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USA

# The U.S. Election Too Close to Call and too Strange for Words

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**With just a little more than two weeks until the November 5 U.S. presidential election that pits vice-president Kamala Harris against former president Donald Trump, the contest remains too close to call. A variety of issues, from conspiracy theories to assassination attempts complicate the campaign and sometimes confuse and mislead both voters and poll-takers.**

In September and October, the Southeast was hit by hurricanes Helene and Milton, with high winds and torrential rain causing vast destruction to homes and businesses and to highways, and bridges, as well as taking a number of lives. One might expect and hope that society would unite in the face of such a disaster. But, no.

Rightwing conspiracy theorists, including Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Green, claimed that the U.S. government, that is to say Biden and Harris, controlled the weather and used the storm to attack those predominantly Republican states, disrupt voting, and steal the election from Trump. Others claimed the government, having manufactured or directed the hurricanes, planned to seize the land for lithium mining. Those theories went viral on social media and led to threats, including death threats, to federal rescue and relief workers and to meteorologists who predict and report on the weather. With some grieving, some injured, many without homes, or lacking power, Harris apparently feels this is not the moment to talk about climate change.

Trump himself claimed that Biden and Harris had ignored the states hit by hurricanes—claims denied by their Republican governors—and that the federal government was giving only \$750 to disaster victims—not true, that was just an emergency relief payment.

Then there is the question of security. There were two attempts by Americans to assassinate Trump in the last four months and U.S. intelligence services have verified that Iran has plans to assassinate Trump. Understandably then, Trump has security concerns and has demanded more protection, including from the U.S. military and has even asked for a military aircraft, requests that are out of the ordinary for candidates' protection. At the same time, Trump has suggested, and many of his followers have accepted the idea, that the Democrats were behind the assassination attempts.

Reports state that Trump is angry because his donors haven't contributed more money. Harris meanwhile is awash in money. She has raised more than one billion dollars, and she appears to have more than 100 million dollars more than Trump. Money goes for television, radio, and social media advertising, for staff, and for field operations, meaning canvassers' door knocking.

Harris, however, is worried about winning over Black and Hispanic voters. Over the last three elections, Democrats have lost Black and Hispanic voters to the Republican Party and in particular to Donald Trump. A New York Times poll finds that Harris has lost ground among Black voters, particularly Black young voters, those Blacks without a college degree, and Black men in particular. Today 15 percent of Black voters support Trump. Harris has also lost support among Hispanic voters, 37% of whom now support Trump. The majority of Black and Hispanic voters still back Harris, as do all of the important Black and Hispanic organizations; still Harris has suffered a serious erosion of support.

Then too, there is the problem of the Arab American voters who have moved away from Harris because of her support for Israel with its genocidal war on Gaza. A poll taken among the 206,000 Muslim and Arab Michigan voters a month ago found that 40% favored Green Party candidate Jill Stein, 18% favored Trump, and only 12% Harris. The

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Greens are a left party, but votes for Stein could bring about Trump's election.

Many of us on the left find it hard to support either candidate—but many of us will vote for Harris to stop Trump.

*13 October 2024*

*PS:*

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