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To: Interested parties

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Failing GOP tax scam big opportunity to close with out-of-touch attack Final pre-election poll

The new tax cut law – the Republicans’ signature legislative accomplishment – is unpopular, and increasingly so, as a majority have not seen any personal benefit and believe the tax cut primarily benefits corporations and the wealthy at their expense. Critically, contrary to the Trump-GOP narrative about the booming economy, more people say the economy isn’t strong for people like them because their wages aren’t rising or keeping up with costs. That tough reality gives progressives an opportunity to hit these leaders for their corrupt deal for their corporate donors, while being out of touch and indifferent to the struggles of the middle class and working people.

The final pre-election poll conducted by *Democracy Corps* for the *American Federation of Teachers*, like the average of public polls, shows the Democrats just at the edge of the wave election for which progressives are battling.¹ It also tells progressives to stay on offense in the closing weeks. Embracing the public’s anger with other leaders’ out-of-touch portrayal of their economic lives genuinely shifts vote support toward Democratic candidates and increases turnout.

The tax scam for the rich is increasingly unpopular

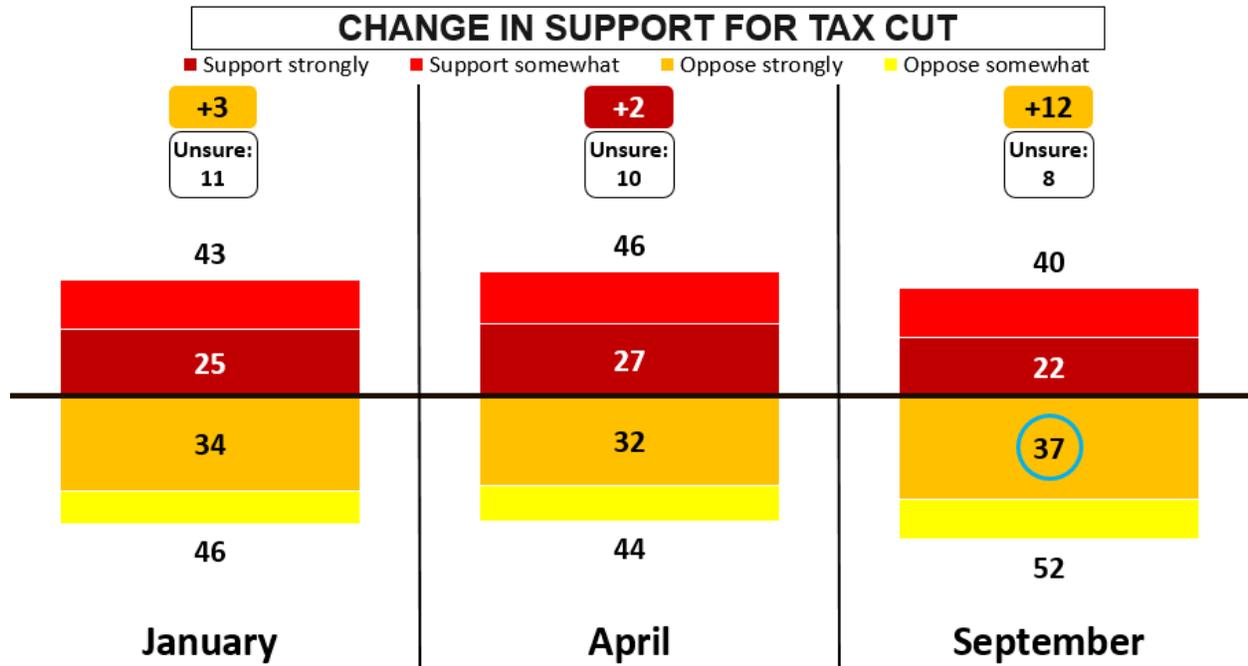
Opposition to the tax cut now exceeds support by 12 points, a 14-point shift in net opposition since April. A 52 percent majority now oppose the tax cut and opponents have grown their intensity advantage over supporters (37 percent strongly oppose, 22 strongly support). This is just as we anticipated, [and assured skeptical progressives would happen back in June](#), as voters internalized the costs and the lack of benefit to them of the new law.

