

TO: Interested Parties
FR: Mark Riddle, Future Majority
DT: June 14, 2021
RE: **The Battleground: Play Offense! Or the Pitchforks are Coming Again...**

Play Offense! Or the Pitchforks are Coming Again...

In early May, Future Majority conducted a polling project with our partners at Change Research in the 37 congressional districts decided by +/-5 points, and the battleground state of Pennsylvania, building off earlier research in Arizona, Michigan, and West Virginia. The title of the May memo was "Objects in the Mirror May Be Closer Than They Appear," in which we stressed that conventional wisdom was too rosy, that voters had settled back into their partisan corners and that the all-important true swing independent voter was already trending away from the President and Congressional Democrats.

After the completion of our groundbreaking study "[Winning the Future – The Unconscious Mind of Voters](#)," we wanted to look at two major questions as we continued our polling of key districts and battleground states: 1) Just how sharp are the pitchforks for another revolt? 2) In this hyper partisan time, is it possible to play offense and move the needle?

The information provided below is from a June 6-9 study of 1,335 voters in the 37 congressional districts +/-5 and 1,546 voters in the battleground of Wisconsin as well as a few key points from other surveys. This memo is in the public domain.

Key Data Points: The Pitchfork

- 33% of polled voters believe the U.S. government is working well in its role in their lives. 22% of undecided independent voters believe the government is working well.
- Just 27% believe the government is accountable to them. Just 14% of undecided independent voters think it is accountable. 70% feel the government is not accountable. Accountability as a messaging theme cannot be repeated enough.
- When asked about personal income, just 7% of these voters say their income is going up faster than the cost of living. 30% say staying about even with the cost of living, and the rest - **60% say they are falling behind the cost of living**. In May, 54% of voters were falling behind – **a 6-point jump in just a month**.
 - **90% of voters are staying even or falling behind**. Note: This is the same number we have statewide in PA, OH, WI. In WV, the total is 94% - with 74% falling behind.
 - "Has gone up recently": 92% your gas prices, 91% home prices in area, 87% your groceries (cost of groceries is the #1 ranked concern among voters), 60% taxes, 50% crime, 27% 401k or retirement investments.

- **“Today’s Americans feel like they are drowning and dispensable.”** – Future Majority’s May Report on the [Unconscious Mind of Voters](#).
- **68% of these voters in swing CDs and Wisconsin, alarmingly for the incumbent party, say they want to “burn it down” or we “need a revolution” when asked how voters feel about their current economic situation.** In a certain way, we are at the mercy of large, structural forces in the recovery that are beyond anyone’s control. But, Democrats need to message better what they have done.
- Just 29% say they are “better off than a year ago.” 69% of voters say they are not going anywhere up -- 41% say they are worse off and 28% are about the same.
- Just 26% say the U.S. House and 6% say the U.S. Senate are working well and accomplishing a lot this year.
- An overwhelming 88% rate the health of American Democracy as “negative.” This is a key opening for HR1/S1.
- 76% are concerned that the candidate who wins the most Electoral College votes in 2024 won’t become President because state legislatures will decide to award Electoral Votes to the candidate who did not win the most votes in the state (79% of Democrats, 76% of independents, 73% Republicans).
- 77% believe “corruption in Washington, DC has reduced opportunities for [them], [their] family, and [their] community.” Democrats = Washington now.
- 80% believe “corruption in Washington DC has limited [their] freedoms.” These things must be addressed, making the anti-corruption elements of HR 1 crucial – not just for Democrats, but more importantly for the legitimacy of our institutions.

Bottom Line: Voters don’t think they are doing well, and they believe the government fails to deliver and is corrupt/for sale to the highest bidder. This means independents flip every two years, flipping either the Senate, the House, the Presidency, or a combination, every year since 2006 except 2012. This is an old, once again structural set of problems, and needs fundamental reform which is also blasted at every social media user in the country. Democrats will lose independents in 2022 and 2024 if we do not deliver growth, wages, jobs, and anti-corruption/transparency measures. Notice, Republican voters dislike corruption as much as Democratic voters. It unifies everyone around one platform. That is the ‘unity’ we are looking for.

