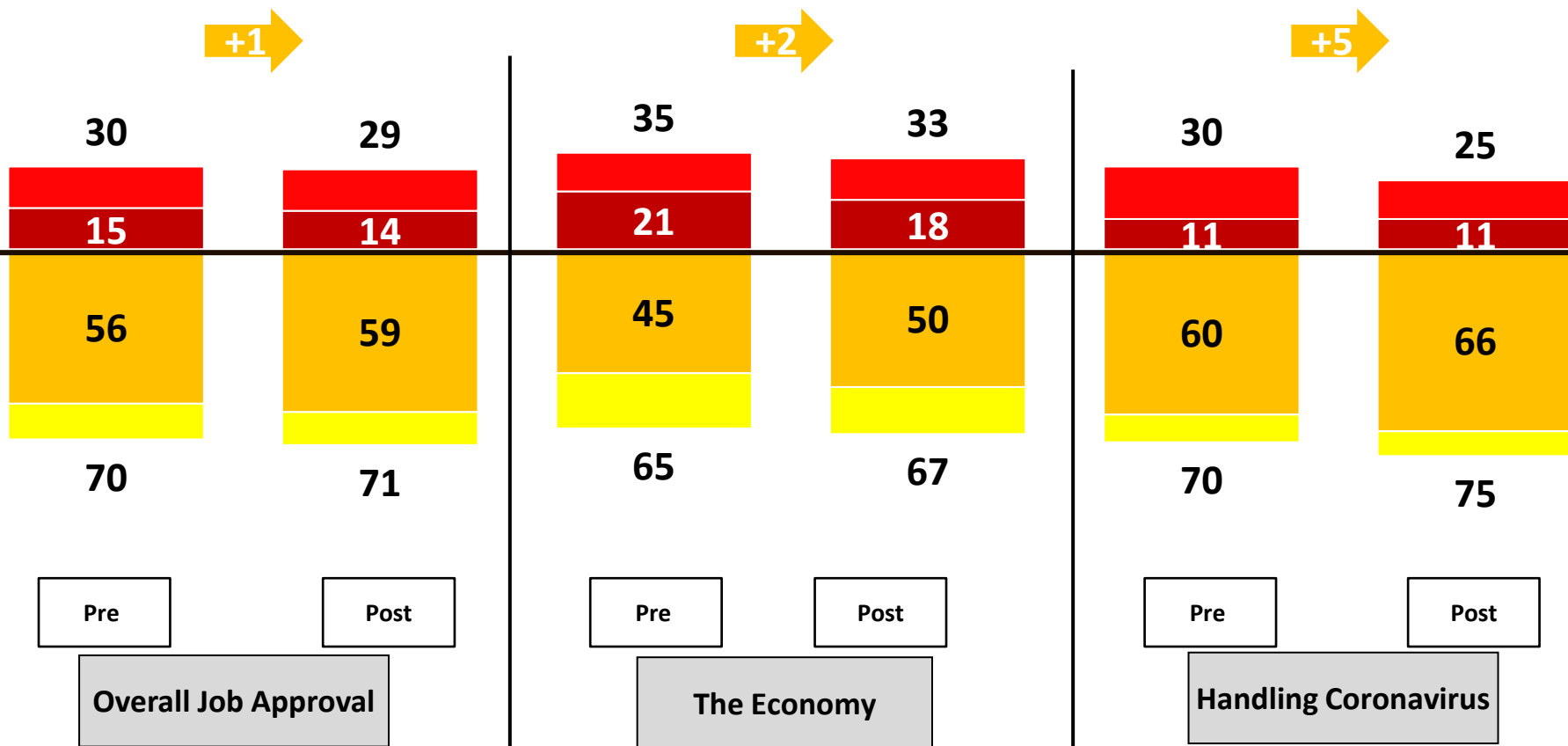
# Speech generates a drop in Trump's approval, particularly on the pandemic, including a 6-point increase in "strong disapprove"