Contrary to the fears of some progressives, Democratic opposition to the tax cut grew and now outpaces Republican support for their party’s signature legislative achievement. Only three-quarters of Republicans now support the tax cut, just half strongly, down from the 84 percent who supported it in April; Democratic opposition grew from 73 to 84 percent over that period,

¹ In partnership with the *American Federation of Teachers*, *Democracy Corps* conducted a national phone survey September 9-23, 2018 among 1,000 registered voters from a voter-file sample, with 53 percent of interviews conducted on cell phones. The margin of error for the full sample is +/- 3.1 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

and two-thirds now strongly oppose the bill. The shift may be most consequential among independents, who narrowly supported the tax cut in April but now oppose it by a 15-point margin.

From what you know, do you support or oppose the tax cut for corporations and individuals passed by the Republicans in Congress and signed by the President at the end of last year?



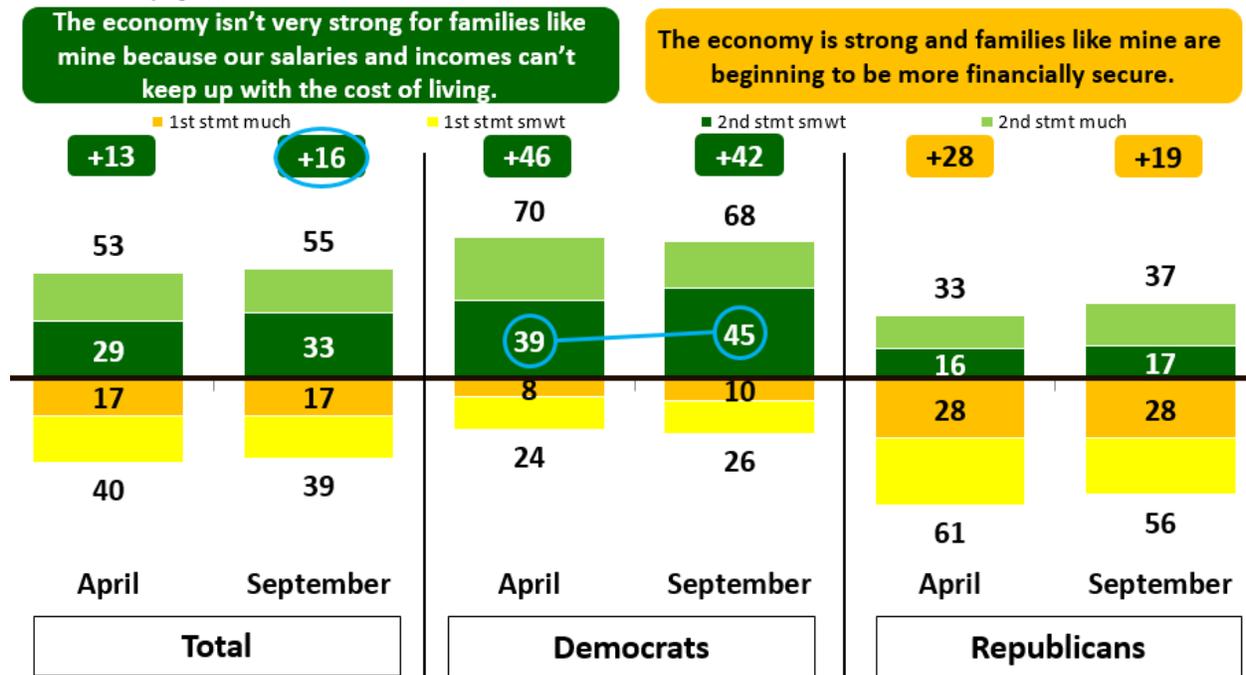
Nine-months under the new tax regime and five-months since our last tracking poll, there has been no increase in the number who say that the new tax law is benefitting them personally (38 percent agree, 51 disagree) and a 53 percent majority still agree the “new tax cut law benefits corporations and the wealthy *at the expense* of working and middle class families.” Agreement with the conservative line defending tax cuts – that it “will grow the economy and create higher paying jobs” – is unchanged at 39 percent, mirroring the 40 percent who still support this bill.

