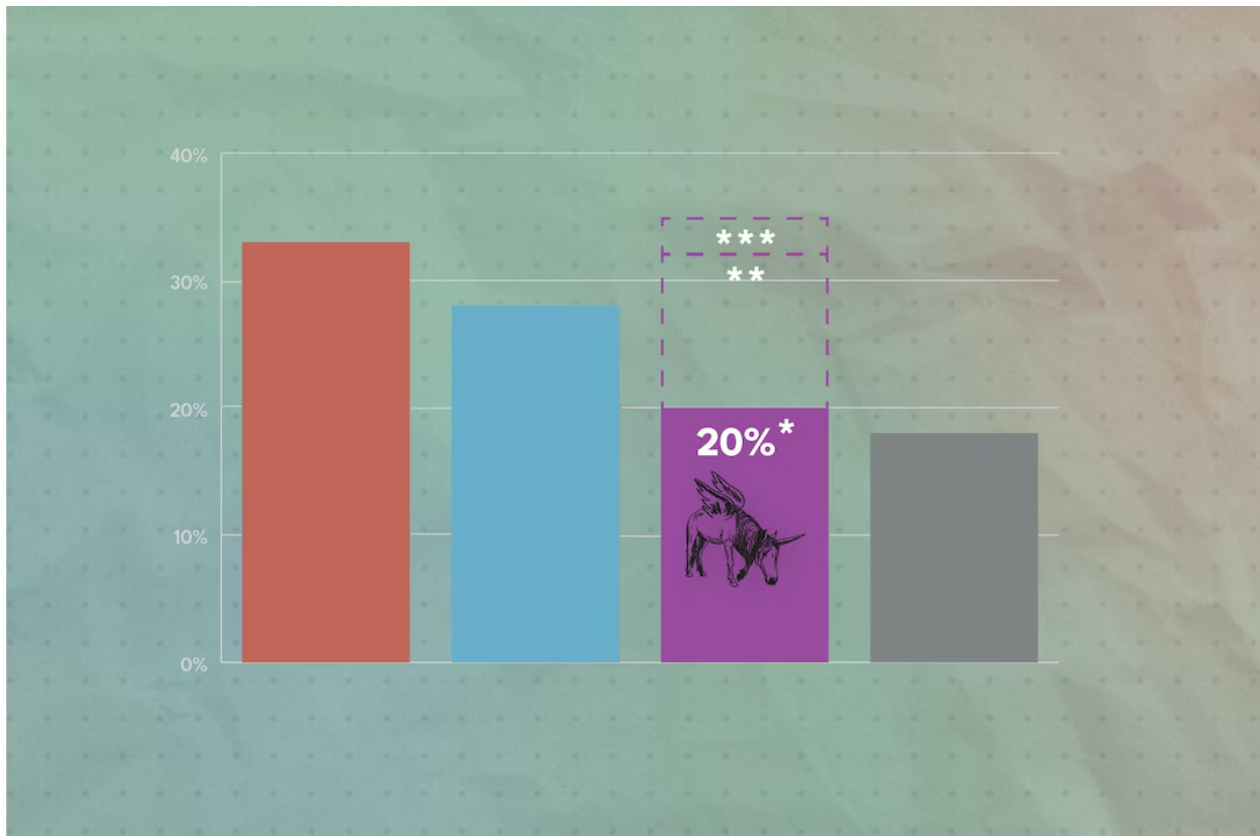


No Labels' Magic Polling Asterisks



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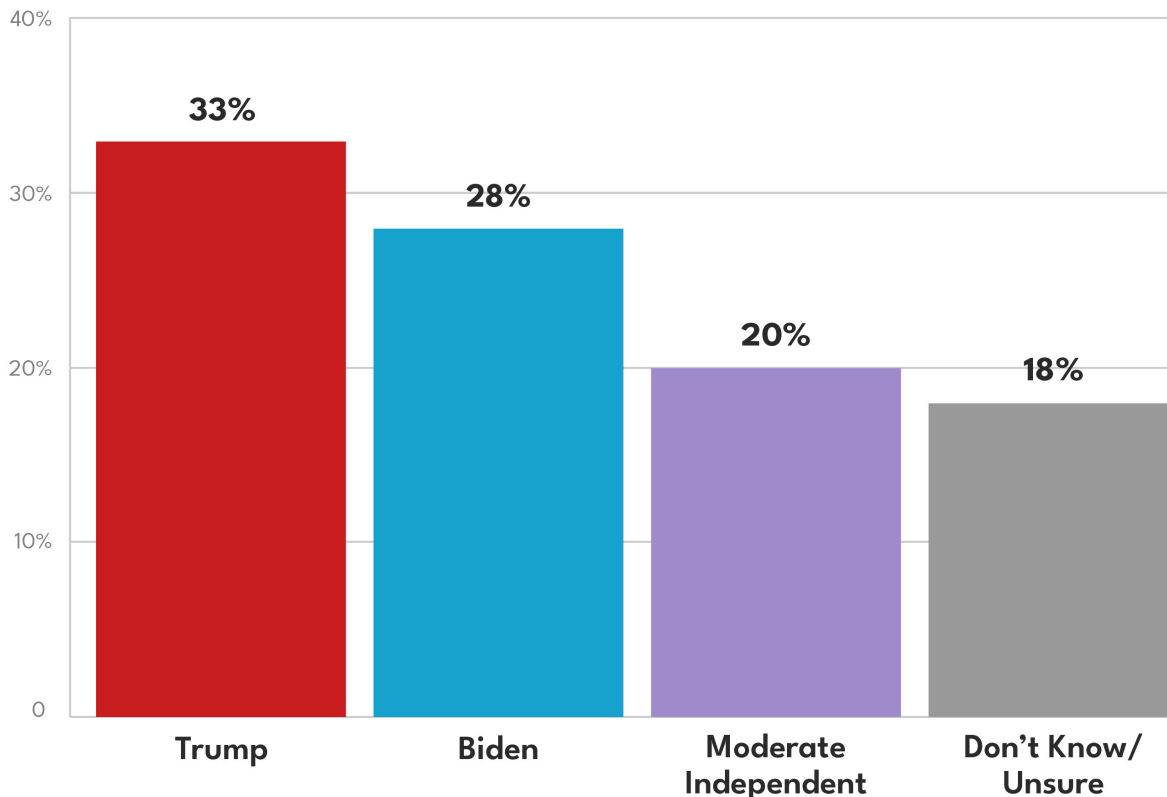
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No Labels is mounting a third-party bid in 2024 that experts from the [Wall Street Journal editorial board](#) to the [former co-founder of No Labels](#) agree has [zero chance of winning](#), but could act as a spoiler and [re-elect Donald Trump](#). Still, No Labels insists they will defy history and win at least 270 electoral votes to take the White House.

They base this fantastical claim on a [poll](#) they conducted in December 2022. Leaving aside the absurdity of relying on a poll taken nearly two years before an election, No Labels has a much bigger problem with this survey as their sole piece of evidence: it proves precisely the opposite of what they claim.

No Labels' own polling shows that they will elect Donald Trump & spoil President Biden's 2024 re-election



Source: Clancy, Ryan, and Dritan Nesho. "Third Way's Misrepresentation of No Labels' 2024 Victory Map." No Labels, 6 June 2023, www.nolabels.org/third-ways-misrepresentation-of-no-labels-2024-victory-map.

For reasons they have yet to explain, No Labels has released only some of the topline of the December survey. And those show, as we have noted repeatedly, their candidate comes in a distant *third* and turns a Biden-Trump tie into a Trump victory. Undeterred by the rather obvious conclusion of these data, No Labels claims they can somehow turn this clear third place embarrassment into a first-place triumph. How? By inserting three magical asterisks into their polling data. Then, *voila!*, their candidate hits the threshold of 36% of the national vote they claim they need to win. Below, we unpack and describe each of their magic asterisks.

