

# Townhall

## Here Are The Five Types Of Trump Voters

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In June, the Cato Institute's Emily Ekins found 8,000 voters to participate in the Democracy Fund Voter Survey and found that there is no such thing as one type of Trump voter. In fact, a good chunk of the Trump base is made up of economic progressives. The breakdown on Trump's coalition is broken down into five groups: free marketers, staunch conservatives, American preservationists, anti-elites, free marketers, and the disengaged; 31 percent are staunch conservatives, 25 percent are free marketers, 20 percent are American preservationists, and 19 percent are anti-elites. Five percent are described as part of the Disengaged.

Here's how Ekins described each group:

### **Staunch Conservatives:**

Staunch Conservatives tend to be slightly older, more male than female, and upper middle class with moderate levels of education. They are the most likely group to own guns and to be NRA members. They are the most politically interested and aware group and one of the most likely groups to have correct knowledge of political facts.

While not as hardline on immigration as the American Preservationists, they are deeply skeptical of it—both legal and illegal—and worry particularly about Muslim immigration. They feel that having lived in the U.S. for most of one's life and being Christian are very or fairly important components of being a real American. Although their attitudes toward racial minorities are similar to the attitudes of non-Trump voter groups, they are more worried that discrimination against whites is a major problem.

On economic issues, Staunch Conservatives and the Free Marketeers share an overwhelming opposition to tax hikes on the wealthy, business regulation, and government-provided health care. They have high levels of social trust in other people and worry less about whether the system is rigged. They also take conventional conservative positions on the environment and on cultural issues like same-sex marriage.

### **Free Marketers:**

More likely to come from the West, Free Marketeers skew male, are middle aged, and are the most educated and highly paid of the Trump groups (and non-Trump voters).

They are the most likely to be working full time, own their own homes, and have private health insurance. They are more cosmopolitan, the most likely group to know LGBT people, and they are least likely to watch TV or to smoke. Along with Staunch Conservatives, they are one of the most politically engaged and informed voter groups.

They align with Staunch Conservatives' steadfast fiscal conservatism—except that they are even more supportive of free trade. Nearly 100 percent of them believe that the free market better solves complex economic problems than strong government. They are, however, more liberal than Anti-Elites when it comes to matters of immigration and identity. Immigration is not their priority, they have warm feelings toward immigrants, and they only tepidly support a temporary Muslim travel ban. Their own racial identity is not salient to them, and they are similar to Democrats in their warm feelings toward members of minority groups. They also reject nativist conceptions of American identity.

### **American Preservationists**

These Trump voters lean economically progressive, believe the economic and political systems are rigged, have nativist immigration views, and a nativist and ethnocultural conception of American identity.

American Preservationists have low levels of formal education and the lowest incomes of the Trump groups—and non-Trump voters as well. Despite being the most likely group to say that religion is “very important” to them, they are the least likely to attend church regularly. They are the most likely group to be on Medicaid, to report a permanent disability that prevents them from working, and to regularly smoke cigarettes. Despite watching the most TV, they are the least politically informed of the Trump groups.

American Preservationists appear more likely to desire being around people like themselves, who have similar backgrounds and cultural experiences. They are far more likely to have a strong sense of their own racial identity and to say their Christian identity is very important to them. They take the most restrictionist approach to immigration— staunchly opposing not just illegal but legal immigration as well, and intensely supporting a temporary Muslim travel ban.

### **Anti-Elites:**

This group of Trump supporters leans economically progressive, believes the economic and political systems are rigged, and takes relatively more moderate positions on immigration, race, and American identity than American Preservationists. They are also the most likely group to favor political compromise.

Anti-Elites have relatively cooler feelings toward Donald Trump than American Preservationists, and nearly half had favorable opinions of Clinton in 2012. This group shifted most dramatically, however, against Clinton by November 2016. They were the least likely group to mobilize in the Republican primary, but of those who did, they disproportionately turned out for John Kasich.

Anti-Elites are middle-class voters with moderate levels of education, and they skew slightly younger than other Trump groups. They are the least likely group to own guns, go to church, and be politically informed.

### **The Disengaged:**

This group does not know much about politics, but what they do know is they feel detached from institutions and elites and are skeptical of immigration.

The Disengaged are less loyal Republicans who largely came to vote for Trump in the general election. They skew younger, female, and they are religiously unaffiliated. They are not very politically informed and have limited knowledge of political facts.

The Disengaged do not reveal many strong preferences on surveys, but what they do reveal is they are concerned about immigration and support the temporary Muslim travel ban.

Ekins noted that these “flavors” of Trump voters share similarities with groups crafted from other polling firms. As with any exercise that involves putting voters into blocs, the percentages may be off by a little, but offer a good insight into this diverse coalition. For example, she noted that anti-elites and American preservationists are quite similar to Pew’s “Hard-Pressed Skeptics” group, which leans Democratic, are financially distressed, and are deeply distrustful of government.