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

## TRUMP APPROVAL: PRE & POST BRIEFINGS

■ Strong approve

■ Strong disapprove



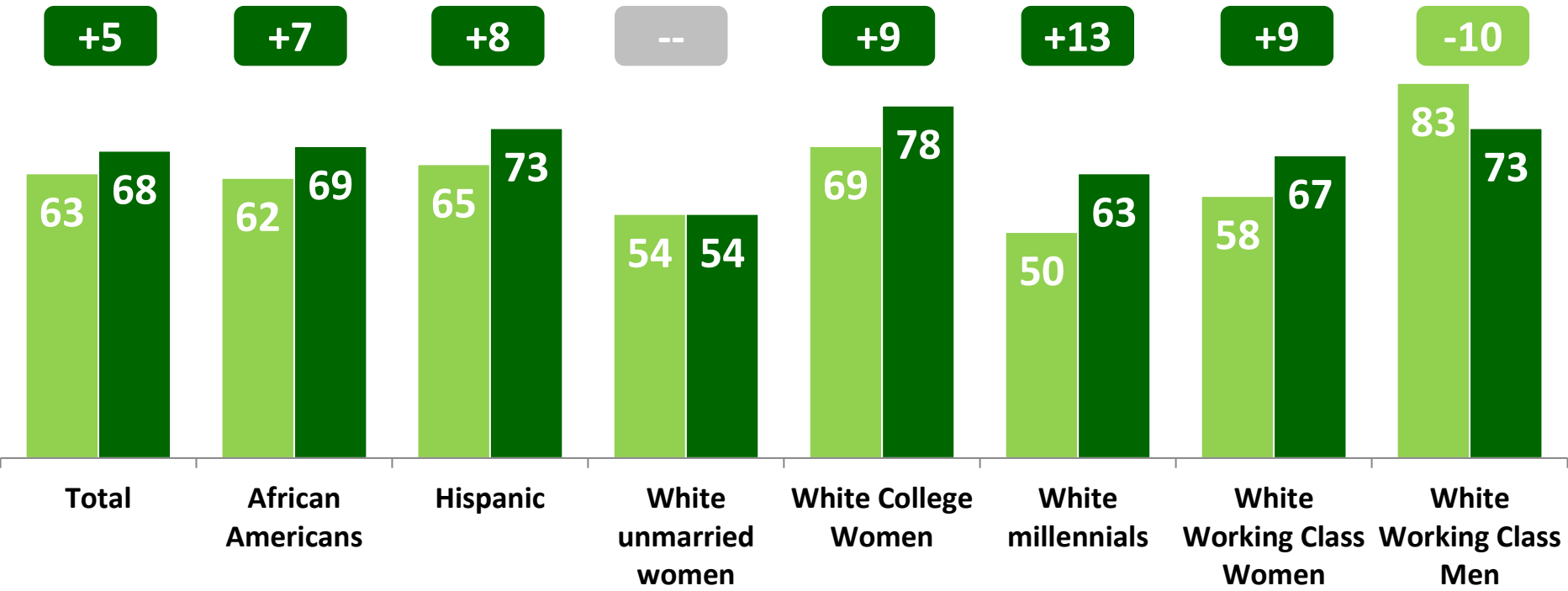


# Speech motivates anti-Trump groups in Rising American Electorate

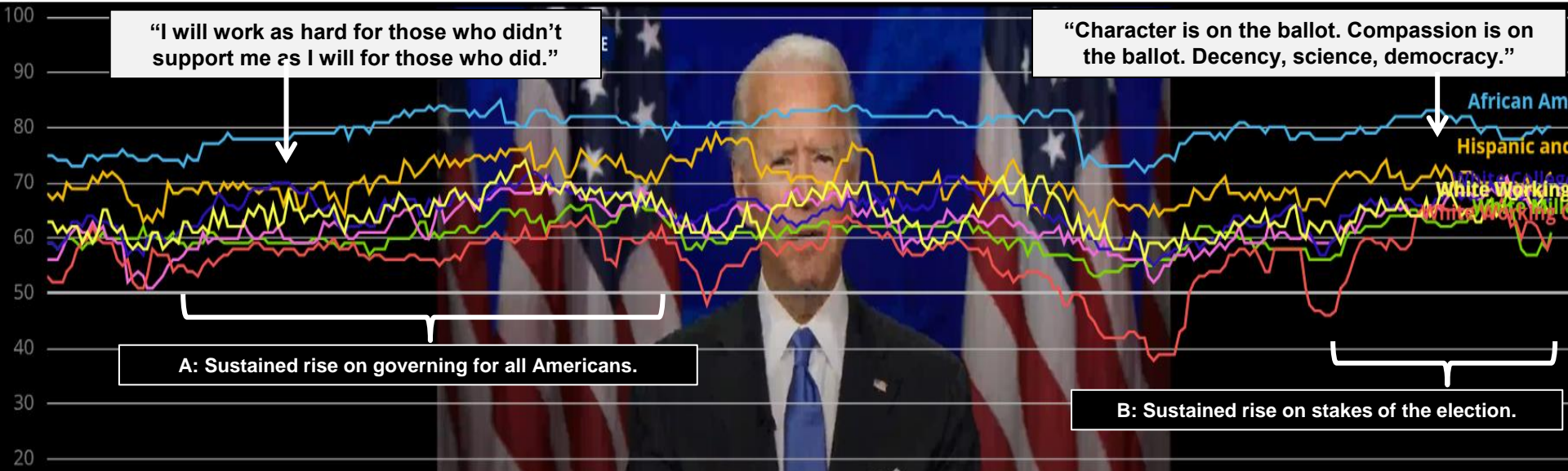
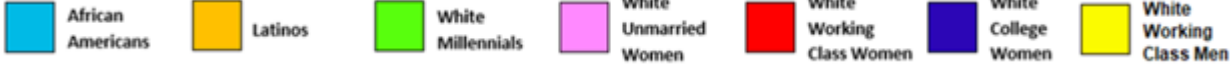
How interested are you in the elections in November 2020 for President, U.S. Congress and other state and local offices? Please rate your interest from 1 to 10, with 1 meaning that you have no interest in this election and 10 meaning that you are extremely interested.