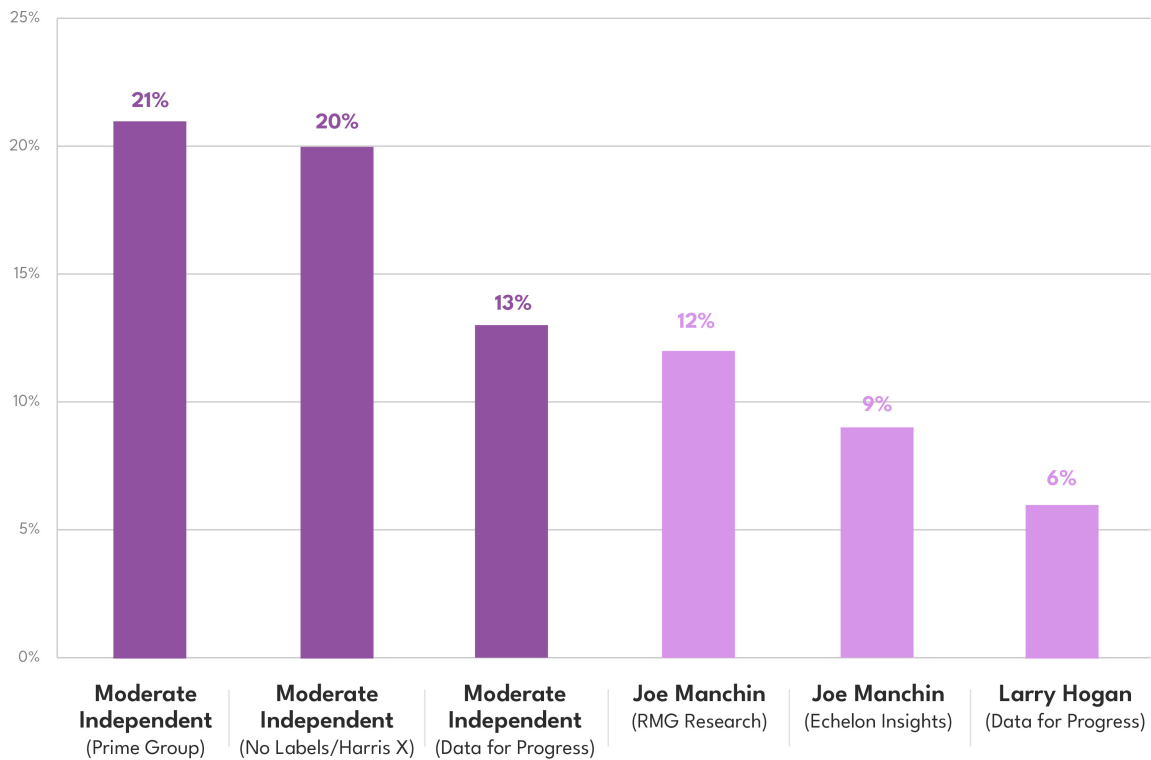
Magic Asterisk #1: The Surge

The first magic asterisk is No Labels' insistence that the 20% garnered by an unnamed "Moderate Independent" is simply the floor, and that once a real candidate is named and ads are run, their support will skyrocket. This is, to put it plainly, not true. Empirical evidence and common sense dictate that an unnamed candidate, an empty slate without any baggage or history, will outperform a real candidate. Their 20% is much closer to a ceiling than a floor.

But don't take our word for it. Multiple pollsters have done surveys over the last few months testing this very question. They show that when a named third-party candidate is on the ballot, their maximum level of support barely reaches beyond *the single digits*. (Also, not for nothing, they're spoilers helping Trump win.)

