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To: Interested Parties
Fr: Maria Comella
Date: November 16, 2023
Re: The State of the Race Following Scott & Pence Withdrawals

The State Of The Race

Christie Rising In New Hampshire

Chris Christie continues to rise in the polls in New Hampshire, hitting 14% in the latest CNN/UHN poll of likely Republican primary voters.

- That is up 3% since September, and moves Christie firmly ahead of Ron DeSantis for third place.
- Christie was the only candidate to see an improvement in net favorability, while the number of people open to voting for Christie has increased by 13 points.
 - *Every other candidate saw declines in both metrics.*
- Christie leads among non-Republicans planning to vote in the Republican primary.
 - *With no competitive Democratic primary, this group will make up a massive share of the Republican primary turnout in the state.*

A Consolidated Field

Aside from Trump, there will be no more 4 candidates on the stage at the fourth debate next month. That is down from 8 at the first debate just three months ago.

- That is also ***less than half*** the number of candidates typically on the stage for debates at this point in the cycle.

Cycle	Debate	Date	Number of Candidates
2024 Republicans	4th	12/6/23	4 <i>without Trump</i>
2020 Democrats	5th	11/20/19	10
2016 Republicans	5th	12/15/15	13 <i>incl. undercard debate</i>
2012 Republicans	11th	11/22/11	8
2008 Republicans	11th	12/12/07	9
2008 Democrats	15th	11/15/07	7

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Consolidation Without Confrontation Only Helps Trump

With none of the other candidates willing to take on Trump directly, further consolidation will only strengthen his position. Polls consistently show that Trump's position actually improves if other candidates were to drop out.

- Even if the field were to consolidate further, the candidates remaining would still be losing to Donald Trump by 20+ points in New Hampshire, and 30+ points nationally.
 - *So if polling is all that matters, then why don't all the other candidates other than Trump drop out?*

GOP preferences in a consolidated field...

Based on ranked choices of likely Republican primary voters

	Trump	DeSantis	Haley	Ramaswamy	All others
Initial choice	61%	18%	9%	5%	7%
Reallocating non-top-four votes	62%	21%	12%	5%	
Reallocating Ramaswamy votes	65%	23%	12%		
Reallocating Haley votes	68%	32%			

CBS News

- **Unless losing by 36% is somehow more noble than losing by 43%, the only path to victory is through Trump.**

Running For President ... In 2028

Nikki Haley and Ron DeSantis have been too afraid to take on Donald Trump up to this point, so what makes anyone think they will magically find the courage to do so later? What case against Trump will Haley or DeSantis be able to make were the field to consolidate further that they can't make now?

- ***The reality is they are each trying to do just enough to finish second, because they think it will position them as a front-runner four years from now once Trump is out of the picture.***
- And even if the field were cleared for one of them, ***they are not going to risk their shot at a second place finish by upsetting Trump's most loyal supporters.***
- You can see this by how much time they spend bickering with one another, and how little they are willing to directly and consistently confront the frontrunner.

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The Only Candidate Running To Win

Chris Christie has distinguished himself in the Republican presidential primary race as the only candidate willing and able to take on Donald Trump directly.

- **Been Here Before:** As the only candidate other than Trump who has run for president before, Christie knows from his 2016 campaign that it is wishful thinking by the other candidates that Trump will magically collapse on his own.
- **Taking On An Incumbent:** Christie is the only candidate in the field to ever beat an incumbent. As a former President, *Donald Trump is the incumbent in this race*, and Christie is prosecuting a challenger's case against him.
 - DeSantis and Haley are acting as if Trump is just another opponent in a crowded field. That's not the case, and only Christie has proven he can win a race like this.
- **Changing The Turnout Model:** Christie is the only candidate who will be able to draw support from Republicans who have stayed home the last eight years and independents who are seeking an alternative to Trump.
 - According to the latest CNN/UNH poll, 17% of likely New Hampshire Republican primary voters say that they did not vote in the last competitive Republican primary held in 2016, and Christie (36%) leads among these new voters.
- **Numbers Can Move:** After last week's debate, *the Washington Post's post-debate* poll showed Christie's favorability jump 13 points after his performance - the highest of anyone on the stage. Showing that polling numbers can move, especially if voters hear a message that resonates.

The Path Through Trump

It Is Still Very Early ...

Every single presidential cycle teaches us that this is a long process, and it will have many unexpected turns along the way. And yet every single presidential cycle, pundits manage to forget that lesson.

Voters Decide Late

- In 2016, exit polls showed that "nearly half" of Republican primary voters in New Hampshire decided "only within the last few days" before voting.
- In 2012, 46% Of New Hampshire Voters Chose A Candidate Within Days Of The Primary

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- *NYT: "Many in New Hampshire's famously late-breaking electorate voted in the Republican primary on Tuesday after making up their minds at the last minute."*
- In 2008, half of Republican voters said they decided who they would vote for within a week of voting with 20 percent deciding on primary day

Winning Candidates Break Late

- At this point in the 2008 cycle, Rudy Giuliani held a 14 point lead in the national Real Clear Politics polling average.
- Mitt Romney held double digit leads in both Iowa and New Hampshire.
- John McCain was in a distant 3rd place in New Hampshire and would spend most of November and December in 4th place nationally.

