

THE PAUL RYAN SURGE, MI'S ANTI-OBAMA BLACKS, MITT'S BANKRUPT BIRTH, AND OTHER REPUBLICAN MYTHS

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On August 11, Mitt Romney announced his pick of Wisconsin Congressman Paul Ryan as his running mate. A few days later, CrazyPete Hoekstra renewed his earlier call for the repeal of the 17th Amendment in the name of state's rights. More recently, a poll based on off-year turnout model reported Mitt and Hoekstra would win MI. And seemingly in response to that poll, Mitt came to MI to race bait about how he was born in MI, unlike that brown fella.

It all sort of makes you believe MI's Republicans don't plan on running a fair election this November.

All of which makes me grateful that Nate Silver just called out both that earlier poll and an even crazier one that came out yesterday. As he notes, yesterday's poll—showing a tie in the Presidential and, even more improbably, a one point CrazyPete lead over Debbie Stabenow—assumed that African Americans would not be voting in November.

The head of Mitchell Research, Steve Mitchell, wrote a long memo accompanying his poll release on Monday. In that poll, he weighted the survey to assume that African-Americans would make up only 8 percent of Michigan's turnout. By contrast, black voters represented 12 percent of the turnout in Michigan in

2008 according to exit polls, and 14 percent according to another source, the Current Population Survey. Blacks also made up 13 percent of Michigan's vote in 2004 and 11 percent in 2000, according to exit polls. African-American participation is sometimes lower in midterm election years, but blacks were 12 percent of Michigan's electorate in 2006, the exit poll reported that year. (There was no exit polling in Michigan in 2010.)

So why only 8 percent this year? Mr. Mitchell wrote that he simply doesn't believe the exit polls:

"African-American participation in this poll is 8%, not 12%, which is the percentage of the population but not likely voters. I do not believe blacks represented 12% of the vote in 2008 and I don't believe they will in 2012. Having polled this state for 26 years, blacks have represented about 7%-8% of all votes cast in every statewide race. At best, it went to 9% four years ago. It will not reach that level this year."

What is the evidence for Mr. Mitchell's claim? He didn't present any of it in the memo.

And as Mitchell explained in his memo, it also assumed that over a quarter of all African Americans currently support the guy using a racist approach.

By race, Obama led 92%-5% with African-Americans in our last poll. Now, the lead is 73%-26%. Romney's lead with white voters was 7% (50%-43%) ten days ago, now it is just 3% (48%-45%). Among all other races, Obama led 48%-42% last time. In this poll, Romney leads

55%-37%.

"The main argument that Obama supporters will make against the accuracy of this poll is that Obama is only getting 73% of the vote from African-Americans. That fact, however, does not make this poll inaccurate. I agree that eventually, at least 90% of African-Americans will vote for Obama. Obama's problem now is that he is running behind the party vote among blacks. More than eight-in-ten blacks (84%) self-identify as Democrats. However, just 73% say they are voting for Obama. He is running 11% behind his base party vote. That is not good news. We have surveyed African-Americans that are Democrats. They're just not voting for Obama in the same manner yet that they did four years ago," Mitchell said.

Now, I can think of reasons why MI's African Americans—who have been disproportionately affected by a foreclosure crisis that is Obama's single biggest policy disaster—shouldn't necessarily support Obama (which is far different than saying they should support a race-baiting looter like Mitt). But I have zero doubt that African Americans will support Obama at even higher rates than they traditionally support Democrats in this state, which is higher than the 90% Mitchell anticipates here.

Now both of these polls attribute their odd results to a surge associated with Ryan's selection, as if most MI swing voters 1) have ever heard of Paul Ryan and 2) masochistically want him to gut their retirement healthcare.

But it's nevertheless a story they can spin as being about white working class voters, not because Ryan is working class, but because he shoots deer. But Stabenow is very good at reaching such voters, a remarkably good campaigner generally, not to mention her net worth is the lowest of all Senators, making her ties to white working class voters far more

authentic than Ryan's.

And all that's before you consider how referenda will affect turnout. As of now, the Emergency Manager and collective bargaining referenda will be on the ballot, but the Son of Prop 13 won't be, which would seem to favor Democratic turnout.

I'm not sure precisely what the GOP plans for MI. But my instinct is that they've got some dubious polls so they can invent a narrative to explain a turnaround in the polls for CrazyPete and Mitt that the underlying demographics don't support.

I mean sure, if you could throw out the votes of a third of all African Americans who turn out to vote, and tally a further quarter of those left for Mitt and CrazyPete even if they don't vote for them, I might believe Republicans would win this. Is that what they're planning?