Digging deeper 53 percent of the American preservationist group says they would vote for both Democrats and Republicans in elections, though 87 percent said their vote was for Trump. Seventy-five percent of them support higher taxes on wealthier families, and they’re concerned about social security, Medicare. They’re also for government ensuring citizens have health insurance and family leave. They’re also for increased infrastructure funding. So, it’s no shocker that this group is a core Trump constituency. Eighty percent support the repeal of Obamacare. Ekins analyzed further, noting there are extremes on either side with this group making them difficult to pin down [emphasis mine]:

American Preservationists feel a lack of personal agency and have a sense that we are living in a dog-eat-dog world. They are the most likely group to believe the economic and political systems are rigged against them. Eighty-eight percent (88 percent) believe the economic system is biased in favor of the wealthiest Americans, 60 percent believe wealth is unfairly distributed, and 63 percent have cold feelings toward Wall Street. Furthermore, two-thirds of American Preservationists believe people like them have no say in government and they are twice as likely as other groups to think elections do not change things.

On matters of race, this group feels cooler toward Latinos than other groups. Less than half (46 percent) report warm feelings toward them, compared to 58 percent who hold similar feelings about Asians and 52 percent who have warm feelings toward African-Americans. Overall, American Preservationists are about 10 to 20 points less likely than other Trump and non-Trump groups to have warm feelings toward minority groups.

American Preservationists embrace a nativist and ethnocultural conception of American identity. They are 20 to 50 points more likely than other groups to believe that to be truly American it is “very important” to have been born in America (69 percent), to have lived in America for most of one’s life (67 percent), and to be Christian (59 percent). A plurality (47 percent) also say it is very or somewhat important to be of European descent to be truly American—dramatically higher than the 2 percent of Free Marketeers, 14 percent of Anti-Elites, 25 percent of Staunch Conservatives, and 1 percent of the Disengaged who agree. A desire for societal order and obedience is also important to American Preservationists. They are the only group to say it is more important to teach your child obedience (58 percent) than self-reliance (37 percent)

Despite their desire for obedience from community members, they do not see themselves as traditional. A majority (57 percent) said they would not describe themselves as such, **religious liberty issues were only a moderate priority, and only 33 percent described themselves as pro-life.**

What may surprise readers is this **group’s view on climate change and political compromise: they believe in both. They are one of the most likely groups to believe that global warming is happening (58 percent), that it is serious (61 percent), and caused by human activity (a 40 percent plurality).** Furthermore, 53 percent want their member of Congress to be “compromise oriented” to get things done and make deals.

This group has several personal characteristics that make them stand out. They are about twice as likely as other groups to be smokers, with 42 percent who smoke every day. **They are also less likely to be a gun owner or a member of the NRA.**

This is a less Republican group with only 40 percent identifying as such in 2012 and 23 percent identifying as Democrats.

With anti-Elites, 40 percent have a favorable view of Bernie Sanders, though Ekins found that only 16 percent would have voted for him over Trump in 2016. They’re not as ethnocentric as American preservationists, lean progressive economically, and are not as politically engaged. She breaks down the other groups as well. This window into the Trump coalition could possibly explain why attacks on the president have failed miserably. They’re not catching on; Trump is the Teflon Don. And that’s starting to worry Democratic operatives. Politico noted how they’re even trying to throw warning signs that Trump’s rather lackluster approval ratings are not the makings of a blue wave. They also said if that’s the mindset of the larger Democratic Party for the 2018 midterms, the party is heading for the cliff again. On top of that, the \$15 minimum wage, free college, and Medicare for all fell flat with voters outside of the Democratic base. No one cares about Russia. His temperament, the trip ups with his legislative agenda are all attacks that have failed. There is no one type of Trump voter. The GOP coalition is a mish-mosh of staunch conservatives and populists, with the latter being less likely to be NRA members, more likely to identify as Democrats, and more likely to believe not only in global warming, but that it’s man-made and a threat. Real Clear Politics’ Sean Trende once said there is more than one way to skin the electoral cat. For Democrats, it could be a total vivisection, but first they need a leader, a message, an agenda, and money.

One thing that holds this crew together is their hatred for Hillary Clinton, which soared way past their dislike for Barack Obama. She found that American preservationists, Anti-Elites, and the Disengaged disliked Clinton to Obama by more than 13, 31, and 39 more points respectively. For Clintonites, you could have won a good chunk of some of these voters with a hard-core economic message that wasn't spliced together with trying to make Trump's Access Hollywood tape a thing. A well-tailored message could have averted the run-up in the rural regions. Heck, just showing up, like Obama did, could have prevented such a surge. There were many avenues to hit here; you guys just decided to view the whole group as one atypical Republican base. Huge mistake.