



Committee for the Re-election of the President

MEMORANDUM

August 1, 1972

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MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. H. R. HALDEMAN

FROM: ROBERT M. TEETER

SUBJECT: Second Wave Polling Results

Determined to be an Administrative Marking

By CCG NARA, Date 2/1/2010

This memorandum is to summarize the briefings I am giving the White House personnel you requested I meet with.

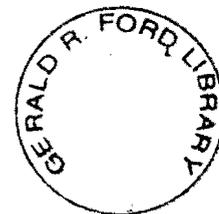
We are in relatively good shape against McGovern in terms of the sample ballots. We have broken the pattern of the President only getting 42-46% of the committed vote for the first time. In several of the priority states his committed vote is near or above 50%. We continue to have some problems in Missouri, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Washington although our situation has improved from the first wave. We have rated each of the states we polled A, B, C, D, and E. With A meaning we are in very good shape, B in relatively good shape, C that it is close, D we are in not too good shape, and E we are in bad shape.

Ratings

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>
Alabama	California	Michigan	Wisconsin	None
Connecticut	Maryland	Missouri		
Illinois	New Jersey	Oregon		
Ohio	New York	Washington		
Texas	Pennsylvania			

The President is doing very well for a Republican candidate with all three voting behavior groups. He is losing almost no Republicans, he has substantial leads with the ticket-splitters and is cutting into the Democrats at the 25-30% level. At this point he is doing significantly better among the ticket-splitters than he did in 1968.

Our data indicates that there are two basic groups of ticket-splitters with which we need to be concerned. The first group has been splitting their ticket for some time and in recent years have been splitting in favor of winning Republicans. They tend to be in the 25-50 age group, to be somewhat better educated than the average voter, to have slightly higher incomes than the average voter, in general they are from the upper middle class, and are typically suburbanites.



The second group are those who have only begun to split their ticket in the past few years and who have previously voted straight Democratic. Even though they are now clearly ticket-splitters and are available to us in this campaign, they will still probably vote for a majority of Democrats. Many of them split for Wallace in the last election and many switched from Wallace to Humphrey late in the campaign. This group is lower on the socio-economic scale than the first group and age is somewhat less of a factor. They are often (but not necessarily) Catholic, and in the large cities of the East and Midwest, often have ethnic backgrounds. They are essentially the blue collar working middle class.

Candidate Perception

The President is rated quite well on the three key personality dimensions -- trustworthiness, strength, and competence. He is rated higher on the trustworthy dimension now than he was in January and this is a scale on which we rarely see any movement for a well-known figure. However, there is no significant difference between the President and McGovern on the trust or strength dimensions. He gets his highest ratings by far on the competence dimension and has a large advantage over McGovern.

Several specific questions were asked concerning credibility and the results indicate that a significant number, though a minority, do not think the administration has been completely honest with them, particularly with regard to Vietnam. However, when viewed against the President's personal trustworthiness ratings I think that the problem is as much one of government not being credible as it is of the President himself not being credible. More importantly, I think this is a problem that can be at least partially solved by separating the President from it and then having him attack the problem. Although he hasn't gotten much credit for it, he appears to have done this to a degree by ordering the reviews of classification and secrecy procedures. Another possibility might be for him to attack the pork-barrelling practice of Congress adding non-related spending items to major appropriation bills if and when he vetoes some major spending bills.

The President however does get fairly low ratings on the amiability or friendliness dimensions. While he is seen as trustworthy, strong, and competent he is not seen as warm, friendly, etc. There is no indication, however, that this is detracting from his support. In contrast to 10-12 years ago, being dynamic or friendly is simply not viewed as being an important qualification for the Presidency. This is not to say, however, that higher ratings on these scales would not be of some assistance in attracting new votes.

The President is also seen to a degree as a one dimensional President. That is, in contrast to some past Presidents, he is viewed almost exclusively as one who is the chief of State, and the head of the



government rather than as the head or leader of an entire culture -- sports, the arts, life style, etc. In a sense he is viewed as a "professional" President, that is, one who is trained, experienced, competent, respected for his ability, and concerned with the official duties of his job full time. There is also no evidence that this is losing us any votes at all.

McGovern's perception is still being set at this time. Although most of the respondents could rate him on the various personality and issue scales, his various ratings were similar indicating that the knowledge of him is quite superficial.