 **THIRD WAY**

Named Third-Party Candidates See Far Less Support than Unnamed "Moderate Independents"



Sources: Polling from Data for Progress, Echelon Insights, RMG Research, No Labels/Harris X, & Prime Group

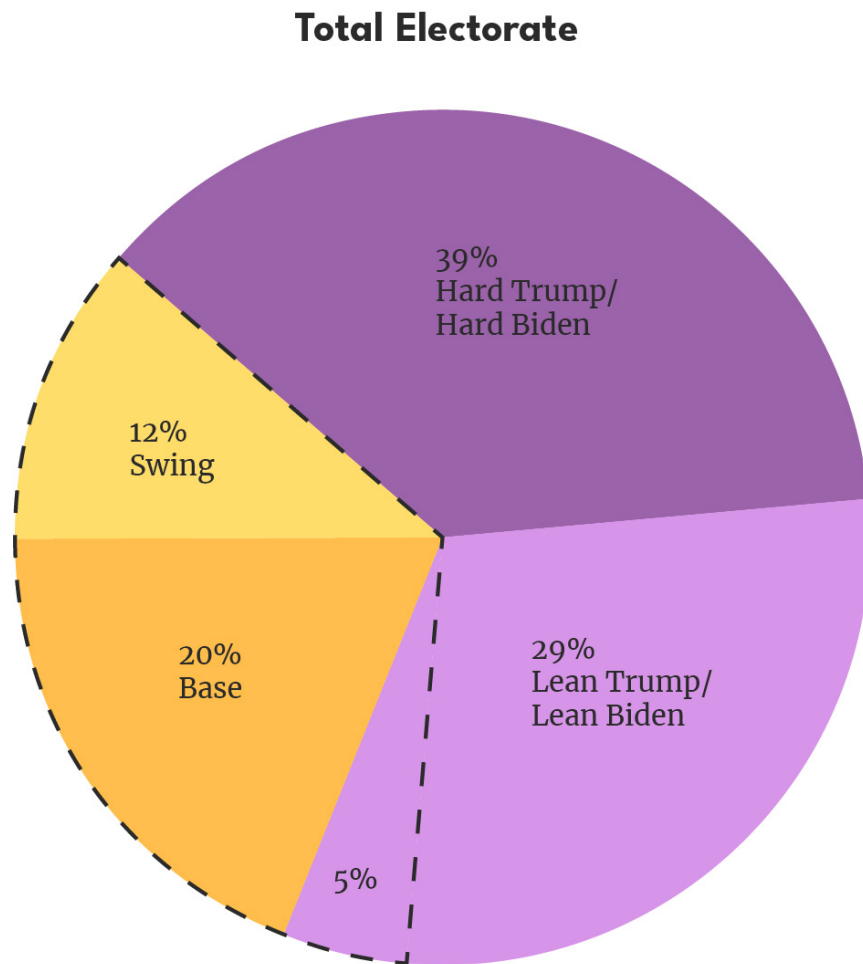
A poll from Data for Progress, a left-leaning firm, showed that in a hypothetical three-way race, an unnamed moderate independent garners 13% of the vote, but when a third-party candidate is named, in this case former Governor Larry Hogan (R-MD), he tops out at 6%—seven points *lower*. Echelon Insights, a Republican firm, conducted a similar poll that showed the third-party independent, in this case Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV), wins just 9% of the vote. RMG Research, whose founder has done work with No Labels' pollster (Harris X), also found that Joe Manchin manages just 12% of the vote.

Not only do these polls confirm that third-party candidates (named or unnamed) don't come anywhere close to winning 36% of the vote, but when a third-party candidate is named, they see a decline in support, not an increase. Could a wave of free press and massive paid advertising raise name ID and boost the No Labels candidate? Sure, it could. Would that advertising enable No Labels to shatter all historical records and move the candidate's support well above 30 percent of the vote

across two dozen states, including Biden’s home state of Delaware, which he carried by 19 points? Certainly not.

