



4 years ago, exhausted by US election viewing we headed off for bed at midnight, only to be jarred awake by pushed 3AM newsfeeds buzzing away on the phone, informing of the victory by Trump. It will not be called so early this year, it seems. Here we are at midnight again and it looks like AZ, PA, MI, and WI will dictate the race. When will it be called? The chart in this piece gives some insight - it won't be tonight!



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Daily Deck: Biden vs Trump: photo finish?

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Election day is finally here. Just a few final thoughts...

What changed recently

The state polls have not just tightened but have continued to shift around. As we highlighted in last week's DD, given the state polling data, Trump is seemingly fighting an uphill battle. But hopefully if we learned anything from the last go around, it's that we can all wake up surprised the next day.

We all know and appreciate that polling data are hard to take at face value so what we did was make adjustments to the current Biden-Trump polling spread using Trump's 2016 outperformance in each state. When we do that, there have been a few notable shifts since we published that DD last week. First, WI and MN (each has 10 electoral votes) have shifted to Trump. Unfortunately for the President, on this same basis, Texas has shifted to Biden. So when we sum up the electoral votes using our adjustment process in the 12 key races (and add that to the non-toss up states) Trump ends up with 249 of the 270 needed to win (this total is down from last week when we had him at 267). But we have to acknowledge the flip side. The reality is Texas is going to be close. If Trump happens to win there (and assuming our adjustment for WI and MN – and the other states – are right) he would net 287 and the win. We know people want it to be clear cut, but it's not. It's going to be close (more on how close and gaming it out a bit, below)...

What we will probably know (and not know) tonight

We will probably know tonight with a high degree of certainty whether the Republicans hold the Senate, or it flips to the Democrats. Three critical states in the race are Maine, North Carolina, and Iowa. If the Republicans sweep these states, it becomes highly likely that they will maintain control of the Senate. All three of these are expected to have results this evening (NC closes at 7:30pm, Maine at 8:00pm and Iowa at 10:00pm). Winning 2 of these 3 and then sweeping Georgia (where the Republicans are polling well, but where results are unlikely at least for a few days after the election) would also give them control.

In terms of the Presidency, of the 12 toss-up (battleground) states, we should have election results for 5 of them by the end of the night. These are North Carolina, Florida, Wisconsin, Texas and Iowa. They account for a non-trivial 98 electoral votes.

There are a couple of things these results will tell us. For starters, if Biden wins either Florida or Texas (polls look really tight here relative to 2016), the race is effectively over for Trump. Thus, one of these states going blue would give us an election night result. On the flipside, should Trump sweep these 5 states, it will put him in a very good position to win. This haul, plus the 125 electoral votes he is expected to win (i.e. leaning Trump or better) would get him to 223. This sweep would also suggest he is outperforming the polls once again (and perhaps by a larger margin than 2016). Thus toss-ups like Ohio and Georgia (where Trump is ahead in the polls) are also likely to drop in the Trump column. This would get him to 257 with 5 toss-up states – and 63 electoral votes – to go. The contest in Pennsylvania (20 electoral votes) would all of a sudden be front and center. This leads us to...

What might make it messy

A close race. If Trump wins Florida and Texas and the other of the 5 "early" states are mixed, the uncertainty with regards to the eventual outcome will grow significantly. Of the 97 remaining electoral votes, we are expected to get 37 of these by Wednesday (11/04) and another 36 by the end of this week (11/06). Then, if it is still tight after that, note

that the heavily-contested state of Ohio is not expected to report final results until November 28th. To be sure, if Trump has a significant lead here, they are likely to call the state for him given that significantly more Republicans than Democrats were expected to vote in-person on election day. But it is an example of where the election can get significantly drawn-out even without a candidate contesting the results.

Tight results in key states obviously increase the odds that any eventual re-count (once triggered by wide-ranging state rules, depending on how wide the margin of victory is) will be contested. But this is likely something for, at the earliest, the end of this week. **For Required Conflicts Disclosures, please see page 3.** Disseminated: November 3, 2020 15:10ET; Produced: November 3, 2020 15:10

Key Races: President

<u>State (electoral votes)</u>	<u>Poll closing time (PM, eastern)</u>	<u>Biden-Trump (RCP avg, 11/03)</u>	<u>Trump 2016 outperformance (actual minus polls)</u>	<u>Adjusted Biden spread</u>	<u>Result timeline</u>
Georgia (16)	7:00	-1.0	0.5	-1.5	Most results expected by 11/04.
North Carolina (15)	7:30	-0.2	2.7	-2.9	97% of ballots expected to be counted on election night.
Ohio (18)	7:30	-1.4	4.6	-6.0	Early-voting results reported at 8:30. Final results not until 11/28.
Florida (29)	8:00	0.9	1.0	-0.1	Majority of results expected tonight. Counting mail-in votes well ahead of election day.
Pennsylvania (20)	8:00	1.2	2.6	-1.4	Start counting early-voting on election day. Majority of votes counted by 11/06.
Michigan (16)	8:00	4.2	4.1	0.1	Full results could take until 11/06.
Wisconsin (10)	9:00	6.7	7.2	-0.5	Results expected on election night.
Minnesota (10)	9:00	4.3	4.5	-0.2	Majority of results known by noon on 11/04.
Arizona (11)	9:00	0.9	-0.5	1.4	Majority of results known by 11/04.
Texas (38)	9:00	-1.2	-3.0	1.8	Majority of results known on election night.

Iowa (6)	10:00	-2.0	6.5	-8.5	Results expected on time, similar to prior elections.
Nevada (6)	10:00	2.2	-1.1	3.3	Timeline unknown.

Source: RealClearPolitics, 270twin.com, NY Times, RBC Capital Markets US Economics

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