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Trump's Trade Views Boost His New York Appeal

Posted By *Brendan Kirby* On April 7, 2016 @ 6:11 AM In Poli | [Comments Disabled](#)

If New York is Donald Trump's firewall, Upstate New York is his firewall within a firewall: Few regions in America have been harder hit by globalization. It's hard to imagine a place more receptive to the businessman's trade message.

Susan McNeil, the Republican Party chairwoman in Fulton County, pointed to the experience of the biggest city in her county, Gloversville.

"It used to be known as the leather capital of the world," she said Wednesday as she was driving to a Trump campaign rally on Long Island. "We've lost a lot of industry. A lot of businesses have closed."

It's not just leather. Once a thriving manufacturing center, Upstate New York has shed jobs in sectors ranging from industrial machinery to steel over the past three decades. The region has suffered population losses, as well.

"It's really been incredibly hard hit by trade-related job loss," said Alan Tonelson, an economic policy analyst who writes a blog called RealityChek. "It's just been a massacre ... It would stand to reason that it is a great formula for generating support for a candidate like Trump."

Trump soars to majority in New York poll



One of those supporters is McNeil, who endorsed him early in the campaign season. She was among a group of Upstate Republicans who spoke to the developer several years ago about running for governor of the Empire State. She said she likes him for the same reasons many rank-and-file voters do — he is an outsider fighting against an Establishment than needs to be challenged.

Central to that, McNeil said, is trade and economics.

"This state isn't the great state it used to be," she said. "Our kids graduate, they're not coming back to Fulton County ... We have to have someone to bring these jobs back."

Upstate New York is one of the few places in the country where Trump can count on a measure of institutional support. A smattering of party officials like McNeil are backing him. Rep. Chris Collins, who represents a Buffalo-area seat in Congress, and Rep. Tom Reed, who represents a district in western New York bordering Pennsylvania, are two of just seven sitting members of the House of Representatives to endorse him.

New York Manufacturing Crisis

All non-farm jobs

February 2006	8.6M
February 2016	9.3M
Change	+8.9%

Manufacturing jobs

February 2006	571.4K
February 2016	456.4K
Change	-20%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Collins said on "The Laura Ingraham Show" ^[1] last month that he shares Trump's hard line on imbalanced trade deals.

"The Republican Establishment in this part of the state are Trump supporters," said James Campbell, a political science professor at the University of Buffalo.

Campbell said trade is an issue of concern in both parties in Upstate New York.

"As the Republican Party goes, it probably resonates pretty well," he said.

Campbell pointed to Democrat Jack Davis, a trade critic who ran competitive races against

then-Rep. Tom Reynolds in 2004 and 2006 in a district once represented by Jack Kemp. That he almost beat a Republican in a conservative-leaning district speaks to the anxiety of local residents, he said.

Trump's Home Field Advantage

March/April polls	Trump spread
Monmouth	+27
CBS/YouGov	+31
Quinnipiac	+36
Liberty Research	+33
Optimus	+26

Source: RealClearPolitics

Campbell said he expects Sen. Bernie Sanders to do well in Upstate New York in the Democratic primary because of the same issue. He said trade, in fact, probably is an even greater concern among Democratic voters.

"It does bleed over to a fair number of Republicans, as well," he said.

Five recent polls peg Trump's support at 50 percent or better. It is an important threshold, because under New York rules, a candidate who wins a majority gets all 14 delegates awarded statewide. A candidate also can win all three delegates in each congressional district where he wins a majority. If no one wins 50 percent, though, the delegates will be awarded proportionally.

Trump not only is winning the horserace; he's crushing his Republican rivals on the trade issue. A CBS News/YouGov poll conducted March 29 to April 1 indicated that 61 percent of state residents think Trump is best on trade. Some 64 percent judge him best-equipped to bring back jobs.

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[March Manufacturing Massacre](#) ^[2]

U.S. loses 29,000 manufacturing jobs, steepest decline since 2009

A Quinnipiac University poll released March 31 suggested Trump was most competitive against Democratic Hillary Clinton in Upstate New York than any other region in the state. His deficit was just 4 percentage points.

Even Trump critics acknowledge his Empire State strength.

"He is a New Yorker," said Gerald Benjamin, a former member of the Ulster County Legislature who now is on the faculty at the State University of New York at New Paltz. "I don't think that's decisive. But It is significant."

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