Lay of the Land

- 87% of Democrats, 86% of Republicans, and 79% of independent voters are “extremely motivated to vote in 2022.”

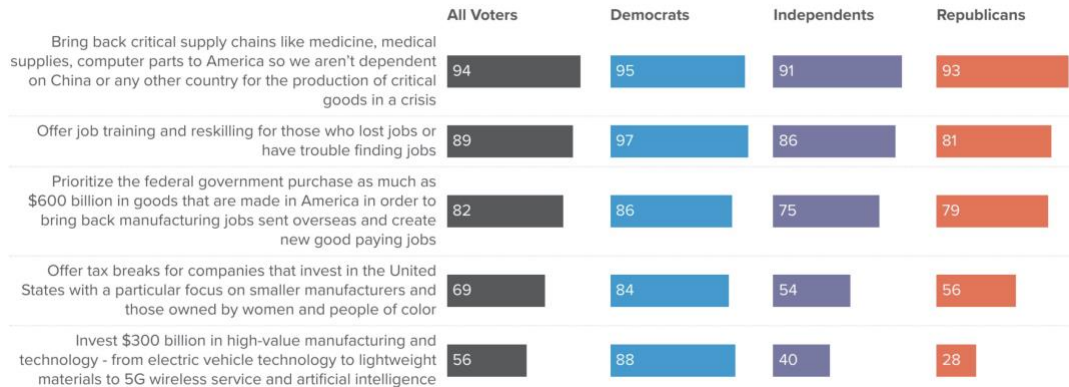
- President Biden's overall job approval is 45%, a 3-point drop since May. Also concerning is that 29% of Democrats only somewhat approve of Biden's performance. Creating more legitimacy through economic growth, and reform that is seen clearly to increase the accountability of Members of Congress and the President, will do wonders. They go together.
- President Biden's approval in handling of the Coronavirus pandemic is positive, 52% **approve** vs. 46% **disapprove**. On handling other issues, his approval not nationally (where sampling makes his numbers better) but in these key swing CDs and the state of Wisconsin, he is already underwater on all important facets of government:
 - Helping the middle class: 37% approve vs. 58% disapprove
 - Jobs and Economy: 42% vs. 54% (May: 45% vs. 52%)
 - Climate Policy: 42% vs. 54%
 - Racial Injustice: 42% vs. 55%
 - Health Care: 34% vs. 59%
 - Relations with China: 33% vs. 63%
 - Immigration/the Southern border with Mexico: 33% vs. 63%
 - **New Question: Gas Prices: 29% v. 59%**
- Donald Trump: 43% favorable vs. 52% unfavorable. Republicans 90% favorable. Independents 34% favorable vs. 54% unfavorable.
- Generic Congressional Ballot: 46% Republican vs. 42% Democrat. 11% Not Sure. +2 GOP gain since May
 - **25% of Independents are undecided** vs. 5% Democrat and 5% Republican. The profile of these undecided Independent voters:
 - 61% are under 50 years old (31% 18-34, 30% 35-49)
 - 14% Hispanic or Latino
 - 46% College graduates
 - 3% Black voters
 - 2020 Vote: 44% Biden, 38% Trump, 11% Jorgenson, 5% did not vote
 - Democratic Party: 15% favorable, 58% unfavorable
 - Republican Party: 16% favorable, 63% unfavorable
 - Donald Trump: 23% favorable, 62% unfavorable
 - Joe Biden: 35% favorable, 52% unfavorable
 - Kamala Harris: 31% favorable, 51% unfavorable
 - Government working for you: 27% well, 66% not well
 - Income/cost of living: 58% falling behind, 33% staying even, 5% going up
 - Biden approval: 45% approve, 51% disapprove

Note: The 3 main drivers of the independent vote are jobs/economy, U.S. interests first, and personal freedom. Remember, corruption is seen as decreasing freedom.