## % EXTREMELY INTERESTED 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

■ Pre      ■ Post

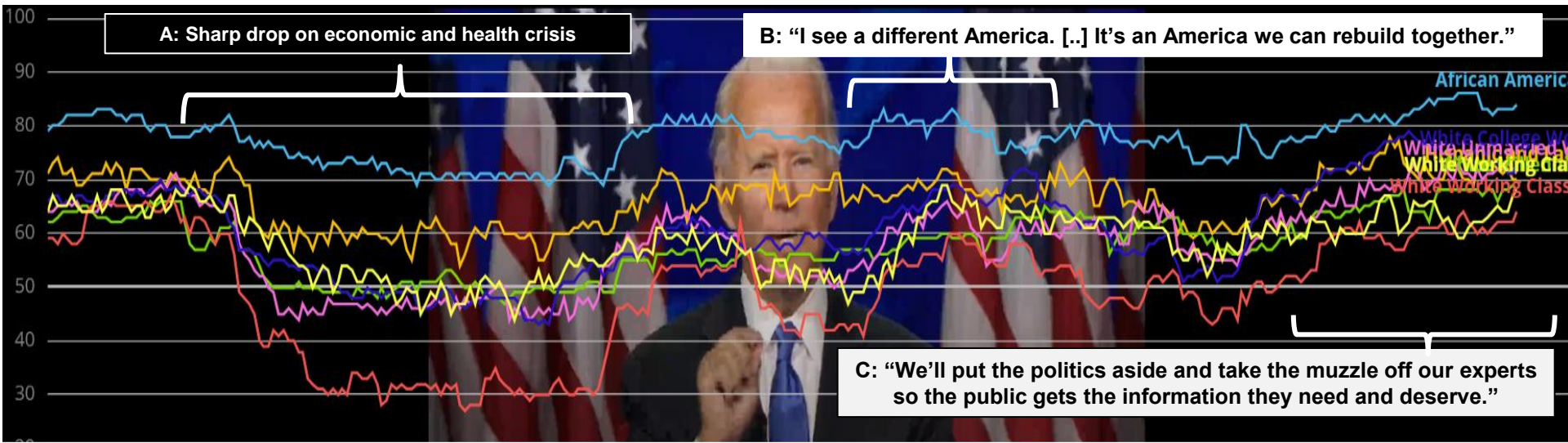


# Biden gets a positive reaction across the board on governing for all Americans, and a sharp rise in the lines after laying out what is at stake in this election



- **[A]** But while I will be a Democratic candidate, I will be an American president. ***I will work as hard for those who didn't support me as I will for those who did.*** That's the job of a president. To represent all of us, not just our base or our party. This is not a partisan moment. This must be an American moment. It's a moment that calls for hope and light and love. Hope for our futures, light to see our way forward, and love for one another. America isn't just a collection of clashing interests of red states or blue states. We're so much bigger than that. We're so much better than that. This campaign isn't just about winning votes. It's about winning the heart, and yes, the soul of America. Winning it for the generous among us, not the selfish. Winning it for the workers who keep this country going, not just the privileged few at the top. Winning it for those communities who have known the injustice of the "knee on the neck." For all the young people.
- **[B]** So, the question for us is simple: Are we ready? I believe we are. We must be. All elections are important. But we know in our bones this one is more consequential. America is at an inflection point. A time of real peril, but of extraordinary possibilities. We can choose the path of becoming angrier, less hopeful and more divided. A path of shadow and suspicion. Or we can choose a different path, and together, take this chance to heal, to be reborn, to unite. A path of hope and light. This is a life-changing election that will determine America's future for a very long time. ***Character is on the ballot. Compassion is on the ballot. Decency, science, democracy. They are all on the ballot. Who we are as a nation.*** What we stand for. And, most importantly, who we want to be. That's all on the ballot.

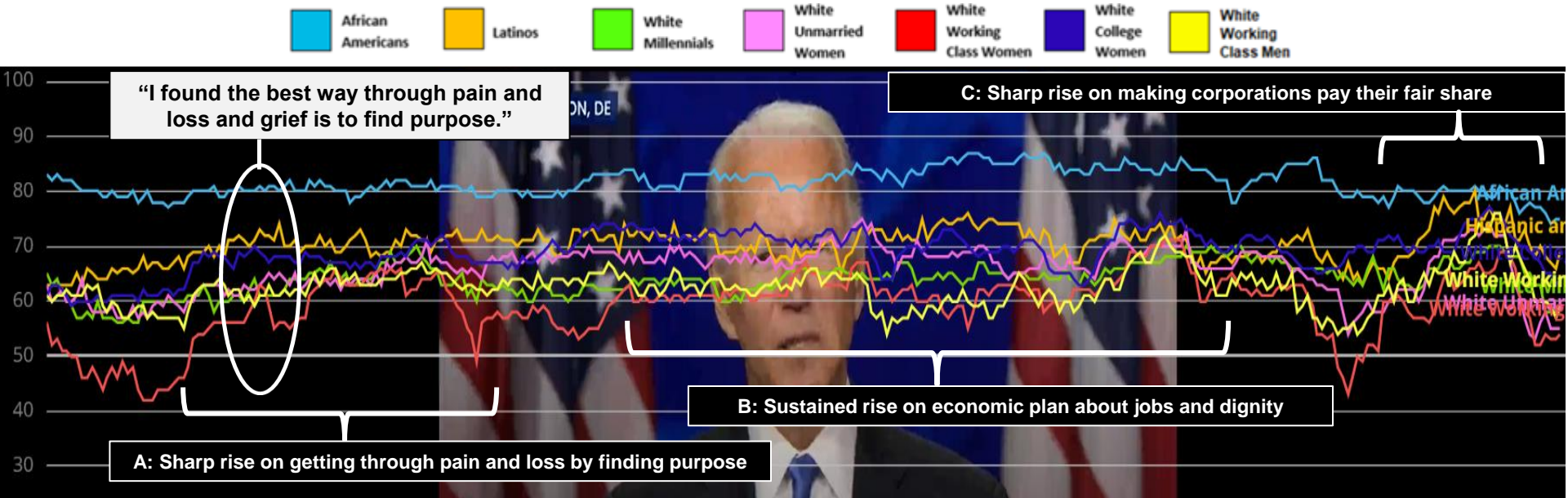
# Strong reaction to health crisis and economic impact, with sharp rise in lines on bringing America together and national COVID strategy with information from experts