This is in the context of an economy that people increasingly say is not strong for people like them because their wages are not rising and increasingly not keeping up with costs.

The reality is that just 39 percent agree with the very modest claim that “the economy is strong and families like mine are beginning to be more financially secure” and a growing majority of voters say instead that it “is not very strong for families like mine because our salaries and incomes can’t keep up with the cost of living.”

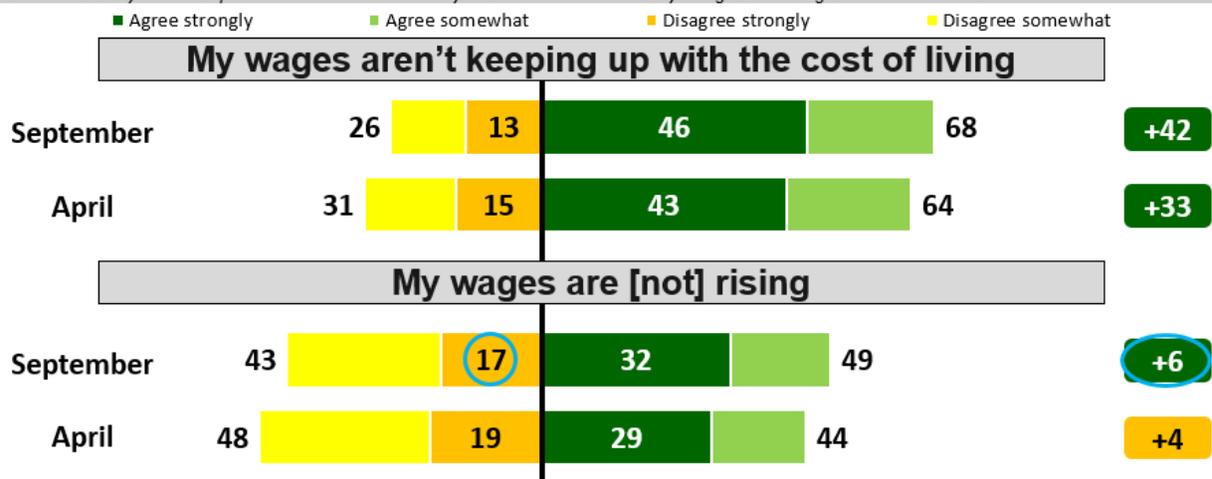
This insecurity is particularly acute among African Americans (72 percent), millennial women (64 percent), unmarried women (62) and Hispanic voters (60). A 55 percent majority of college graduate women, assumed to be beneficiaries of the macro-growth and tax cut, say the economy isn’t very strong, along with 58 percent of the white working class women who helped elect Donald Trump. Even white working class men, the backbone of Trump’s base, are divided over this question (47 percent economy strong, 49 not strong).

Now let me read you some short statements about the economy. Please tell me which statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.



Voters are increasingly worried about stagnant wages and the cost of living. They are now more likely to disagree with the statement “my wages are rising”; agreement with the statement “my wages aren’t keeping up with the cost of living” now outpaces disagreement by a 42-point margin, up 8 points since April, and nearly half agree with that statement strongly. Student loan debt and health care costs are top contributors to the cost of living crisis: 89 percent say that health care costs “are out of control” and three-quarters say so strongly.

