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To: The progressive community

From: Stan Greenberg, Democracy Corps

The Wave

America is about to experience a once-in-a-lifetime earthquake of an election, but progressives do not seem to trust the new American majority and its ascendant values and thus, continue to be tactical, reactive, and fight old wars. As a result, they may miss the chance to create a governing majority after November 8th.

Hillary Clinton is beginning to emerge with the kind of lead you would expect in a country where over 60 percent of the electorate will be racial minorities, single women, millennials, and seculars and where the positive sentiment about the Democratic Party is 9 points higher than for the Republicans.¹

Progressives, pundits and the media are consumed with the pivotal role of angry white working class men when their vote share is declining every presidential election and will be only 18 percent of the electorate this year. When Clinton's margin was only 3 points, their share of the electorate would have to jump to 25 percent to push the overall vote to parity.²

I am the person who invented the term "Reagan Democrats" and took Bill Clinton to Warren in Macomb County, Michigan. But then, the white working class men's share of the electorate was twice what it is today.

Today, I want progressives to embrace an economic narrative that seeks to "level the playing field," because that is key to motivating working class voters, white *and* minority, including women who are now a majority of the working class, not because of its appeal to Reagan Democrats.

Because progressives did not trust the new American majority, they thought Donald Trump's dark convention and speech was effective and waited for the polls to be sure. They thought Pennsylvania would be close, underestimating the new dynamics in the state. And their priority

¹ Huffpollster average, August 11, 2016. Democrats viewed favorably by 44 percent, Republicans by 35 percent.

² In a three way race, white non-college educated men vote for Trump over Clinton, 58 percent to 22 percent. In a two way ballot, 61 percent vote for Trump and 35 percent vote for Clinton. With all else equal, white non-college men would need to count for 25 percent of voters in order for Trump to tie Clinton in a competitive three-way race and they would need to count for 36 percent of the electorate in order for Trump to tie Clinton in a two way race.



and strategy was to stop Trump in the Rust Belt states to stamp out any chance of Trump being elected.

But Trump already lost this election before his disastrous last week, as only 6 percent of Clinton voters would even consider supporting Trump. The number of potential switchers in this election has shrunk to just a third of what it was in the last three presidential elections.

This misplaced priority comes at the expense of efforts to produce the biggest possible wins in the elections for the U.S. Senate and House and state elections.

Campaigns and media should be focused on this number: 38 percent. That is the percent of the vote that Trump is likely to win in this multi-party election, matching the vote share for George Bush in 1992 when he lost to Bill Clinton by 5 points. That 38 percent should concentrate the mind on what is the real opportunity for Republican votes and voters to disappear down the ballot.

Here is what progressives should focus on to maximize that opportunity.

Task 1: Get Clinton voters to vote Democratic down-ballot

Clinton is beginning to build comfortable leads in the diverse and Rust Belt battleground states, but the Democratic Senate and House candidates are performing less impressively.

We know from the WWV/VPC June state battleground research that 16 percent of the likely electorate in these states are Clinton voters who are not yet voting for the Democratic candidate for Senate. Three-quarters of these unconsolidated voters are members of the Rising American Electorate – minorities, unmarried women and millennials at the heart of the progressive coalition. They are mostly Democrats (70 percent), yet half said they were casting ballots for the Republican Senate candidate, and about 40 percent are undecided.³

We know who they are, but we need to learn what gets them to cast a Democratic vote down-ballot.

- ***Trump ticket and nationalized election.*** The DCCC correctly points out that our presidential election years are increasingly nationalized. They are rightly attacking Republican candidates for continuing to support Trump. Whether this will work long-term is an empirical and testable proposition. It is critical to learn whether it will work when an increasing number of Republicans are putting distance between themselves and Trump. Will it impact down-ballot voting at the state level?

³ On behalf of Women's Voice. Women's Vote Action Fund and the Voter Participation Center, 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.