- **[A]** *If this president is re-elected, we know what will happen. Cases and deaths will remain far too high. More mom-and-pop businesses will close their doors for good. Working families will struggle to get by, and yet, the wealthiest 1 percent will get tens of billions of dollars in new tax breaks. And the assault on the Affordable Care Act will continue until its destroyed, taking insurance away from more than 20 million people — including more than 15 million people on Medicaid — and getting rid of the protections that President Obama and I passed for people who suffer from a pre-existing condition.*
- **[B]** *I see a different America. One that is together generous and strong. Selfless and humble. It's an America we can rebuild t's ruined so many lives. Because I understand something this president doesn't. We will never get our economy back on track, we will never get our kids safely back to school, we will never have our lives back, until we deal with this virus.*
- **[C]** *Well, I do. If I'm president on day one, we'll implement the national strategy I've been laying out since March. We'll develop and deploy rapid tests with results available immediately. We'll make the medical supplies and protective equipment our country needs. And we'll make them here in America. So we will never again be at the mercy of China and other foreign countries in order to protect our own people. We'll make sure our schools have the resources they need to be open, safe, and effective. We'll put the politics aside and take the muzzle off our experts so the public gets the information they need and deserve. The honest, unvarnished truth. They can deal with that.*



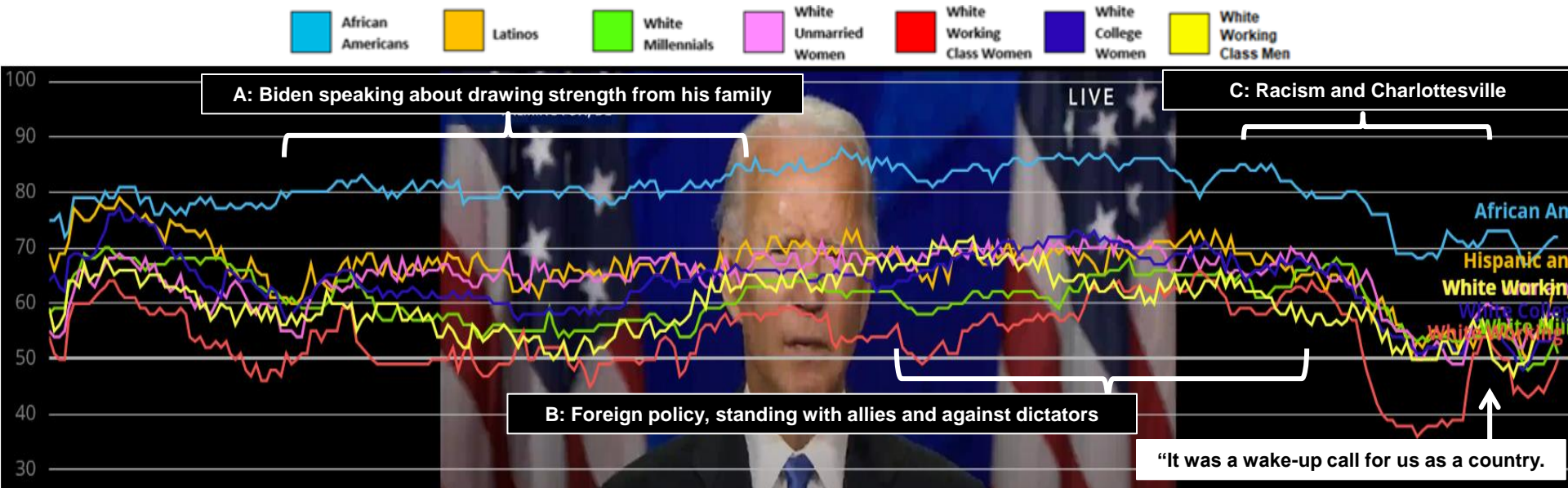
# Very positive reaction to Biden's own experience with loss, with sustained rise on middle class jobs plan and sharp jump in the lines on corporations paying fair share