Policy Priorities and Effective Pitches:

- 55% support the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Act. (96% Democrats, 53% independents, 58% women). 36% of voters have heard “a lot” about the Rescue Act
- 54% support the \$2.0 trillion American Jobs Plan (95% Democrats, 50% Independents, 59% women, 66% of voters under 34 years old). 40% of voters have heard “a lot” about the Jobs Act.
 - **Go on offense on infrastructure as security (Make Republicans pay for voting against it, by challenging them on brand):** 68% agree that The America Jobs Act and its investment in infrastructure is a **national security issue** because we have got to upgrade our cyber security systems, grids, ports and port inspections and soft targets
 - **More offense:** 82% agree that policy makers should focus on and invest more in protecting the United States by developing antibiotics of the future in the U.S., strengthening encryption, and mining rare earths in the U.S. so we are not reliant on other countries. Also, design segments of acts to make blocking policy painful on their turf. Message appropriately. This is what they do. They go directly at our strengths.
 - **Note:** Future Majority created and tested several 30-second ads around the American Jobs Plan. Broadly, **ads emphasizing the Made in America theme from Biden’s Executive Order test best and ads without Joe Biden** being a main character **test higher** than with Joe Biden. This underlines the finding that **the American worker – not the politician – is the hero of the story.**
 - Win the Future: <https://youtu.be/M0zec2pXTos>
 - Information Highway: <https://youtu.be/gwV0Fa4eBhQ>
 - Imagine: https://youtu.be/Wg93a_Tw_Hs
 - Blueprint: <https://youtu.be/HhdgHr7XHvo>
 - Made in America: <https://youtu.be/8Uig5Ma3sP8>
 - Dependent: https://youtu.be/NJtVvt_x_g0
- 53% of voters support the \$2.0 trillion American Families Act (97% Democrats, 49% independents, 57% women, 67% of voters under 34 years old). 35% of voters have heard “a lot” about the Families Act.

- Offense:** The Made in America proposals test 80%+ in all of our research and could well help with the key independent vote driver of “U.S. interests first.” In March, voters in these same congressional districts broadly approved of Made in America policies. **Note that only 9% of voters have heard “a lot” about the Endless Frontier Act.**



- 46% of voters said, “as our country opens back up, we need to make big investments to win our future” versus 39% support for “the government take a time out since we have weathered the storm.” 15% are not sure, most being undecided Independents. We can take over everything good that ‘America First’ appealed to, with the right policy.
- When asked, “When thinking about the future, what concerns you more?” 47% of voters said that “America will not invest in jobs, infrastructure, education and technology to be competitive in the 21st century” versus 50% of voters who said that “America will raise taxes too much hurting jobs, stifling investment and innovation.”
 - Responses are mostly along party lines (91% of Democrats worry about lack of investments, 92% Republicans worry about raising taxes), but **the key demographic of undecided voters worry more about raising taxes than lack of investments 52% to 42%.**
 - From May: On spending: 62% of independent voters agree “that we had to spend what it took to limit the damage of Covid, but spending \$2 trillion on new government programs is too much right now.” Paradoxically, that number does not change much on \$4, \$6, or \$8 trillion. If we are going to take the hit for additional spending, we might as well go big.
- On the revenue question, from our battleground congressional district poll:
 - Corporate Minimum Tax of 15%: 63% support, 31% oppose
 - Wealth tax of 2% on +\$50M: 61% support, 37% oppose
 - Capital gains tax over \$1M: 57% support, 39% oppose
 - Income tax over \$400,000: 56% support, 41% oppose

- State and Local Deduction: 54% support, 25% oppose
 - Corporate tax rate from 21% to 25%: 52% support, 45% oppose
 - Estate tax on inheritance over \$5M: 51% support, 45% oppose
 - Fees on sales of stocks and bonds: 36% support, 54% oppose
 - Tolls and user fees: 26% support, 65% oppose
 - Five-cent gas tax: 23% support, 72% oppose
- Moral: Voters are fine with taxing the wealthy and powerful. They do not like fees. That is why the Republicans asked for fees as the revenue mechanism in the “bipartisan” negotiations. McConnell reads polls.
 - A new idea that we tested in May’s swing congressional district poll is setting up an Infrastructure Finance Authority run by independent directors out of Treasury. The funds would be raised by assessing a fee to businesses over \$5M in revenue. Estimates show it would raise \$400B and the Authority could use that to leverage private money to build \$4T worth of physical infrastructure. 57% of voters support and 34% oppose (Democrats 86%, independents 56%, and Republicans 29%).

