

The original documents are located in Box 65, folder “September 29, 1972 - Clark MacGregor - George McGovern Turn-Around Commercial Study” of the Robert Teeter Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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Teeter

Committee for the Re-election of the President

MEMORANDUM

September 29, 1972

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE HONORABLE CLARK MAC GREGOR

THROUGH: JEB S. MAGRUDER

FROM: ROBERT M. TEETER
TED J. GARRISH

SUBJECT: McGovern Turn-Around Commercial Study

This memorandum will outline the results from our study of the Democrats for Nixon "McGovern Turn-Around Commercial" conducted September 26-27, 1972.

The commercial did a good job of achieving its objective with few negative reactions. 47% mentioned it showed McGovern changing his mind and being two-faced. 29% responded to the individual issues presented. For instance, they mentioned the details of how McGovern has changed his position on war (7%), bussing (6%), marijuana (5%), taxes (5%), \$1,000 grant (4%) and welfare (2%). Only 7% mentioned "mudslinging" or "not fair". No negative mentions against Nixon were made for having run the commercial.

When the voters were asked if there was anything disliked about the commercial, 36% replied nothing was disliked. Among ticket-splitters voting for Nixon, 64% replied nothing was disliked. The actual dislikes mentioned were quite varied. There were virtually no comments suggesting that the commercial reflected poorly on the President. Overall, 43% of the voters believed the commercial, compared to 38% who found it hard to believe. This ratio of "believe" to "hard to believe" is fairly close to our results from the Milwaukee TV test of our primary election commercial. The only difference was a slightly higher level of no opinion answers for the turn-around. Even among those who found the commercial hard to believe, about a third of the responses were anti-McGovern (e.g. He can't make up his mind). Only 13% mentioned it was hard to believe because it was not truthful but these were all McGovern voters. No Nixon voters made this comment.

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By CCG NARA, Date 2/8/2010



The sponsor of the commercial -- Democrats for Nixon -- was effectively communicated in that 44% of the voters made this identification. The other mentions were substantially less including 11% who thought the ad was run by McGovern.

This study did not address itself to the strategic question of whether or not we should begin hitting McGovern hard; however, we have indicated in a previous memorandum that there is some advantage to be gained by pointing out McGovern's inconsistent positions and confusing statements. If it is decided that we should bring this inconsistency point home forcefully, our research shows that the "Turn-Around Commercial" is an acceptable means of communicating this idea. Negative reactions to the commercial were minor. If the decision is made to use this commercial, we suggest that it run for a very short period with very intensive coverage. Then, immediately following the time when the commercial runs, we should have intensive coverage of Pro-Nixon advertising on a wide range of subjects.

cc: Mr. Peter H. Dailey

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