... And This Is A War Of Attrition

As the only candidate other than Trump who has run before, Christie knows that presidential campaigns are wars of attrition.

- Of the eight candidates at the first debate, two have been knocked off the stage, and two others have dropped out. We will be down to four come December.
- Christie has already outlasted a former Vice President, a current US Senator, a current self-funding governor, and another former governor who were all on that stage.
- Christie is running to win by drawing a clear contrast - and plans to be the last to break. By running a lean, efficient race now, Chris will have the resources he needs to meet the moment when it comes.

Taking The Right Lessons From Scott & Pence Withdrawals

While many national pundits were quick to jump on Tim Scott's and Mike Pence's respective withdrawals from the campaign as indications of the need for a quick consolidation of the field months before anyone votes, the real lesson is that the the candidates who can clearly differentiate themselves while running efficient, smart campaigns will go the distance.

- **Messages Matter** - Candidates need to be able to articulate a concise message and reason for their candidacy. With Trump the dominant candidate at this stage of the race, we are seeing what isn't working: Get to Trump's right, run as a Trump clone, ignore Trump, try to please everyone.

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- **Campaigns Matter** - Financial runway is proving to be the best predictor of which campaigns are built to go the distance. Two of the candidates who entered October with insufficient Cash on Hand to sustain their burn rates have dropped out.

Runway as of October 1 - 44 days ago						
	Christie	Haley	Scott (Out)	DeSantis	Ramaswamy	Pence (Out)
Primary COH	\$3.9M	\$8.3M	\$11.6M	\$4.6M	\$3.8M	\$178k
Daily Burn Rate	\$15.8k	\$38k	\$134.5k	\$120.3k	\$132.9k	\$35.5k
Runway	<u>247 Days</u>	<u>219.8 Days</u>	<u>86.5 Days</u>	<u>38.5 Days</u>	<u>29.2 Days</u>	<u>5.0 Days</u>

How We Get There

This will end up being a two person race between Trump and someone else, and Christie is the only candidate positioned to take him on aggressively and outlast the candidates too scared to do so.

- **Draw The Contrast In NH:** With its open primary and heavy participation from independents, New Hampshire allows Christie to change the turnout model, and establish himself as the clear alternative.
- **Gain Steam As Field Narrows:** South Carolina offers a similar opportunity to pull in Independents and will further narrow the field as the last stand for several other candidates.
- **Prepare For The Long Haul:** There won't be a quick victory over Trump, and he will continue to do well in caucus states, but open primaries in dozens of states and proportional delegate allocation mean Christie can wage and win a protracted fight for delegates over the long haul.

The States

Iowa: Almost every other candidate needs a strong showing in Iowa, so there will be significant movement and consolidation after caucuses. Yet despite so many candidates going "all in" on Iowa, in the last three competitive cycles, New Hampshire has been a better predictor of the Republican nominee: Trump 2016, Romney 2012, McCain 2008

New Hampshire: Even before post-Iowa consolidation, Christie remains tightly competitive with the other relevant Trump opponents in New Hampshire.

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Poll	Date	Sample	Christie	Haley	DeSantis	Ramaswamy	Trump
CNN/UNH	11/16	841LRPV	14	20	9	8	42
NMB Research	9/5	800LRPV	8	10	10	8	47
InsiderAdvantage	9/21	850LRPV	10	14	8	5	42
St. Anselm	9/25	931 LRPV	10	15	11	6	45
CBS News	9/26	943RV	8	11	13	8	50
NH Journal / co/efficient	10/12	940 PPV	22	19	5	6	27

- Independent voters make up a significant percentage of the New Hampshire primary electorate, particularly when there is no competitive Democratic primary.

2016 New Hampshire Primary	2012 New Hampshire Primary
Republican Primary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Republican - 55% Undeclared/Independent - 42% Democrat - 3% Democratic Primary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democrat - 58% Undeclared/Independent - 40% Republican - 2% 	Republican Primary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Republican - 49% Independent or other - 47% Democrat - 4%

- And in the latest CNN/UNH poll, Christie led among NH Independents and registered Democrats who planned to vote in the Republican primary.

Christie	37%
Haley	28%
Ramaswamy	18%
Trump	7%
DeSantis	1%

South Carolina: While less than in New Hampshire, independents still make up a significant portion of the primary electorate in South Carolina.

Beyond: After the field has narrowed naturally, and Christie has established himself as the clear alternative to Trump, there are several state primaries where independents can participate. If Trump can be kept under 50%, Christie can win delegates even in states he does not win.

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Through Super Tuesday

	Delegates		Delegates
Michigan	16	North Carolina	71
Colorado	37	Tennessee	58
Maine	22	Texas	155
Massachusetts	41	Vermont	17
Minnesota	39	Virginia	49