

Top Takeaways from the Republican National Convention

- Republicans are leaving Milwaukee today feeling like the wind is at their backs.
- They are emphatically united behind the Trump-Vance ticket and there is no doubt former President Trump clearly controls the Republican Party now. His top primary rivals, former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, and South Carolina Senator Tim Scott, all endorsed him in prime-time speeches at the convention.
- Republicans are expanding the electoral map beyond the seven swing states (Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin) election watchers have been focused on for months and are now looking at Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Virginia.
- It should be noted that down ticket polling of Democratic candidates, particularly Senate races in Michigan, Montana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin, show that the Democrat is still maintaining a lead, so Trump does not appear to have strong coattails yet.
- APCO continues to recommend that businesses and organizations pay attention to Senate and House races and the likelihood of a continued split government come January. Given the high number of retirements in Congress, there will be many new Members and committee chairs, plus new Republican leadership in the Senate as Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky steps aside as the top Republican at the end of this year.
- Expect to see a modest (+2 to +3) rise in support for Trump in the coming weeks. Convention polling bumps tend to be minimal when the candidate is already well known.
- Despite the triumphant mood of the convention, some Republicans fear overconfidence, with many Members of Congress from swing districts cautioning their supporters not to let their foot off the gas. The Republican National Committee Chair evened cautioned his Party against taking a “victory lap.”
- Trump’s speech, especially at the beginning, was more somber and softer than his normal rhetoric. He was humble as he described in detail the assassination attempt that could have ended his life five days ago. And, as promised, he talked about unity, saying “I am running to be president for all of America, not half of America, because there is no victory in winning for half of America.”
- The second part of his speech, which at more than 90 minutes is the longest acceptance speech by presidential nominee in history, was harsher as he laid out an agenda that includes mass deportations, higher tariffs on imported goods, particularly from China, and an “America First” foreign policy.
- Trump also promised additional tax cuts for workers, including an exemption for taxes on tips, and ending electric vehicle mandates. Those specific policy callouts appeared aimed more at whipping up Trump’s base than winning over moderates and independents, but in this current moment of the campaign, winning over new converts seems less urgent.

- Notably, Trump’s speech did not mention the abortion rights issue, which is expected to play a role in outcome November’s elections.
- He also did not mention the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.
- Trump only mentioned President Biden by name once. In his 2020 acceptance speech, he called out Biden more than 40 times.
- The selection of Ohio Senator JD Vance as Trump’s running mate is a clear signal Trump cares about the legacy of the MAGA movement. Vance, also once a fierce Trump critic, is now the embodiment of the MAGA movement, having transformed himself into one the staunchest defenders of the Trump agenda, especially when it comes to foreign policy, trade, and immigration.
- Vance’s acceptance speech Wednesday was superfluous in its praise of Trump. It recounted his poor rural upbringing in Ohio and how it influenced his life and his politics.
- It also was an appeal to swing state voters in the battleground Rust Belt states, touting the need for a “leader who fights for the people who built this country. We need a leader who is not in the pocket of big business but answers to the working man, union and non-union alike. A leader who won’t sellout to multinational corporations but will stand up for American companies and American industry.”
- Another speech worth noting was Teamsters Union President Sean O’Brien’s remarks on Monday night. Trump is openly courting the labor vote and O’Brien’s appearance broke with most major unions in the U.S., which have overwhelmingly thrown their support behind Biden. O’Brien used the opportunity to rail against corporate greed, push for greater investments in the American worker, and call for greater bipartisanship in Congress.
- The GOP adopted a [revised policy platform](#) to align more closely with Trump's voice and views. The slimmed-down 16-page document titled, “2024 GOP PLATFORM MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!” includes 20 broad-stroke policy initiatives. While some social conservatives are unhappy with watered-down language regarding abortion and traditional marriage, it’s not enough for them to walk away from Trump.
- The Democratic National Committee, meanwhile, is moving forward with plans to nominate Biden using a virtual roll vote ahead of the Democratic National Convention August 19 – 22 in Chicago, despite growing calls for Biden to step aside following his disastrous debate performance last month. However, within the last 24 hours, multiple media outlets have reported that top Democrats believe Biden may now be considering leaving the race as soon as this weekend.
- Finally, black swan events often decide campaigns. There have been two already: Biden’s disastrous debate performance, which threw the Democratic Party into a panic, and the attempted assassination of Trump. There are still more than three months to go until the November election and other unexpected events could occur. Nothing is written in stone yet, for either presidential candidate or Party.

What's on the "To Do" List

Focus on Priorities: With the election at an uncertain crossroads, it is essential not to get distracted by day-to-day shifts. Focus instead on consistent policy priorities that matter to your organization.

Understand Policy Implications: Even as some Democrats continue to call for President Biden to step aside, the overall policy differences between the Democratic and Republican parties have not, and will not, drastically change. The focus will continue to be the economy, immigration, taxes, trade, and health care, including abortion policy.

Start Preparing Now: Regardless of whom is sitting in the White House next January, there is going to be significant change in Washington next year due to the retirement of several senior Members of Congress in both parties. Preparing now is critically important to cultivating and maintaining bipartisan relationships that will extend beyond the election cycle. APCO's government relations, issues management, and crisis communications colleagues can help to you prepare your strategy and begin executing against it.

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