Magic Asterisk #2: The Funnel

Even if we accept the dubious notion that a real third-party candidate would perform as well on Election Day as a fantasy unnamed candidate, No Labels is still only at 20%. How do they move from 20% to 36%? They use their second magical asterisk: the “voter funnel.” (Their name, not ours.)



Source: No Labels.

In this special funnel, No Labels seems to say (we say “seems to say” because they continue to refuse to release all of their polling data and crosstabs) they can win an additional 12% of the overall vote from the undecided column. They call undecideds their “soft swing” voters. But to squeeze 12% of the overall from undecideds, who were just 18% of the total, would require their candidate to win **70% of the undecided voters in their poll**. Here again, history and data show that is not going to happen.

In 2016, Trump narrowly won late undecided voters over Clinton, 45%-42%. In 2020, Trump won late undecided voters over Biden 54%-42%. No major party candidate, let alone one from a third party, has managed to win anything close to 70% of undecided voters in a presidential election. No Labels says not only that they can, but they *must* if they are to get to 36%.

But wait, you may be thinking: even if No Labels pulled off a miracle and got the full 20% of the third-party curious and the full 70% of undecided voters in their poll, they're just at 32% of the vote—four points short of victory. That means their moderate independent would still fail to achieve a plurality of the vote and would still be a spoiler. So how do they get the remaining 4%?

Magic Asterisk #3: The Swing

To prove their unnamed moderate independent *really does* have a viable coalition to reach the White House, No Labels must insert a third, even more outlandish asterisk into their formula—that their candidate will win over voters who have *already* said they would vote for Biden or Trump.

Their memo puts it right out there, forthrightly but bizarrely: “No Labels’ ticket would have to win over the final 4-5% from those who lean towards Trump or Biden now. This is the ‘hard swing’ ...It would be up the ticket to rise to the challenge of closing this 4-5% gap.”

Consider for a moment what it might take to win over 4-5% of voters who committed to Biden or Trump on an early poll that included a fantasy bailout option. Then note that if the electorate mirrors the one in 2020, they will have to swing at least 2.3 million votes away from the major parties (after completing the impossible gymnastics required to get them to 32%).

Conclusion

No Labels has argued that anyone who challenges their survey or uses polling as an indicator that they will spoil Biden’s re-election will be “cherry-picking” these data points. In fact, a No Labels senior strategist recently told NBC News that “to sit where we are and say we know exactly how an independent ticket would impact a race, it’s cherry-picking.” So, No Labels argues that polls cannot be used to show they are spoilers because they will be cherry-picked data points. *But* No Labels does not want anyone looking beneath the hood of their polling because their entire premise for running falls apart when we do.


Moreover, you don't have to take our word for it about the reliability of their data. A former senior manager who oversaw the political polling division of No Labels' polling firm, Harris X, has come forward to harshly critique the reliability of their polling, saying "there's a reason they don't detail their methodology and you shouldn't trust a single thing they release"—and that the No Labels poll explanation is "nonsense analysis."


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I used to work at HarrisX — the firm that conducted this poll — & managed their political polling (was the wrong fit for many reasons & I quit after 10 months)

All I'll say is there's a reason they don't detail their methodology & you shouldn't trust a single thing they release



InteractivePolls  @IAPolls2022

 2024 Presidential Election Poll


(R) Trump 46% (+4)
(D) Biden 42%




Independents
(R) Trump 42% (+8)
(D) Biden 34%

Net 4-point swing towards Trump from previous poll (was: 44/44)

 @TheMessenger / @Harris_X_
 922 RV | July 21-24 | MoE: $\pm 3.2\%$

themessenger.com/politics/trump...

4:31 PM · Jul 25, 2023 

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Magical thinking can be wonderful in the creative arts, but in politics it is profoundly dangerous. It is alarming that No Labels has not been transparent about releasing the state-by-state polls on the three-way race or their survey methodology. No Labels should give up on a model that relies on such magical asterisks, admit they can't win, and stop pursuing a course that could lead to the catastrophe of a second Trump term in office.