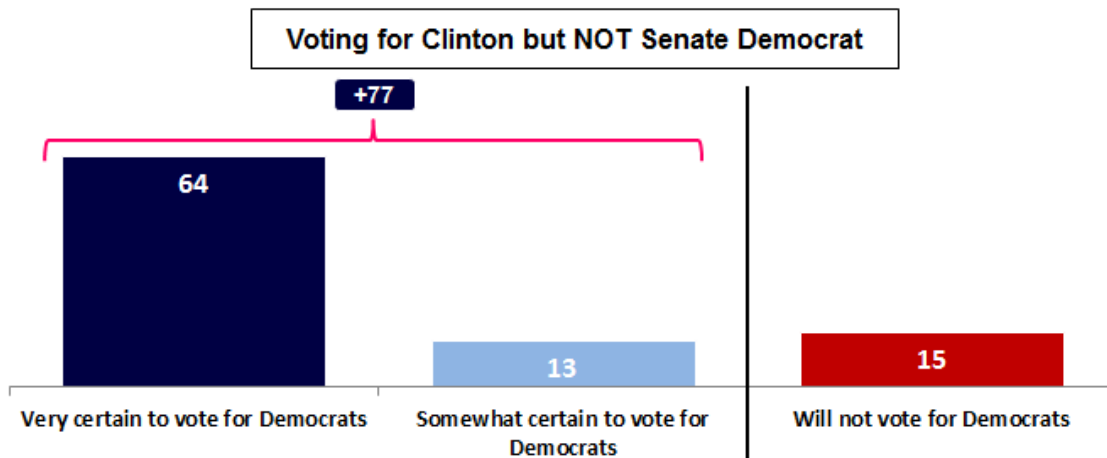
It is quite possible that this strategy helps to build a GOP brand image that is independent of Trump and rationalizes split-ticket voting. Or not.

- The Republican brand values at the national and state level.*** We need plan B, and it may be one that focuses on the GOP itself. At the national and state level, the Republican Party is associated with extreme positions on abortion, guns, discrimination against the LGBT community, and women. With the goal to get Clinton voters to vote straight ticket, informing voters of these GOP positions may prove more motivating – as you can see in the graphs below. ***Two-thirds of Clinton voters not yet supporting the Democrat for Senate become very certain to switch their vote when they hear that list of Republican positions.***

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?



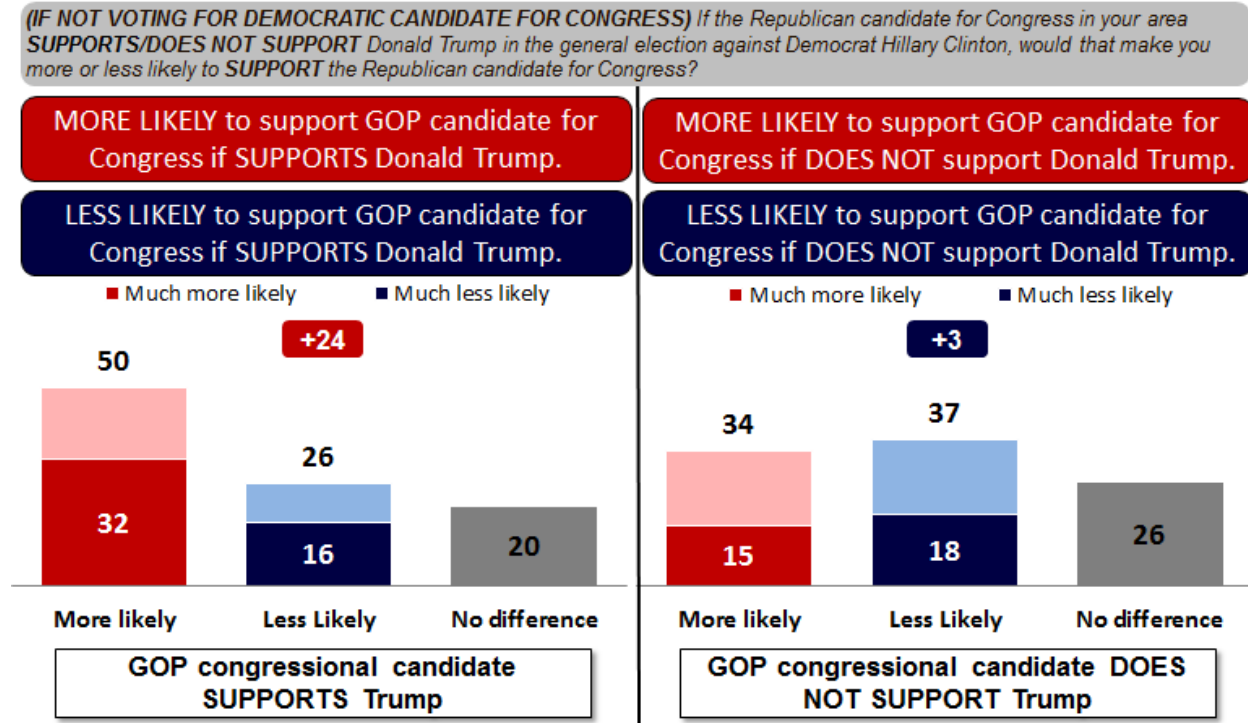
This underscores the critical need for a strategy for these unconsolidated Clinton voters that could readily produce a major shift to the Democratic candidates for Congress and state legislatures. The right strategy could be embraced by the Senate and House campaigns, the state parties, as well as the national Clinton campaign.