The Chess Match:

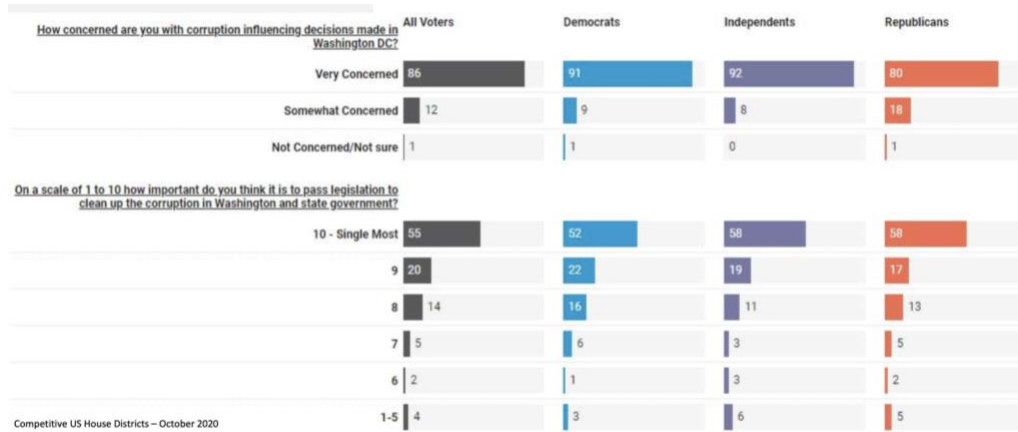
- “What should be the priority of Congress this year?” 49% say pass Joe Biden’s Agenda. 51% say block Joe Biden’s Agenda. Independents are 49% pass vs. 51% block. Undecided independent voters support: 60% pass vs. 40% block.
- If Senator Mitch McConnell continues to object and obstruct, which measures should Democrats push through and get signed into law? The D Frame of the legislation: 68% HR1, 52% Jobs Act, 44% raising taxes on wealthy, 39% Families Act, and 12% expanding background checks.
 - What measures should Mitch McConnell work hardest to block? The R frame: 71% HR1, 52% Jobs Act, 43% gun control, 28% raising taxes, 21% Families Act.
- On HR1, swing state voters in Michigan and Arizona told us in May they support the legislation on average by +10 points when framed as reforms to clean up corruption in Washington vs. when framed as legislation to protect and expand voting rights (AZ: 65% support anti-corruption frame vs. 55% support voter protection frame; MI: 67% support anti-corruption frame vs. 56% support voter protection frame).
- 70% agree Congress works best when Democrats and Republicans come together and compromise vs. 21% Congress works best when it reflects the will of the majority.
- 46% support a 51 simple majority in Senate v. 49% oppose (36% undecided independents support v. 53% oppose).

- **This says it all (unifies the country): 75% believe there should be an exemption from the filibuster for new laws that directly impact members of Congress, such as disclosing dark money, curbing the influence of lobbyists, and ending Congressional corruption. 68% of undecided Independents are on board with this.** People will accept Democrats exercising power if it is for the things everyone agrees on already. Not exercising the power we have attained is a sure recipe for disaster.
- From May: 49% support HR1 vs. 41% oppose. Support: 91% Democrats, 49% independents, 8% Republicans. 42% of voters have heard “a lot” about HR1/For the People Act.
 - Is West Virginia too difficult a state to support HR1? No. 2 key data points from Future Majority’s West Virginia poll conducted in May:
 - 37% support HR1/S1 after a short list of key points of the legislation were presented (90% Democrats, 33% independents, 11% Republicans).
 - **Our very next question: “Do you support or oppose a more limited proposal that would end partisan gerrymandering, crackdown on corruption, and pass new tough ethics and conflict of interest laws for Members of Congress.” 79% support (88% Democrats, 78% independents, 75% Republicans). Yes, in West Virginia.**

Key Points as We Think about HR1/S1 Moving Forward and How to Message:***Transparency / Corruption***

- 91% support 72 hours reporting by Members of Congress on meetings with any lobbyist, lawyer or foreign agent trying to influence government actions.
- 91% support banning Members of Congress from being a lobbyist for 5 years after leaving office.
- 87% support closing loopholes for former Members of Congress who style themselves ‘advisors’ to lobbyists, and therefore do not register as lobbyists.
- 82% support prohibiting Members of Congress from making stock trades.
- 69% support any candidate seeking federal office disclose 5-years’ worth of tax returns. (Not surprisingly, 50% of Republicans are against this idea).

