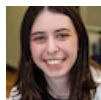
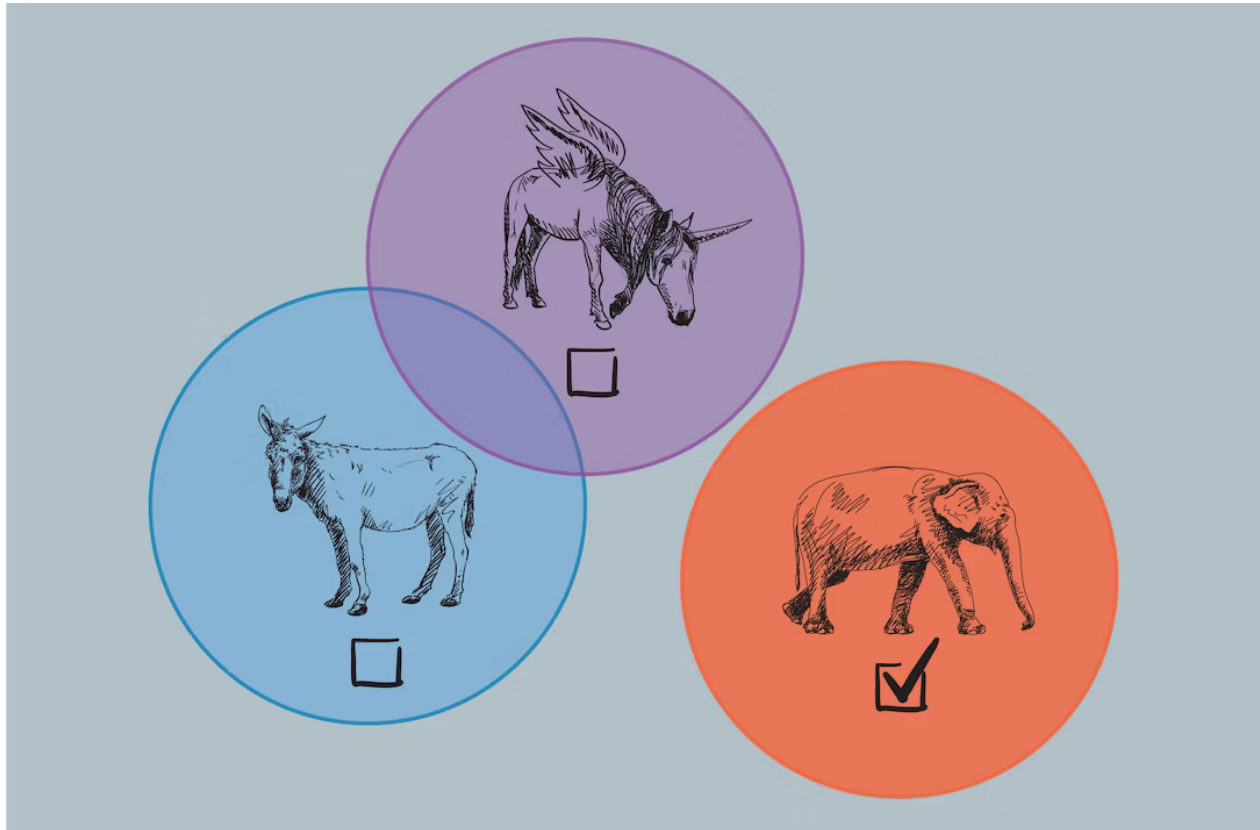


# Explainer: Why a Presidential Third Party in 2024 Would Benefit the GOP



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Third Way has embarked on an ongoing [project](#) to sound the alarm about the dangers of a third-party candidate in 2024. Below are our core arguments for why a well-financed 2024 third-party presidential candidate would act as a spoiler and benefit presumptive Republican nominee Donald Trump or a Trump acolyte.

## A third-party candidate won't win.

- There aren't that many truly Independent voters. While [Gallup](#) data shows that 39% of Americans identify as Independents, most Independents have a partisan leaning. When taking partisan leans into account, only 9% of Americans are true Independents. That's a small base for a new party.

- **Historically, third-party candidates just don't win.** Since 1912, across 27 presidential elections, third-party candidates have not won enough Electoral Votes in sum to win a single election.

## **A strong third-party candidate would draw votes from the Biden coalition.**

- **Biden won 2016 third-party voters.** AP Votecast data indicates that Biden won 2016 third-party voters by a 30-point margin. If a strong third-party candidate had tempted them away, it would have pulled votes from Biden's coalition.
- **Biden won "double haters."** In 2016, Hillary Clinton lost "double haters," voters who had unfavorable views of both candidates. In 2020, such voters backed Biden by a 15-point margin, according to AP Votecast. "Double haters" are the prime targets for a third-party candidate, and they were part of the Biden coalition.
- **In swing states, 2016 third-party voters flipping to Biden were decisive.** The estimated raw vote of 2016 third-party voters that were persuaded to cast their ballot for Biden in 2020 was greater than the margin that Biden won by in every single battleground state that flipped from red to blue in 2020.
- **Trump's voters are VERY loyal – and a third party won't draw them away.** Among Trump's supporters, a vast majority said they "strongly approve" of his presidency. Larger shares of Biden's supporters only "somewhat approve" of Biden. And voters who strongly approve of a candidate are more likely to vote for that candidate than those who only somewhat approve.

## **If neither candidate gets 270 Electoral Votes, Republicans are favored.**

- **If a third-party candidate did win some electoral votes, they would deny any candidate 270 Electoral Votes.** This would throw the election to the House – whereby the House delegation from each state gets one vote. After the 2022 midterms, Republicans control 25 out of the 50 state delegations, while Democrats control 23, with two split evenly. If the election were thrown to the House, Republicans would be favored.