- [A] I know how mean and cruel and unfair life can be sometimes. But I've learned two things. First, your loved ones may have left this Earth but they never leave your heart. They will always be with you. And second, I found the best way through pain and loss and grief is to find purpose. As God's children each of us have a purpose in our lives. And we have a great purpose as a nation: to open the doors of opportunity to all Americans. To save our democracy. To be a light to the world once again
- [B] That's why my economic plan is all about jobs, dignity, respect and community. Together, we can, and we will, rebuild our economy. And when we do, - we'll not only build it back, we'll build it back better. With modern roads, bridges, highways, broadband, ports and airports as a new foundation for economic growth. With pipes that transport clean water to every community. With five million new manufacturing and technology jobs so the future is made in America. With a health care system that lowers premiums, deductibles, and drug prices by building on the Affordable Care Act he's trying to rip away. With an education system that trains our people for the best jobs of the 21st century, where cost doesn't prevent young people from going to college, and student debt doesn't crush them when they get out.[...]
- [C] And we can pay for these investments by ending loopholes and the president's \$1.3 trillion tax giveaway to the wealthiest 1 percent and the biggest, most profitable corporations, some of which pay no tax at all. Because we don't need a tax code that rewards wealth more than it rewards work. I'm not looking to punish anyone. Far from it. But it's long past time the wealthiest people and the biggest corporations in this country paid their fair share.



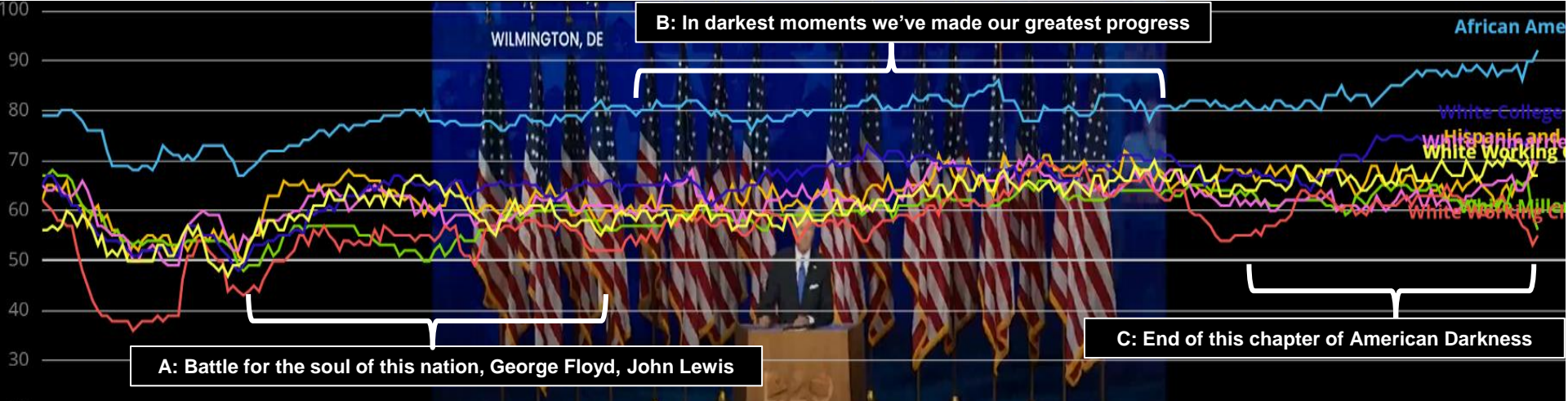
# Another positive response after Biden mentions family, and lines go up on restoring American leadership abroad, with sharp rise on call to action to address racism



- **[A]** Kamala and I both draw strength from our families. [...] After losing my first wife in a car accident, Jill came into my life and put our family back together. She's an educator. A mom. A military mom. And an unstoppable force. If she puts her mind to it, just get out of the way. Because she's going to get it done. She was a great second lady and she will make a great first lady for this nation. She loves this country so much. And I will have the strength that can only come from family. Hunter, Ashley and all our grandchildren, my brothers, my sister. They give me courage and lift me up. And while he is no longer with us, Beau inspires me every day. Beau served our nation in uniform. A decorated Iraq war veteran. So I take very personally the profound responsibility of serving as commander in chief.
- **[B]** I will be a president who will stand with our allies and friends. I will make it clear to our adversaries the days of cozying up to dictators are over. Under President Biden, America will not turn a blind eye to Russian bounties on the heads of American soldiers. Nor will I put up with foreign interference in our most sacred democratic exercise — voting. I will stand always for our values of human rights and dignity. And I will work in common purpose for a more secure, peaceful, and prosperous world..
- **[C]** History has thrust one more urgent task on us. Will we be the generation that finally wipes the stain of racism from our national character? I believe we're up to it. I believe we're ready Just a week ago yesterday was the third anniversary of the events in Charlottesville. Remember seeing those neo-Nazis and Klansmen and white supremacists coming out of the fields with lighted torches? Veins bulging? [...] **It was a wake-up call for us as a country. And for me, a call to action.** At that moment, I knew I'd have to run. My father taught us that silence was complicity. And I could not remain silent or complicit.



