UNITE THE COUNTRY

To: Interested Parties
From: Unite the Country
Date: October 16, 2023
Re: Memo on the UTC study of the “No No’s”

Following our extensive study conducted in late September across Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, we sought to unravel the intricate dynamics of the 2024 electorate, with a particular focus on voters disapproving of both President Biden and Donald Trump. Here, I present our detailed findings along with strategic imperatives to guide our efforts moving forward.

Topline Findings: Our comprehensive survey, directed by the seasoned pollster Elizabeth Sena of GQRR, involved 1,000 likely voters in each state. The results revealed a remarkably tight race, akin to the 2022 margins, with a 50:50 split in a forced 2-candidate choice across the three states. Importantly, the upper Midwest exhibits an even 46% split in party identification, with the Republican Party facing a more negative perception (42:54) compared to the Democratic Party (46:50). It's worth noting that strong majorities in these states lean towards pro-choice policies, with only 36% supporting the idea that abortion should be illegal in all or most cases.

Insights on "No-No" Voters: Out of the total 3,000 respondents, 482 individuals held a negative opinion of both Biden and Trump, hence termed as "No-No" voters. Within this cohort, the race is essentially tied, with Trump holding a 3-point lead overall, but Biden leading by 3 points among those certain of their vote choice (33-30 Biden). Notably, 37% of these voters remain fluid in their choice, indicating an opportunity for persuasion.

Further specifics on "No-No" voters:

- Educational Background: 49% of "No-No" voters are more likely to have a bachelor’s degree or higher compared to the full sample (41%).
- Partisan Lean: These voters lean more Republican (+12 GOP) than the total sample (+2 Dem).
- Age Distribution: Breaks down age-wise very close to the total sample.
- Gender Composition: 51% are men compared to 47% in the total sample.
- Previous Voting Patterns: Trump won these voters by 17% in 2016, but Biden/Trump was essentially a push among them.

Concerns and Preferences: Among these voters, negative views of Trump are more intense than those of Biden, with 59% having a very unfavorable view of Trump and 49% feeling the same about President Biden. Despite their Republican lean, Biden gains credit for bipartisanship, holding an +18% edge on who works better with members of the other party. Additionally, Biden has substantial leads on negative attributes, with a 24-point margin over Trump on perceptions of corruption, divisiveness, and likelihood to be a liar.

The "No-No" voters, despite being more aligned with Republican values, express fear about Trump and concerns about the future of American democracy. Their hesitance towards Trump is rooted in various aspects, such as his role in leading a coup, multiple indictments, and praise for the Chinese dictator.

The Task Ahead: Given the razor-thin margins in these battleground states, especially Wisconsin, our focus must shift to engage and understand the "No-No" voters. They could be the tipping point, as was evident in 2020 when this segment, with a history of voting disproportionately for Trump, chose Biden by a 53-47 margin. Our imperative moving forward includes:

1. **Refine Modeling:** Undertake an in-depth refinement of our modeling around "No-No" voters, ensuring a nuanced understanding of their preferences and characteristics.
2. **Qualitative Research:** Leverage qualitative research methodologies to refine our messaging strategies, emphasizing the case for America and highlighting a vote for Biden as a vote for the nation's well-being.
3. **Early Engagement:** Recognize the urgency in beginning our engagement efforts now, understanding the historical impact of these voters on election outcomes.

By identifying and understanding the specifics of these voters, as we did with Biden uncertain voters in 2020, we can strategically engage them through a mix of television and digital channels. This will allow us to demonstrate why a vote for Biden, and consequently against Trump, is a crucial vote for the United States.

To put this into state specific example. Take Wisconsin.

In 2016, Donald Trump won Wisconsin by roughly 23,000 votes.

In 2020, Joe Biden won Wisconsin by just under 21,000 votes.

According to a study we just completed, as many as 700,000 likely Wisconsin voters have a negative opinion of both President Biden and Donald Trump – and if those voters break 55-45% Trump, Trump would win these voters by more than 70,000 votes – meaning he would very likely carry Wisconsin.

This is why we believe it is imperative to have a laser focus on these voters. The White House and several other groups are doing a nice job of making the economic case for the President --- we want to lean in on the case for America.

We have always believed in letting the data drive our work, so over the next several months, we are going to undertake the tedious work of further refining the modeling around these voters, to ensure we have a clear sense of who these voters actually are, as well as leaning into qualitative work to refine the messaging.

By identifying these voters – just as we did the Biden uncertain voters in 2020 – we can lean into a lengthy conversation them, using a mix of television and digital, demonstrating why a vote for Biden – and a vote against Trump – more than anything is a vote for America.

We can’t possibly overstate just how close these three battleground states are.

Take Pennsylvania. 13 million ballots were cast in 2016 and 2020 – and the total difference between Republicans and Democrats is less than 40,000 votes.

Or Wisconsin, where only 2,000 votes – or 0.03% separate the two parties out of the 6.3 million votes cast in 2016 and 2020.

For America, there is no margin for error. The work has to begin now.

In conclusion, the work ahead is challenging but pivotal. With our proven ability to influence this particular voter segment, a strategic, data-driven approach can significantly impact the 2024 election.