Now let me ask you some questions about the economy. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

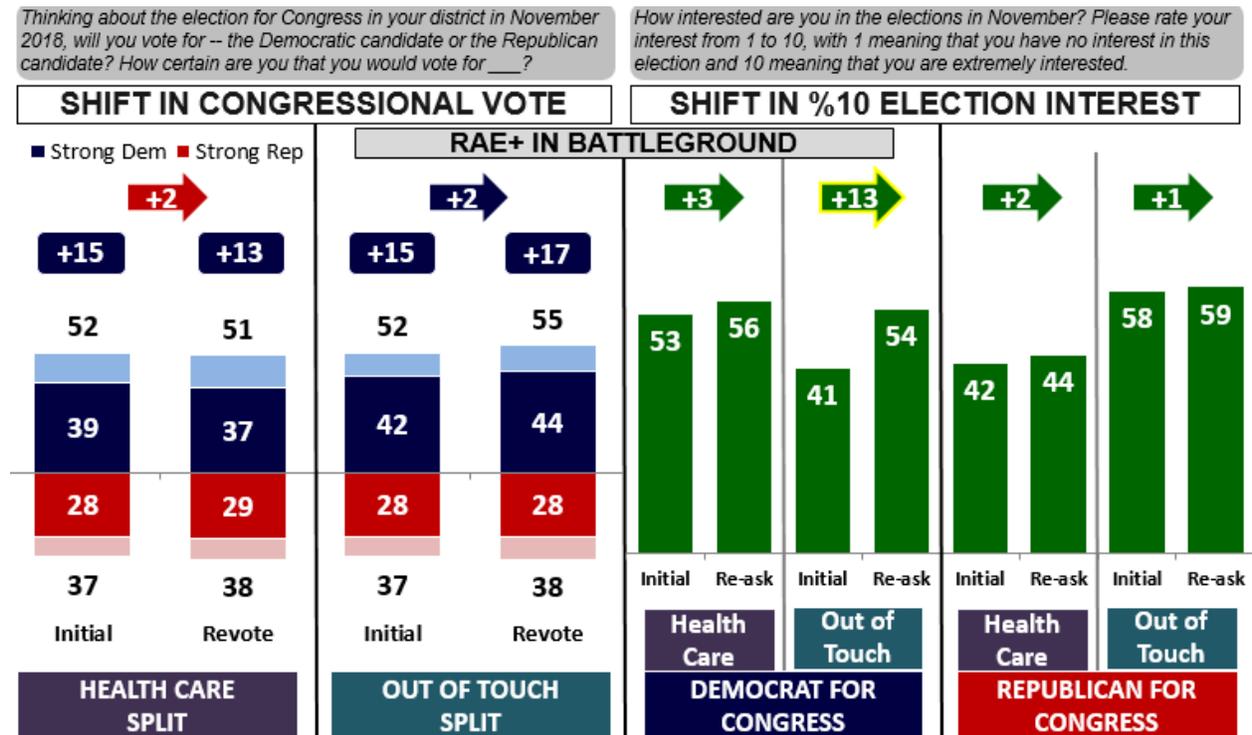


If the tax cut law was really producing the promised economic benefits, one would expect the opposite trends.

The reality is that the Trump-GOP narrative about the economy and tax cuts is out of touch and a liability that progressives may exploit to their advantage in the closing weeks.

It's no wonder Trump and Republicans are closing this election with a toxic brew of hate and division instead of their economic record and signature legislative victory. The Trump-GOP narrative that this is the best economy in history with better jobs and rising incomes is totally disconnected from the economic reality of increasing insecurity due to stagnant wages and rising costs from everything from health care to student loan debt.

Progressives can be confident pressing their case against the Trump-GOP tax cut because it reveals how out of touch and indifferent these Republican leaders are to the struggles of everyone else. The Trump-GOP tax cut is a reckless giveaway to benefit themselves and their wealthy, corporate donors at the expense of the priorities of working and middle class people struggling in this economy, like Social Security, Medicare, education investment and affordable health care. As our recent battleground research has demonstrated, such a closing message grows the Democratic congressional vote margin and turnout advantage.



Too many leaders divide the country and cut corrupt deals for themselves and their wealthy corporate campaign donors at the expense of working people and the middle class. *The Republicans say your wages are great and it's the best economy in history. But their tax scam for the rich recklessly drives up the deficit to justify their cuts to Medicare and Medicaid and less investment in education and health care. I won't take contributions from corporations, and the very richest must pay more in taxes, so we can invest in education and make health care more affordable.*