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Trump fans from O.C. have their reasons for backing the Donald for president

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Donald Trump's supporters don't necessarily believe all his promises, let alone agree with everything he says.

But as his strong Super Tuesday showing confirms, the billionaire businessman is resonating with a range of voters across the country – to the dismay of many mainstream Republicans who never thought his unorthodox campaigning would get him this far.

The unfiltered clarion call of a celebrity outside conventional political circles is striking a chord so deep that backers readily forgive the lawsuits, bankruptcies, insults, extreme proposals and swings in policy positions.

“Our way of life, our middle class and our European civilization hang in the balance,” said Laguna Hills attorney Bill Hulsy. “We finally have someone who is not a tool of the Republican National Committee, The Wall Street Journal, the Club for Growth, the Cato Institute and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.”

The Register spoke with a sampling of Orange County Trump supporters about their attraction to the former reality TV star and their reactions to the criticisms of their candidate coming from across the political spectrum.

Three policy themes emerged as particularly important to the group: Bringing manufacturing jobs back to the U.S. and rebuilding the middle class. Defeating the Islamic State. And putting an end to illegal immigration.

Supporters dismiss polls such as a CNN survey conducted last week showing Hillary Clinton would beat Trump by 8 percentage points. They distrust those polls and point to more favorable surveys.

Here's a look at four local Trump supporters, all of whom said they consistently go to the polls. They include an independent and a Democrat, as well as an early Trump advocate who's now having second thoughts.

The masseuse

Capistrano Beach's Jeanne Alonzo-McIntyre, a retired massage therapist, brushes aside controversy surrounding Trump's Sunday interview in which he declined to disavow former KKK leader David Duke. The candidate later issued a series of disavowals of Duke.

"As baby boomers, we've grown up with Donald Trump and we know he's had nothing to do with the KKK," said Alonzo-McIntyre, an unaffiliated voter who's favored Trump since he entered the race. "I feel like he really loves America. Just look at the people of color at his rallies.

"With Trump, Americans will be on top of the food chain, meaning good-paying jobs. With the other candidates, wealth and jobs would go first to big donors, special interests, lobbyists, Congress, illegals, foreign workers – and whatever is left, for the American workers."

She likes his ideas for a border wall with Mexico, deporting the 11 million people in the country illegally and temporarily blocking Muslims from entering the country. However, she agrees with those who say deportations would be unlikely to win congressional approval.

She dismisses concerns that he was once fined \$1 million for using undocumented workers to build the Trump Tower – "That was 36 years ago" – and that he's being sued by former students of his now-defunct Trump University.

"On the whole, I feel he's an honest businessman," she said. And she's confident that he would govern responsibly. "I feel Trump would not abuse or overreach with executive orders and would work with Congress."

The furniture maker

Bob Moore doesn't want mass deportations or to block Muslim visitors from entering the country – both of which Trump has proposed.

"I don't think Trump does either," said the retired owner of a furniture manufacturing company, who supports a path to citizenship for those in the country illegally. "You can't even take 5 million people and take them out of their homes and away from their families. I think he's just trying to bring attention to the problem.

"I've said a couple times to the TV set, 'Why are you saying that, Trump?' But part of it is his showmanship, and maybe we need that."

From the outset of the race, the Republican from Dana Point was determined not to support anyone named Bush or Clinton. Trump, Ben Carson and Carly Fiorina all caught his attention – largely because they came from outside of Washington circles. He threw in with Trump when he emerged as the strongest of the three.

Moore would like to see more taxes on products entering the country, saying that would encourage companies to bring manufacturing back to the U.S. – a key Trump promise.

“But we must have plant workers paid well,” said Moore. “That’s the way to create a strong middle class.”

Will Americans pay for U.S.-made products that could be significantly more expensive than those made abroad?

“If that’s all that’s available, they will,” he said.

The attorney

Bill Hulsy is gung-ho about Trump’s proposals for mass deportations, a border wall and blocking Muslim visitors. The attorney and former prosecutor offered a detailed account of how those in the country illegally might be rounded up and “sent to some camp which can be set up cheaply.”

He sees the two biggest threats to the U.S. way of life as “being overwhelmed by the waves of Third World peoples who have invaded and colonized our country” and a free-trade policy “which is a euphemism for the Chinese and the Japanese daily stealing our lunch money.”

The Laguna Hills resident is no stranger to politics. He was a staffer with the California Republican Party in the late 1960s and has worked on a variety of GOP campaigns.

Hulsy was initially considering supporting Rand Paul, but was turned off by his libertarian attitude toward drug enforcement and by his decision to announce his immigration policy in Spanish. He then turned to Ted Cruz before deciding the Texas senator “wanted to continue the war-fare state.”

His decision to back Trump rests on the billionaire’s campaign platform and success in business. He said questions being raised about Trump’s health care plan, student lawsuits against him involving Trump University and the \$1 million labor-related fine aren’t a concern. And he supports tax breaks and tariffs to bring manufacturing jobs back to the U.S.

“We’ve been spoiled by getting things made for pennies,” said Hulsy. “It’s going to cost people more, but that money will stay here. We’re going to have benefits here and it will have a cascading effect.”

The communications pro

Democrat Nancy Jo Flint proudly shows off the autograph she got from Trump when the two met at the 2006 opening of his Trump National Golf Club in Rancho Palos Verdes. She recalls trading comments about the menu.

She says she's backed his presidential bid since he entered the race because there were "zero choices" among the other candidates.

Flint supports Trump on the proposed border wall and blocking Muslim visitors, but says those in the country illegally should be given a chance to apply for citizenship. She also has some concerns over Trump's favorable comments about Canada's single-payer health care system.

The Newport Beach resident and retired communications manager says she can accept those policy differences. But what has given Flint, an African American, pause is Trump's handling of questions about former KKK leader Duke on Sunday.

"I was beyond disappointed to listen to Trump's stumbling remarks regarding David Duke," Flint said. "How could he not know him, with a billionaire photographic memory such as his? This particular issue has given me considerable doubt of whether I could vote for him."