# Closing minutes bring all lines up in a tight group on making progress in our darkest moments, with final rise when he says “end of this chapter of American Darkness”



- **[A]** One of the most important conversations I've had this entire campaign is with someone who is too young to vote. I met with 6-year old Gianna Floyd, a day before her daddy, George Floyd, was laid to rest. She is incredibly brave. I'll never forget. When I leaned down to speak with her, she looked into my eyes and said, "Daddy changed the world." Her words burrowed deep into my heart. Maybe George Floyd's murder was the breaking point. Maybe John Lewis' passing the inspiration.
- **[B]** America's history tells us that it has been in our darkest moments that we've made our greatest progress. That we've found the light. And in this dark moment, I believe we are poised to make great progress again. In times as challenging as these, I believe there is only one way forward. As a united America. United Are we ready? I believe we are. Tin our pursuit of a more perfect union. United in our dreams of a better future for us and for our children. United in our determination to make the coming years bright. his is a great nation. And we are a good and decent people. This is the United States of America. And there has never been anything we've been unable to accomplish when we've done it together.
- **[C]** This is our moment to make hope and history rhyme. With passion and purpose, let us begin — you and I together, one nation, under God — united in our love for America and united in our love for each other. For love is more powerful than hate. Hope is more powerful than fear. Light is more powerful than dark. This is our moment. This is our mission. May history be able to say that the end of this chapter of American darkness began here tonight as love and hope and light joined in the battle for the soul of the nation. And this is a battle that we, together, will win. I promise you. Thank you. And may God bless you. And may God protect our troops.



# Open ended responses on impressions of the speech:

Please describe your overall impression of Joe Biden’s speech tonight. Anything that comes to mind.?

## VERBATIM RESPONSES ON BIDEN SPEECH

### MILLENNIALS, WHITE WORKING CLASS, TRUMP DEFECTORS

#### Millennials

*“I thought he did best when he stuck to specific policy ideas rather than broad rhetoric and platitudes.” **White Millennial Man***

*“It was a very powerful speech. it was exactly what I wanted to hear from a leader. I believed him and trusted his words. He sounded sincere and hopeful that he could make America great again.” **Minority Millennial Woman***

*“It felt more real than what I've heard from him in the past. I think he's at his best when speaking about his family, faith, and loss and how he's grown from them.” **White Millennial Woman***

*“The speech really moved me so much. I was actually not sure for who to vote, because I've seen so much fabricated videos of the two candidates. But to be honest, Joe Biden is the best of the two, to help this country grow and rise from this dark times we're living as a country.” **Minority Millennial Woman***

#### White Working Class and Former Trump Voters

*“I thought his speech was engaging. I still don't love him as a candidate, but I will vote for him and listening to him speak about current issues and about how he finds inspiration in his family and those he has lost made me feel more confident in him.” **White Working-Class Woman***

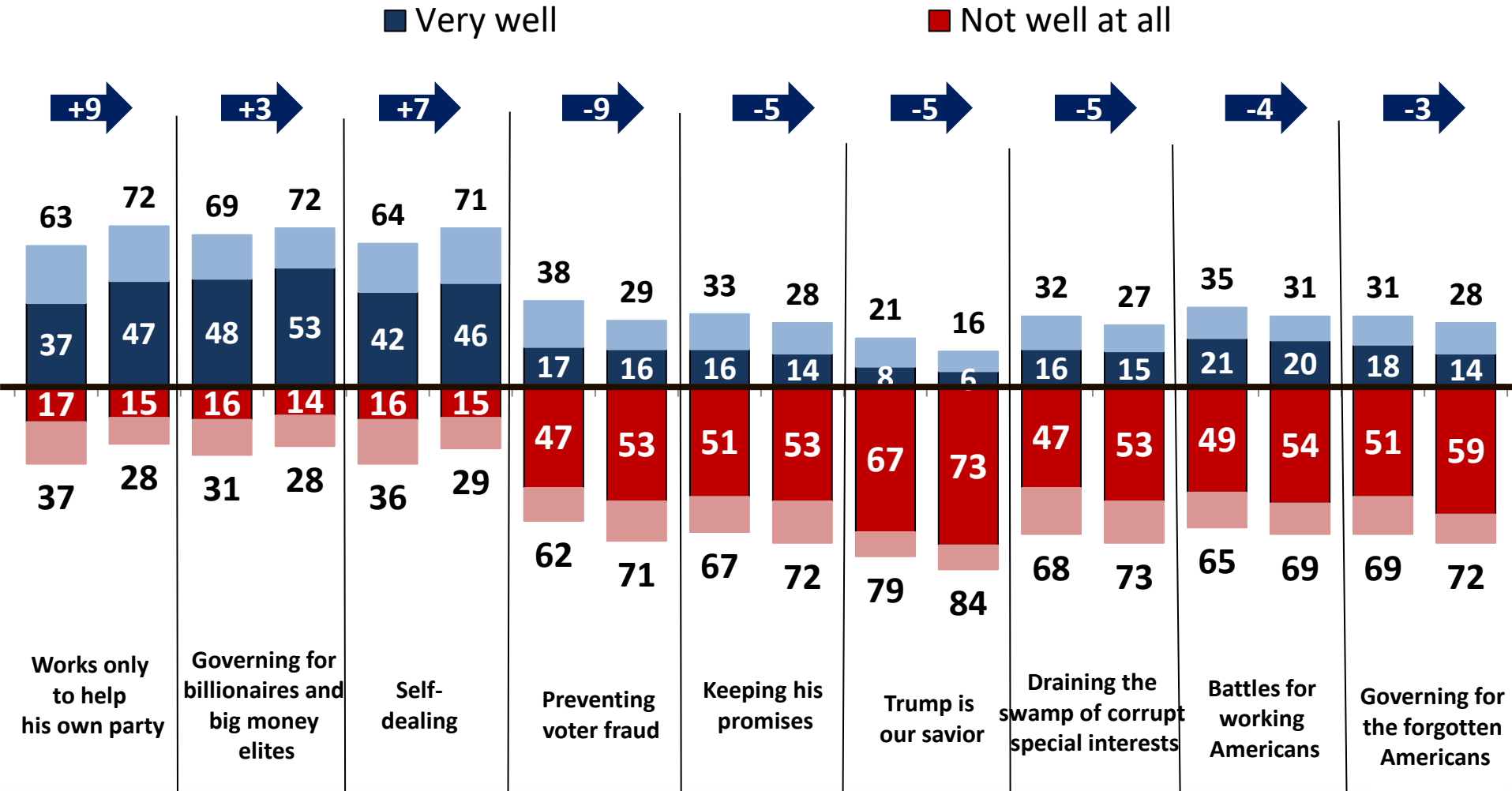
*“I was actually really impressed. I'm not a huge Biden fan, but he's the only option we have in my mind. He communicated clearly, he was direct. He made some emotional connections that seemed genuine and impactful. His tone was pragmatic with regard to trump rather than disdainful which made him more believable” **White Working-Class Man***