Compared to the President, McGovern's ratings for trustworthiness, strength, and amiability were not significantly different from the President's but he was rated much less competent than the President. I would expect to see McGovern's personal image take much more definite shape in the next few weeks.

The most important issues continue to be Vietnam and the economy, particularly inflation, both in terms of general concern and of importance in voting for the President. Taxes, drugs, personal safety are also important but definitely secondary to Vietnam and inflation. The minor issues such as abortion and marijuana do not appear to be affecting Presidential vote. The tendency to lump amnesty, abortion, and marijuana all together is not supported by the data. Amnesty is viewed as part of the Vietnam issues and therefore relatively important. Abortion is not seen as a major national problem and the voters are split almost equally on this question of liberalizing abortion statutes. Liberalization of the marijuana statutes is opposed by a substantial majority, but is not seen as an important issue in the Presidential election.

Bussing is seen as a moderately important problem in those local areas where it is a reality or there is a pending decision but is not at all an important issue outside of those areas. It is not a major national issue and while we may want to use it in those areas that have been directly affected, there is no reason for us to make it a national issue.

Unemployment is a moderately important issue but not one which is currently costing us any votes at this time. Very few people who are most subject to unemployment are potential Nixon voters. This will probably remain the case as long as it continues to decline. There appears to be a threshold at which unemployment becomes a major concern of large numbers of voters whether they are unemployed or not but below that level only those who are unemployed are immediately threatened are concerned. Undoubtedly this, is also related to the trend of the unemployment statistics. The issue of more and better jobs has, however, always been an effective issue and even though unemployment per se is not a major concern, I don't think we should overlook the job issue.

The general issue of national defense is also seen as a moderately important issue but with varying attitudes about the specifics. There is support for the idea that a strong national defense is a means to peace. Yet a large majority think we should cut our armed forces. The reason for this is, however, a belief that there is great waste in the defense department, not that we don't need a strong national defense.

% Mention As One of Top
Three Problems Facing U.S.

Vietnam	57
Crime	14
Inflation	13
Drugs	13
Economy	12
Race	11
Unemployment	11
Environment	11
Poverty	9
Taxes	7
Bussing	5

There is some concern on the part of a large group of voters, many of them ours, or potentially ours, with the general issue of change and of the concentration of power in large institutions -- government, labor, business. This issue does not appear to be specific or to have taken shape yet but looks like one which could become of increasing importance. Any of our questions which even hinted at the need for change or the concentration of power issue got strong responses on the side of change and more concern for the individual citizen.

This appears to be particularly true with regard to large unions. More people blame them for inflation than blame business, or the President and Congress combined and other recent data indicates a real lack of sympathy with large or crippling strikes. With regard to business, the problem seems to be one of a lack of faith in the honesty or with being adequately concerned with either the customer's or the public's welfare.

Government is seen as too expensive, distant, inefficient, and simply ineffective. The citizenry simply does not think they are getting their moneys worth for their taxes. At the same time, however, they want and expect government to solve whatever problems they presumably think are important.



With just three exceptions the President's ratings on his handling of issues have held fairly constant and positive since January. Between January and June his ratings on the change issue increased significantly and his ratings on inflation and taxes dropped markedly. His rating on Vietnam remains high with 35% more people rating him positively than negatively.

McGovern's ratings are fairly positive but not very well defined as yet. This, however, may not change for the majority of the issues in the short time between now and the election.

ISSUE HANDLING

	<u>Nixon</u>		<u>McGovern</u>	
	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
Vietnam	65%	30%	42%	26%
Inflation	47	46	41	42
General Unrest	57	33	43	20
Crime	56	36	46	17
Unemployment	50	43	43	20
Drugs	53	36	44	18
Taxes	46	48	40	24
Bussing	46	40	35	24
Health Care	69	21	50	12
National Defense	73	18	43	23
Environment	60	30	50	11
Racial Problems	60	31	43	20
Foreign Policy	81	11	40	22
Welfare	52	39	43	22

Conclusions

One of the unique things in this set of data is its consistency across the various states particularly with the perception of the President. His strong and weak points in terms of personal perception is very similar in all of the priority states. The major issue concerns are also fairly uniform across states but there is some significant variance in the importance of the secondary issues.

