

Politics

Bingo Games, Daytime TV: Biden Woos Older Voters to Stop Trump

- Polls show Biden up among seniors, reversing recent trends
- Elderly can help president offset losses of younger voters



A voter casts their ballot during early voting in Maryland, on May 7. Photographer: Graeme Sloan/Bloomberg

By [Akayla Gardner](#)

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Pollsters are calling the 2024 presidential election a coin toss. President Joe Biden's campaign hopes the race will actually be decided by bingo balls.

The president's team is intensifying outreach to older voters, with volunteers organizing bingo games in swing states and running ads during daytime shows popular with seniors, such as *The Price is Right*. It's a bid to capitalize on polls showing Biden leading Donald Trump among those 65 and older, reversing a trend that's seen seniors back Republican nominees in recent elections.

Older voters are a coveted bloc, boasting the highest turnout rate of any age bracket and sizable populations in battleground states. They're even more important this year, offering Biden the

chance to offset losses from younger voters frustrated by his handling of the Israel-Hamas war and other issues.

Biden's team believes seniors could make a difference in the battleground states, a campaign official said on condition of anonymity to discuss internal strategy.

Democratic strategist Tom Bonier said older voters are tuned in to political news, including coverage of Trump's criminal cases.

"Voters who are paying the closest attention are those who are abandoning Trump and the Republican Party at higher rates than any others," Bonier said.

Polling Edge

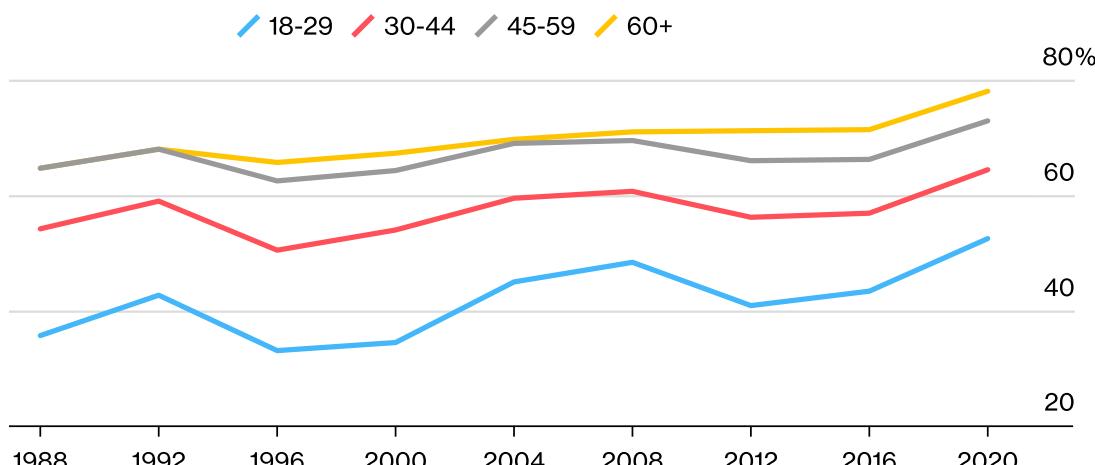
Trump carried voters 65 and older in his prior campaigns, including by 52% to 47% over Biden in 2020. In a rematch this year pitting the two oldest major-party candidates ever, polls show Biden, 81, with an edge over Trump, 77, among those voters.

Biden leads Trump head-to-head by 1 percentage point among registered voters 65 or older in seven swing states, according to an April Bloomberg News/Morning Consult poll. An April Siena College/New York Times poll found a more pronounced advantage, with Biden topping Trump 51% to 42% in a two-person race.

"It's a major turning point," Biden pollster Celinda Lake said. "It's really an inverse of the previous patterns, where Democrats traditionally do better with younger voters and have had trouble with seniors."

Older Americans Are the Most Reliable to Turnout

60 and older voters consistently beat younger age brackets to the polls



Source: University of Florida Professor Michael McDonald, 2023

Support from older Americans could be especially valuable in Arizona, a competitive state Biden won four years ago with a significant elderly population. Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan, part of the Democratic “Blue Wall” crucial to Biden’s reelection, also count more than a million seniors each, according to 2020 US Census Bureau data.

Researcher Trevor Smith of WPA Intelligence, which conducts polling for Republicans and conservative groups, said older voters are more up for grabs than in 2020, but his analysis shows Biden does not have an outright lead.

It’s far from certain the president’s polling advantage will translate into success in November. Biden’s team also sought to perform better with older voters four years ago, only to see Trump win the group.

TV Blitz

Biden’s campaign is investing heavily in paid media targeting older Americans, who watch more traditional TV than younger people. Ads have appeared on programs popular with seniors, including local news, daytime shows like *Good Morning America* and game shows such as *Jeopardy!* and *Wheel of Fortune*, according to a campaign official.

While Biden has struggled to sell voters broadly on his economic agenda, some data suggests seniors may have rosier views of the economy, making them more receptive to his pitch.



An attendee plays election-themed Bingo during an election night watch party during the US midterm elections in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, US, on November 8, 2022. *Photographer: Rebecca Droke/AFP*

Older voters are more likely to own a home and stocks, helping them build wealth and avoid the hurdles younger voters face with high housing prices and mortgage rates. Americans age 70 and older have accumulated more than \$14 trillion in additional net worth since the end of 2019, according to Federal Reserve data, as home values and stocks surged during the pandemic.

The share of US homes that are mortgage-free jumped 5 percentage points from 2012 to 2022, to a record just shy of 40%. More than half of those owners have reached retirement age. Many older Americans with a mortgage enjoy rates of less than 3%, while younger buyers face rates above 7%.

Senior Benefits

Biden's messaging on Social Security, Medicare and lowering drug costs are also likely to strike a chord with older voters. Biden has highlighted Republican proposals to cut those programs and raise the retirement age, while Trump's stance has been inconsistent.

Trump said in March “there is a lot you can do” with cuts. He later said he would never do anything to “jeopardize” entitlement payments. The former president has vowed to repeal Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act, which capped insulin and out-of-pocket drug costs for many Medicare patients.

“We obviously don’t have that problem if Biden wins reelection,” said Richard Fiesta, executive director of the Alliance for Retired Americans.

The Bloomberg News/Morning Consult poll found swing-state voters trust Biden over Trump to protect Social Security and Medicare.

Read more: [Ultra-Rich Should Pay to Save Social Security, Voter Poll Shows](#)

Florida’s sizable retiree population is one reason Biden’s campaign is expanding its efforts in a state Trump carried twice – and a marker for how the elderly could swing the election.

Ken Williams, a 67-year-old [United Parcel Service Inc.](#) driver and [Teamsters](#) union member, interrupted the president during a speech in Florida last month to thank him for the [\\$36 billion](#) rescue of the Central States Pension Fund, which saved 350,000 workers’ retirement plans.

“The only reason I have a pension is because of you,” Williams said, holding up a copy of his employment contract. “You stood strong with us and we’ll stand strong with you.”

– *With assistance from Mark Niquette*

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