*“I liked it. It is refreshing to hear a man state his intentions and plan for a way to lead instead of trashing his opponent.” **White Working-Class Man***

*“I felt that for the most part he was speaking honestly and from the heart. I feel he genuinely cares. It was very warm and presidential.” **Former Trump voter***



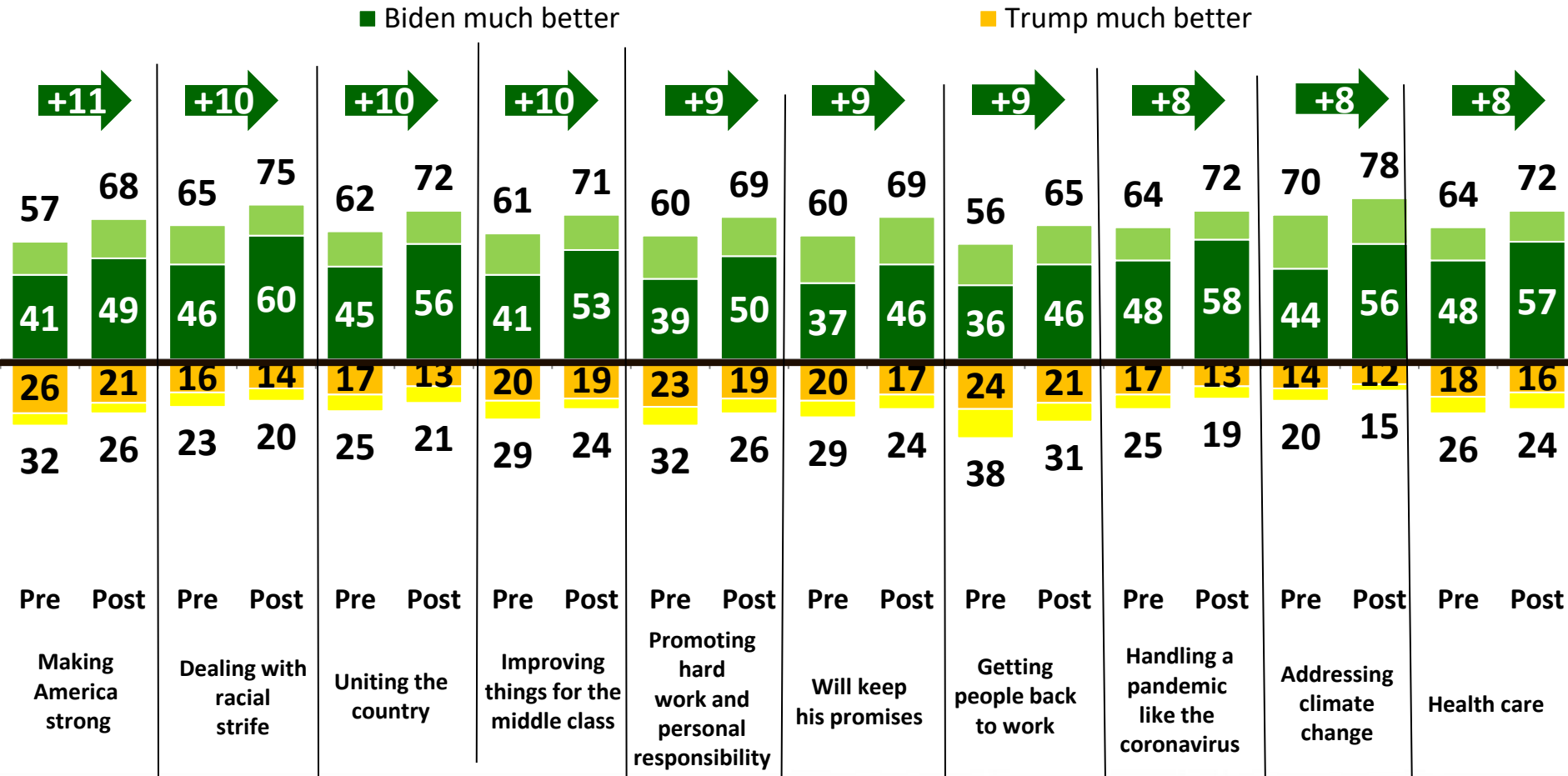
# Biden speech sharply defines Trump works only for own party, billionaires, and self-dealing





# Biden makes large gains on core parts of his speech, particularly strength and unity, and improving things for the middle class

Now you will read some issues. For each issue, please say whether you think Joe Biden or Donald Trump would do a better job with handling that issue.



