

The original documents are located in Box 63, folder “12/8/75 - To Bo Callaway - Ford Constituency - Ticket Splitters - Strategy” of the Robert Teeter Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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MEMORANDUM

To: Bo Callaway

From: Robert Teeter

Date: December 8, 1975

We have examined all the public and available private data for the full-term of the Ford Presidency for the purpose of identifying the current and potential Ford constituency. While it is impossible to analyze this subject in as much detail as need be until the national poll is completed, the public polling data does give us some insight into just where the President's current support is now.

The most important finding is that there is no unique Ford constituency independent of that of a normal or traditional Republican President with one exception.

The President's approval rating and ballot strength come largely from voters that would be expected to support a Republican President. This is not to say, however, that we are in serious trouble because Republicans constitute a small minority of the electorate but rather says that he will win the election with the same coalition of states and voters within those states that other winning Republicans have had. He will not win by creating a unique constituency of various special groups of voters as Nixon did in 1972. It is an established fact that in most states, various Republicans who win regardless of their ideological or other differences do, in fact, get their support from the same general constituency.

Even though one winning Republican candidate may get 60% and another only 51%, they tend to get the same proportion of their support from the same places. One just does better with all groups than the other. For example, in Pennsylvania, Scranton, Schafer, Scott and to a lesser degree Schweiker, all win the state with about the same coalition. The same is true for Olgivie and Percy in Illinois.

The one exception is that for a Republican, he does have unique strength among younger voters (18-35) and it appears that this younger voter strength is fairly solid and can be conducted throughout the election. Apparently the reasons for it are the perception of the President's personal qualities and a positive perception of his family.

The important point is that the President will win the election by carrying the large swing states and will carry each of these states individually with approximately the same coalition of voters that other Republicans who have won statewide in those states have had rather than with some unique demographic constituency.



This means that for most swing states, the strategy will be to get at least 90% of the Republicans, 60%-65% of the ticket-splitters or swing voters and 10%-15% of the Democrats. It also means that we can best identify the priority areas in these states by voting analysis rather than demographic analysis.

Obviously, then the ticket-splitters in the states become our target voters. In most of middle-to-large states there are now two groups of ticket-splitters we need to be concerned with. The first is a group of voters who tend to have slightly higher incomes, be slightly better educated, and are generally slightly more white-collar than the average voters. These voters tend to live in the middle-sized communities and suburban areas and are generally in the upper-middle, socio-economic class. They have been splitting their ticket for some time, think of themselves as good government voters, formerly were moderate to liberal on most domestic issues but have become more conservative on economic and some social issues such as busing. They also tend to be somewhat younger than the average voters (under 45).

Beginning in about 1968, a second group of voters began to split their tickets. This group is about the same age as the first but is somewhat lower on the socio-economic scale. They tend to be blue-collar and are generally people who make their living through manual labor. They come from a Democratic background and still vote for more Democrats than Republicans. Many of them split their ticket for the first time in 1968 to vote for Wallace and then again in 1972 to vote either for Nixon (or against McGovern). This group is more conservative than the first on the social issues but are for a greater degree of government involvement in the economy.

This group has been variously interpreted as the new majority, periferal urban ethnics, and by a number of other demographic descriptions. While some of these descriptions may be demographically correct, none of them address the reason these people have begun to split their ticket. That is, the one common characteristic between both groups of ticket-splitters is that they are made up of people who have moved up a social class in their own lifetime. They are almost all people who are a social class higher than their parents were. Even though many of these voters may be ethnic Catholics in the east, it is not either their ethnicity or Catholicism that makes them ticket-splitters. There are voters of the same social class who split their ticket for the same reasons in Georgia, and Iowa and California, but who do not have the same demographic characteristics as their counterparts in Massachusetts, New York, or New Jersey.

Demographic information is useful, however, in that we have found the past that if we can identify the demographic characteristics of a ticket-splitter and they can find an area with similar demographics, but rather ticket-splitting ways go in and cause ticket-splitting with an introduction of intensive campaign effort.

Because of their age, many ticket-splitters are parents and interested in issues that have to do with children, with home ownership, and with job opportunities. They are generally the people who want to protect what they have gained but are not opposed to the government helping others as long as they don't perceive it as hurting themselves.

The current national study will give us detailed information on the current Ford constituency potential but not realized Ford support at the issue concerns of these orders.