Task 2: Getting Trump voters to punish GOP establishment candidates

While Trump is getting 38 percent of the vote, some proportion of them will not vote Republican down-ballot if Trump is angry at candidates who are distancing themselves from him. This is a potential gold mine. There is a reason why so many Republican leaders are tongue-tied in the face of today’s election. A GOP House candidate who does not support Trump pays a much higher price with GOP voters than one who supports him and this is quantifiable: almost one in



five of those voting for the Republican House candidate (or undecided) are much less likely to support him or her – if they are *not* supporting Trump.



Trump will do most of the work for progressives on this task, though pressing all Republicans on where they stand on Trump increases the number of campaigns Trump voter resentment becomes a significant factor down-ballot.

Task 3: Fueling the Republican civil war and getting moderates to vote Democratic

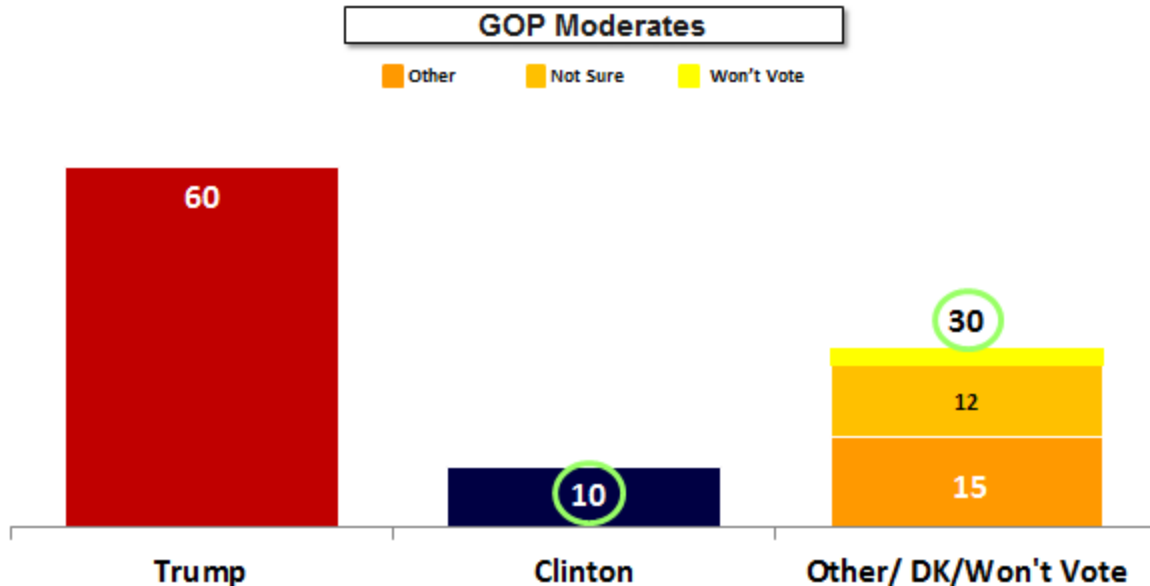
This is the biggest opportunity for progressives to play offense and produce a sustainable fracturing of the Republican Party that impacts the Congress, the states and the issues that get taken up after this electoral earthquake.

His vote would not be at 38 percent but for these Republicans who are holding back. Public research shows 20 percent of Republicans are currently not voting for Trump, and we know from Democracy Corps’ Republican Party Project that most of those self-identified Republicans are moderates.⁴

⁴ Democracy Corps national web-survey of 800 likely Republican voters conducted February 11- 16, 2016 using a voter file sample; 81 percent of Republicans were voting for Trump in the August NBC/Wall Street Journal poll of 800 registered voters, July 31- August 3, 2016 and see “Can Trump Catch Up?” Amy Walter, Cook Political Report, August 11, 2016.



Thinking about the election for President in November, if the election for President were held today, would you vote for -- (ROTATE CANDIDATES) Democrat Hillary Clinton or Republican (Donald Trump/Ted Cruz)?



The fracturing and potential is very real: moderates comprise 31 percent of the Republican base electorate. These are college-educated, socially liberal voters in a white working class, socially conservative GOP. They feel alienated from their own party, which means it may be possible to shift the partisan plates.

Our research from the Republican Party Project done earlier this year says it is possible to move them to vote for Clinton and Democrats down-ballot, but Democratic campaigns and progressive institutions have been reluctant to reach this far.

Again, because these are college-educated, moderates and socially liberal, they respond to a Democratic candidate who says let's get beyond divisive social issues, supports infrastructure investment, encourages long-term corporate investment, supports work and family policies including equal pay for women. They should be a visible target for campaigns at all levels, and these college-educated registered Republicans are easily targetable.

Progressives need to become strategic and opportunistic to make sure this year is really an electoral earthquake.