In the top priority states the President's pattern of support is very close to that which Republicans have won with before, that is to get 90-95% of the Republicans, 15-20% of the Democrats, and a large enough majority of the ticket-splitters to win.

Assuming we get 95% of the Republicans and 15% of the Democrats, the following table lists the percentages of the ticket-splitters we must get in each of the priority states to win a two-way race.



Minimum Percentage of Ticket-Splitters
Needed to Win State

California	70%
Connecticut	60
Illinois	60
Michigan	75
Missouri	75
New Jersey	60
New York	65
Ohio	55
Oregon	60
Pennsylvania	70
Washington	65
Wisconsin	70

Our first priority is to re-create what has been the proven winning coalition in those states before. This means we need to get majorities among those who have traditionally split their ticket. Our next priority should then be to go after the Democrats who have just begun to split their tickets. We also should go after those Democrats who have not yet split their tickets but are similar demographically to those who have. Past experience indicates that some campaign effort directed at these people will cause some new ticket-splitting.

In terms of issues we should concentrate on the major national issue Vietnam, the economy, taxes, drugs, and crime. These are the issues that are going to decide the most Presidential votes and it is to our advantage to keep the campaign directed to them and not on the minor issues of abortion and marijuana.

While the data on the President is generally optimistic there are two soft spots or potential problems that need attention. His ratings on inflation and taxes are poor and down sharply from January. These issues are closely related and important to Presidential vote.

We have some weakness in the general issues of change. A large majority think we need fairly drastic change and they do not see the President as being for this change. I think it is important that we show the President as an innovator and as one who is for responsible change as opposed to McGovern who is for radical and irresponsible change.

We should move as soon as possible to harden up these soft spots while they don't appear to be costing us any sizable groups of votes now, they are points at which we are vulnerable to attack. We should move before McGovern has a chance too.



There are several elements that I think should be present in the general thrust or image of the campaign. First, it should have a central idea or theme. We know from the first wave data that the President is viewed as a tactician and as one without a master plan or strategy for the country. A theme or central idea would give us the common thread with which to tie together all of his accomplishments and give the voters a reason to vote for the President.

Second, the campaign should show the breadth and complexity of the President's accomplishments and proposals. One of the elements of his support is that he is doing a good job in a very difficult or impossible job. This would take advantage of that feeling.

Third, it should show the President as an innovator and for responsible change for the reasons discussed earlier.

Fourth, it should show him as being concerned about improving the lives of the citizens. We need to emphasize that the ultimate purpose behind all the President's trips, programs, and actions is to help our citizens enjoy better lives. We need to communicate how his program is going to help "you" not some special interest group or institution.

Fifth, we should emphasize those plus qualities which the President is seen as having and which are believable - knowledgeable, wise, competent - and not try to make him something he isn't.

The campaign should have the element of hope. The voters have got to believe that things are going to improve over the next four years with Richard Nixon as President or they have no reason to vote for him. They are not going to reward him for the past four years. One of the basic elements of the American attitude and of American politics has always been hope for better times. People don't like negativism.

We should work to the people's desire for a more calm, orderly, and peaceful life style. Even though we may be on the side of the majority, it does not serve our purpose to become strident or increase the acrimony in the country. One of the problems with the '70 campaign was that while people were against long hair hippies, marijuana, permissiveness, etc. what they were for was a return to a peaceful, orderly life style and while our campaign was on the majority side, we were seen as making the fight two sided but adding to the acrimony.

We now have a fairly large lead which will probably decline, at least partially. However, as long as we have a substantial lead it is to our advantage to keep things calm and on the high road. We should take as few chances as possible and not let it get close.



The original documents are located in Box 65, folder “August 1, 1972 - H.R. Haldeman - Second Wave Polling Results” of the Robert Teeter Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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This is not to say, however, that we should not do anything to introduce some negatives on McGovern. We do need to have a fairly regular flow of negative material on him while his perception is being set but we should take full advantage of his own problems and let the press do as much of it as they will without our help. However, if McGovern's negative press does taper off, we should be very careful about how we attack him. We simply cannot take a chance of damaging the President's respect and trust which are not yet particularly deep or well set. Any attacks on McGovern should be directed at the extreme nature of his positions and not at him personally.

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