# And Biden wins the big battle with Trump for the middle class

Which one of the following statements comes closer to your point of view, even if neither is exactly right?

**Biden grew up middle class and will fight to make government work for the middle class after President Trump governed for the biggest corporations and to enrich the top 1 percent and his own family.**

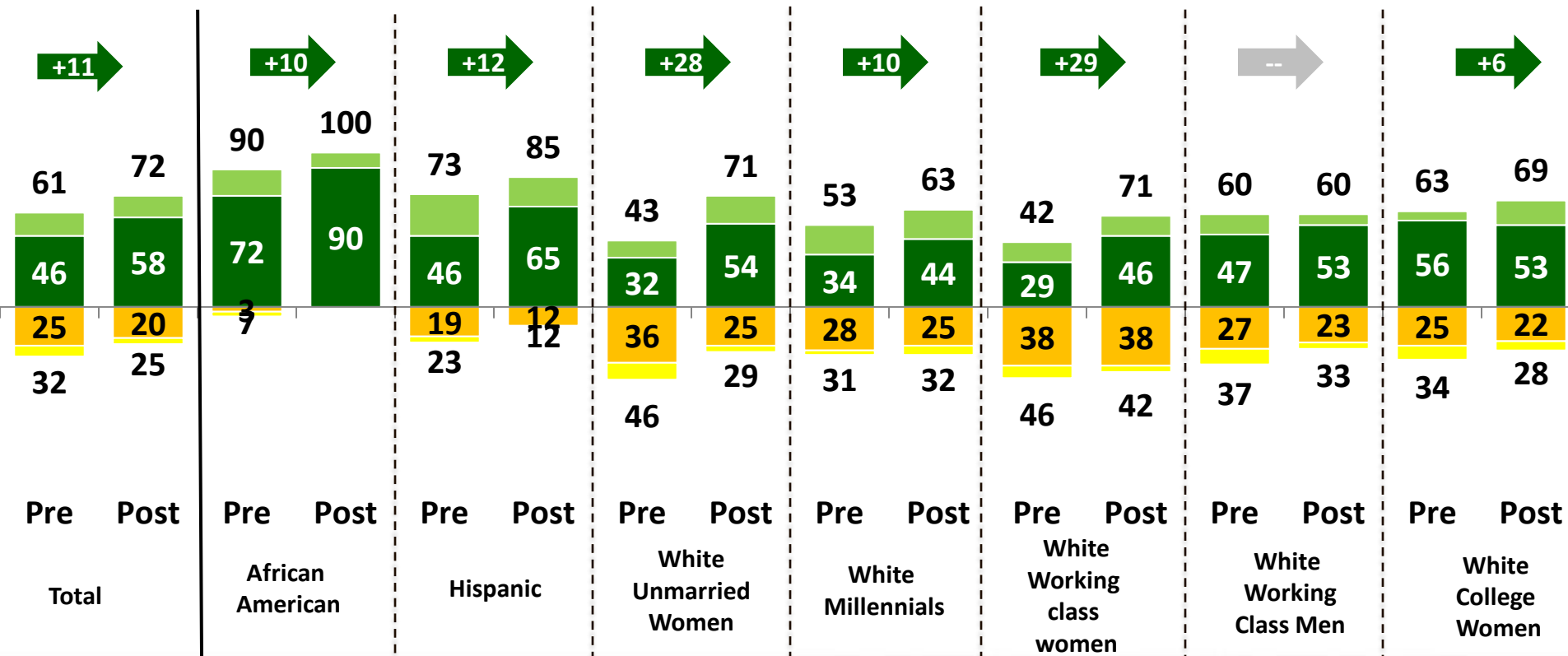
**Trump governed for the forgotten Americans, renegotiated trade agreements to avoid outsourcing, and was the first to stand up for manufacturing in America.**

■ Much More

■ Somewhat More

■ Much More

■ Somewhat More



# CONTACT US



## DEMOCRACY CORPS

1440 G Street. NW  
Floor 10  
Washington, DC 20005

Phone: +1 202 250 3645

[www.democracycorps.com](http://www.democracycorps.com)

## GREENBERG RESEARCH

1440 G Street NW  
Floor 10  
Washington, DC 20005

Phone: +1 202 499 6901

[www.greenbergresearch.com](http://www.greenbergresearch.com)

## CENTER FOR VOTER INFORMATION

1707 L Street, N.W.  
Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20036

Phone: +1 202 659 9570

[www.centerforvoterinformation.org](http://www.centerforvoterinformation.org)

