

# Battleground state: Michigan's race is tightening, but Trump still has an uphill battle

## Presidential candidate strategy in Michigan



### Michigan from Clinton's perspective

- *The Cook Political Report* has Michigan categorized as “Lean D,” but the Clinton campaign has not been complacent about the state
- Clinton was in a similar position during the primaries when many analysts, including *FiveThirtyEight*, predicted with near-certainty that she would win, but ended up losing by two points
- Clinton has campaigned around the state and regularly references the Flint water crisis in her stump speech
- Clinton is ahead by 5.2 points in *RealClearPolitics*'s poll average, though the race has tightened since her 9.5 point lead in late August
- Though she has not invested heavily in advertising in Michigan, Clinton has had an active ground game in the state with 23 campaign field offices focused on consolidating her base and reaching out to moderates



### Michigan from Trump's perspective

- Michigan is part of Trump's Rust Belt strategy, but he has an uphill battle in the state
- Michigan is one of the battleground states where Trump has spent the most time campaigning—the state's manufacturing industry has been a frequent backdrop for his trade and economic policy speeches
- Trump has had difficulty consolidating the Republican base in Michigan because the party's traditional coalition, especially in Western Michigan, has not fallen in line with his candidacy as much as in other states
- State GOP leaders hope Mike Pence, Trump's more traditional running mate, might bring the base together
- Trump has a frosty relationship with Michigan's governor, Rick Snyder (R), who declined the campaign's request for support saying he would rather focus on Michigan and not get involved in the presidential race
- Trump has spent heavily on advertising in Michigan and seems to be relying on the upcoming presidential debate to help build his momentum in the state

Sources: Daniel Strauss “Why Clinton is trouncing Trump in Michigan,” *POLITICO*, August 19, 2016; Darren Samuelsohn, Katie Glueck, Kyle Cheney, Daniel Strauss, “25 battleground counties to watch,” *POLITICO*, August 8, 2016; *RealClearPolitics* Poll Average, September 13, 2016; Todd Spangler “New poll shows Clinton and Trump nearly tied in Michigan,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 16, 2016.

# Battleground state: Michigan’s key counties are filled with moderates Clinton will aim to hold onto

## Key battleground counties in Michigan

County	Past elections	Population	Registered voters	Analysis
Macomb County	2016 primary: Clinton, Trump 2012: Obama 52, Romney 48	864,840	618,420 No party registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This county is known as the home of the Reagan Democrats</li><li>• It is the state’s third most populous county, located outside Detroit</li><li>• Macomb was last won by a Republican presidential candidate in 2004</li><li>• Obama won the county by 9 points in 2008, but only 4.5 against Romney in 2012</li></ul>
Oakland County	2016 primary: Clinton, Trump 2012: Romney 46, Obama 54	1,242,304	937,155	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After Wayne County, which encompasses Detroit, Oakland is the most populous in the state</li><li>• Oakland is also one of the highest income counties in the nation and a longtime GOP stronghold</li><li>• In recent years the suburban demographic has trended left and Romney, who grew up in the county, lost it in 2012</li><li>• At the presidential level, Republicans have not won Oakland since 1992</li><li>• Trump’s difficulty connecting with female Republican voters may cause him trouble in suburban Oakland</li></ul>

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