- We have consistently, over years of surveys, found 90%+ of voters are concerned about corruption. The opposite of corruption is accountability.



Voting

- 83% support requiring a paper ballot for every voter.
- 80% support (consistent across AZ, WV, WI, & PA) ending partisan gerrymandering to prevent politicians from picking their voters.
- 74% support requiring that employers give paid time off to vote or allow employees to vote during working hours.
- 72% support increasing early vote locations and times for in-person early voting.

Playing Offense: The “D” is for Delivering!

- **51% said they would vote for “A candidate who is For the People and delivered on defeating the coronavirus, investing in infrastructure and families, creating middle class jobs, and voted to clean up corruption, and focused on America winning the future” vs. 44% who said they would vote for “A candidate who says they will Make America Great by building the a Wall on the southern border with Mexico to stop illegal immigration, will cut taxes and regulation to grow business, will be tough on China, keep your family safe by supporting the police and will block the Nancy Pelosi/Kamala Harris agenda.” Undecided Independents 49% to 21% for the For the People message.**
 - In the spirit of playing offense, we tested the For the People positive versus “A candidate who says they will Makes America Great but voted against sweeping anti-corruption measures, against raising taxes on the wealthiest 1%, and against the American Jobs Act that would create 5 million jobs by investing money into American infrastructure.” 69% For the People to 16% (must have caught onto the game). Undecided independents 64% For the People to 5% and even 49% of Republicans.

- Slogans that Work and that Don't. Would vote for:
 - **Working for working people: 66%** for (80% Democrats, 58% Independents, 59% Republicans. 46% undecided independents). (+6 from January)
 - **For the People: 55%** for (64% Democrats, 46% independents, 55% Republicans. 39% undecided independents). (-2 from January)
 - **Build Back Better.** 41% for (67% Democrats. 35% independents, 20% Republicans. 29% undecided independents). (+3 from January)
 - **Win the Future.** 36% for (48% Democrats, 24% independents, 36% Republicans. 18% undecided independents).
 - **Justice Democrat.** 31% for (65% Democrats, 25% independents, 3% Republicans. 17% undecided independents). (+6 from January)

More offense:

- 91% would vote against a candidate that voted to allow Members of Congress to use taxpayer money to settle sexual assault and discrimination cases.
- 84% would vote against a candidate that voted to allow politicians to draw the districts they represent, also known as gerrymandering.
- 81% would vote against a candidate who voted against strengthening ethics and anti-corruption laws.
- 81% would vote against a candidate that voted against allowing you to have the same health insurance as a Member of Congress.
- 80% would vote against a candidate that voted against making it easier to see what lobbyist their clients contribute to Members of Congress.
- 80% would vote against a candidate that voted against investing in American infrastructure, thus allowing China to surge ahead on technology and economics.
 - 30% say China is best positioned to win the future v. 25% United States. 17% neither and 28% not sure.
 - 79% say the U.S. should investigate the Wuhan Lab.

