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To: Progressive community

From: Stanley Greenberg and James Carville, Democracy Corps

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## Creating a down-ballot Democratic wave

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On Friday, Democracy Corps released our most recent national survey showing Hillary Clinton with an 11-point lead over Donald Trump (48 to 37 percent, with 8 percent for the Libertarian). Importantly, it showed the Democrats with an 8-point lead in the named congressional ballot (49 to 41 percent), something we have not seen since June of 2009 in our polls. It is also the first time we have seen the presidential margin exceed the Democrats' party identification advantage: in this case, 6 points overall and 8 points without independent leaners.<sup>1</sup>

The Democrats achieved an 8-point margin at the ballot box when they won control of the House in 2006, though this was before the further gerrymandering of districts. Others will soon estimate what margin Democrats will really need to have a chance of winning the House this November.

They are more likely to achieve that goal if voters start voting a straight-Democratic ticket or more Republican voters defect at the congressional and local level.

This might just be such an election. The Republican brand at the national and state level is badly tarnished. In Democracy Corps' 9-state battleground survey for Women's Voices Women's Vote Action Fund, it did not take much for those not currently supporting the Democratic Senate candidate to say, enough!<sup>2</sup> In the poll, we pointed out that "Republicans in Congress and in their own state legislature:

- oppose abortion even in cases of rape and incest (36 percent, bothers the most),
- oppose restricting gun rights for people on the terror watch list and outlawing sale of assault rifles (19 percent),
- oppose gay marriage and new laws barring discrimination against gays, lesbians and transgender people (13 percent),
- oppose new laws guaranteeing equal pay for women (10 percent)."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Democracy Corps conducted a poll of 900 likely voters across the nation from June 23rd – 28th. Sixty-six percent of the surveys were completed among cell phone respondents. The margin of error is +/- 3.27 percentage points. Margin of error is higher among subgroups.

<sup>2</sup> On behalf of Women's Voice. Women's Vote Action Fund, Democracy Corps conducted a nine-state battleground survey of 2700 likely voters from June 11th – 20th. Three hundred cases were completed in each state: Arizona, Florida, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. The margin of error for the entire survey is +/- 1.89 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. The margin of error within each state is +/-5.66 percentage points. Margin of error is higher among subgroups.

<sup>3</sup> In the Senate-race states surveyed, this question was asked of those who did not select the Democratic candidate for Michigan, this question was asked of those not identifying as Democrats.

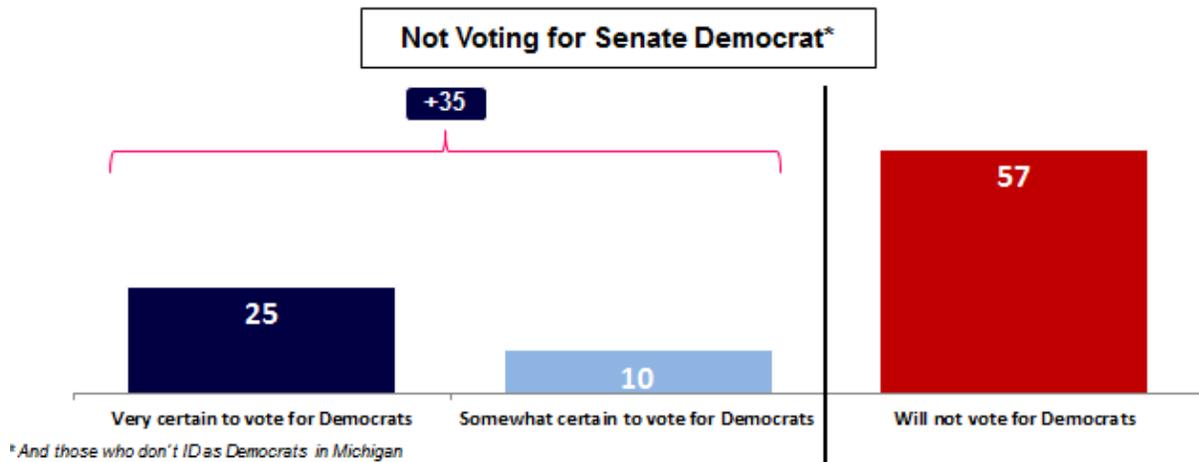


After hearing that information, one-third of those not voting for the Democratic Senate candidate said they would now vote for the Democrat, and one-in-four said they were “very certain” to change their vote. A stunning one-quarter of those voting for the Republican candidate for Senate said they would now vote for his or her Democratic opponent.

Now I am going to read you a list of positions taken by Republican candidates for U.S. Congress and the legislature in [STATE].  
**The Republican candidates oppose:**

- Restricting gun rights for people on the terror watch list and outlawing the sale of assault rifles
- New laws guaranteeing equal pay for women
- Abortion, even in cases of rape and incest
- Gay marriage and new laws barring discrimination against gays, lesbians and transgender people

After hearing the Republican candidates takes these positions, would you now vote for his or her Democratic opponent?



That is a breathtaking number, and we now believe we are on to something – something that Republicans figured out when they used Obamacare in the off-year elections of 2010 and 2014. It motivated and unified their base, brought out the emotions and frustration associated with Obama’s hegemony; it was real and believable; and most important, it allowed them to say, “vote against the Democrats because of Obamacare, not because I want a political party to win.”

Linking Republican candidates to the GOP Congress, the GOP-controlled state legislature and their positions on social issues – starting with their opposition to abortion without exceptions and extending to gun control and gay marriage and discrimination against working women – combines all of the astounding things they are hearing from the GOP. That the Republican position on abortion has such a strong recall reflects what they are in fact doing and underscores the GOP’s fight against women’s and equal rights; talking about opposition to gun regulations enlists the emotions around the senseless, uncontrolled gun violence.

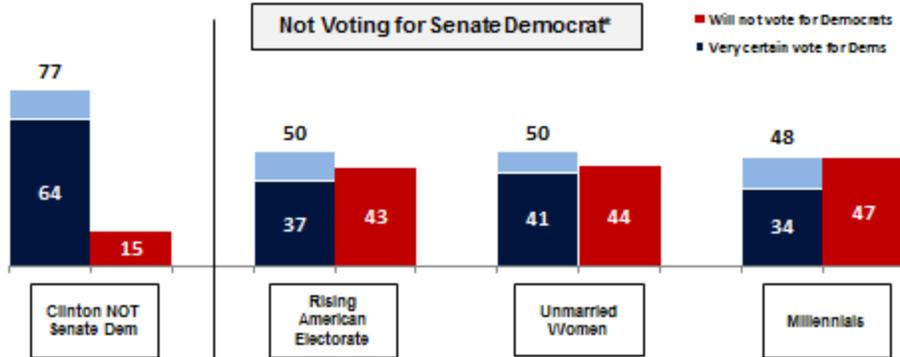
This information also immediately consolidated the potential Democratic vote down-ballot. It moved three-quarters of the Clinton voters who were not yet supporting the Democrat in the race for Senate; it shifted half of the Rising American Electorate not yet voting for the Democrat, including half of the millennials and unmarried women. It is clearly giving Democratically-inclined voters a reason to vote straight-ticket.



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The focus on their opposition to abortion, sensible gun limits, and equality for the LGBT community and women, both in Congress and in our state legislature, is emotional, real, motivating and allows Democrats to consolidate their broad base in a potentially big election.

We will be testing other parts of conservative agenda, including their support for tax cuts for the richest, in future surveys and focus groups to measure the emotive power of this approach to the election.

In the meantime, we hope this contributes to the strategic conversation among progressives.