- A few additional ideas for delivering and playing offense on Health Care:
 - **The Federal Employees Health Care Exchange:** One solution to achieving this long-term goal is by expanding the choices under the Affordable Care Act by providing a new public option for Americans to enroll in the highly successful Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHB). The FEHB currently offers group coverage to cabinet members, White House staff, and all other civilian employees of the federal government. **86% of voters support** allowing Americans to buy into the same health insurance program that government employees receive. [Read Future Majority's analysis](#) of this proposal by Dr. Robert Shapiro, a former senior economic advisor for President Bill Clinton and President Obama.
 - **Take on Pharmacy Benefit Managers to Lower Drug Costs:** Two recent articles in the [Wall Street Journal](#) and the [Ohio Capitol Journal](#) addressing alleged corruption by pharmacy benefit managers, or PBMs, caught our attention. Several states are investigating the business practices of these big insurance middlemen – in some cases seeking millions of dollars in damages for misleading states' Medicaid programs about pharmacy-related costs. In our most recent survey of swing congressional voters, **85% of all voters (92% Democrats, 90% Independents, and 83% Republicans) support** the federal government investigating whether they are rigging the system to raise prices of prescription drugs. **62% strongly support** the investigation, enabled by the bipartisan Prescription Pricing for the People Act. While most voters are not familiar with PBMs, 50% of respondents to our voter survey believe this investigation would help lower the cost of prescription drugs.
 - **Ending Surprise Billing:** In our Compact for the American Future released last year, we urged Congress to make real on their promise to end surprise billing by requiring patients to be notified before an out-of-network charge is applied and banning out-of-network charges when patients don't have control over which doctor, such as in emergency hospital visits. This remains a top priority for voters. In our latest survey of swing congressional district voters, **92% of respondents (95% Democrats, 92% of Independents, and 88% of GOP) support** prohibiting health insurance companies and medical providers from adding charges to medical bills that were not disclosed before patients received care.
 - **Enacting a Veterans Bill of Rights:** Congress should take immediate action to address the health of our nation's veterans by enacting a Veterans Bill of Rights to tackle underinsurance and increase access to critical mental health care for veterans. In our latest survey of swing congressional district voters, a Veterans Bill of Rights that increases access to healthcare, prevents suicide, and improves access to mental health services earned the **support of 96% of all voters**, including 98% of Democrats, 96% of Independents, and 94% of Republicans. 77% of all voters strongly support the proposal.

Drive the Wedge:

- 14% of Republicans think Republican elected officials are too close to QAnon, and 41% of independents. 69% would vote against QAnon Republican. Interestingly, 23% of Republicans said they would vote for a QAnon Republican.
- Rep. Marjorie Taylor Green: 50% total unfavorable. 48% with independents, 39% with undecided independents, and 14% of Republicans.

Day-to-Day Issues That, In a Truly Bipartisan Way, Irk People:

- 94% support enforcing a No Call List to cell phone numbers.
- 92% support a Truth in Cell Phone Bills Act that explains fees in simple language up front.
- 85% support Insurance Companies calling to explain rate changes.
- 81% support an Airline Passenger Bill of Rights.
- 70% support requiring humans to answer customer service calls and not machines.

How Voters Get Their News:

	Total	Dem	Ind	GOP	Und
Please indicate from which of the following sources you get your news?					
Local TV News	46	57	40	41	34
Internet websites	45	48	46	41	39
Online news sites	45	49	52	34	35
Facebook	39	44	39	33	37
CNN	32	56	27	10	17
Local newspapers	31	42	30	19	24
Network TV news	30	48	24	15	17
MSNBC	27	50	23	7	13
Radio news	27	28	31	22	19
Fox News	26	3	21	53	11
National newspapers	25	40	23	10	14
Newsmax	20	1	14	45	1
Talk Radio	18	12	13	29	7
Podcasts	17	17	18	15	13
YouTube	16	14	19	15	23
One America News Network (OANN)	15	0	14	31	6
Twitter	10	16	7	7	10
Magazines	10	14	10	5	8
Instagram	6	7	4	7	4
TikTok	5	7	4	4	6
Snapchat	1	1	1	1	2
Other	19	17	20	18	26

Since the 2020 election, Future Majority with our partners at Change Research have surveyed 12,145 voters, including 1,335 likely voters (June 6-9) in the 37 congressional districts decided by +/- 5 points, 1,546 voters in Wisconsin (June 6-9), 1,093 voters in Pennsylvania, and 1,044 voters in West Virginia (May 10-14). We surveyed 892 voters in Arizona, 983 voters in Michigan, 603 voters in NH-01, and 967 voters in West Virginia (April 9-12). Future Majority has also completed a first-of-its-kind metaphor elicitation study of American swing-state voters that provides a deep understanding of how they see the Democratic and Republican parties, how they feel about America now and into the future, and where governing parties can connect with and deliver for the American voter. Since its founding, Future Majority has surveyed 87,633 voters.