

**MEMORANDUM TO REBUILDING AMERICA NOW PAC LEADERSHIP**

**FROM:** Jim McLaughlin, Wes Anderson, Alex Castellanos

**DATE:** 9/6/2016

**RE:** Battleground Polling Results

The following are the critical findings from battleground state surveys conducted between August 29 and September 1 in **Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio**. Each survey consisted of 800 likely voters stratified by county to reflect an average of 2008 and 2012 presidential turnout. In addition, we conducted an oversample in the Youngstown media market in Ohio. We did the same in our previous Ohio survey completed August 17.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- As of today, the race for president is statistically tied in all three of these critical battleground states.

<b>4-Way Ballot</b>	<i>VA</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>OH</i>
Trump	43	44	42
Clinton	43	44	44
Johnson	8	7	8
Stein	2	3	1
Undecided	4	2	6

<b>2-Way Ballot</b>	<i>VA</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>OH</i>
Trump	44	46	45
Clinton	45	47	46
Undecided	11	7	9

- The top-line ballot test results would lead just about any political observer to conclude that this race is fairly conventional, but we all know that nothing in the 2016 presidential election is conventional.

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A quick look at the image tests of both candidates confirms this point. Both candidates still have sky-high unfavorable ratings.

<b>Trump Image</b>	<i>VA</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>OH</i>
Favorable	39	43	42
Unfavorable	57	54	54
<b>NET</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>-12</b>

<b>Clinton Image</b>	<i>VA</i>	<i>PA</i>	<i>OH</i>
Favorable	43	42	42
Unfavorable	54	55	56
<b>NET</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>-13</b>	<b>-14</b>

## PENNSYLVANIA

- While the GOP hasn't carried Pennsylvania in a presidential contest since Bush 41, we have won a number of statewide elections. Geographically, the winning formula for Pennsylvania GOP candidates is simple but difficult: Try to limit losses in the Philadelphia market, run up the score in all smaller markets and fight Pittsburgh to a draw. That formula is working for DJT in the current state of the race.

<b>Media Markets</b>	<i>Philadelphia</i>	<i>Rest of State</i>	<i>Pittsburgh</i>
Trump	32	58	43
Clinton	56	30	42
Johnson	6	6	8
Stein	3	3	3
Undecided	3	3	4

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## VIRGINIA

- The ballot for president is deadlocked with both candidates maxing out their bases and a very small undecided.
- **Trump and Clinton are tied at 43%** with 8% going to Johnson, 2% to Stein and 4% undecided.
- Both Trump and Clinton have 34% “definite” and 15% “reluctant” voters.
- By media market, the race is virtually tied in the DC (43% Clinton to 42% Trump) and Richmond-Harrisonburg-Charlottesville-Raleigh markets (44% Trump to 43% Clinton). Trump is winning out West (54% to 31%) while Clinton leads in the Norfolk market (52% to 35%).
- Clinton is winning in NOVA 47% to 37% as expected, while Trump is ahead 58% to 30% in the rest of the DC market. With a closer look, Clinton is up 52% to 33% in the “Inner Suburbs.” Trump leads in the “Exurbs” 47% to 37% and further out in the DC market 62% to 23%. Johnson garners between 8% and 10% of the vote in these regions.
- Both candidates are nearly maxed out in their respective voter base. **Trump is getting 90% of the Republican vote and Clinton is receiving 92% among Democrats.**
- As we see with OH and PA, in VA Gary Johnson is pulling a similar percentage away from Trump and Clinton. The majority of Johnson voters really don’t like Clinton or Trump as options.

## OHIO AND THE YOUNGSTOWN TEST

- **In Ohio, as noted above, our latest survey has Trump at 42% and Clinton at 44%.**

We conducted two statewide surveys, pre and post the test described below in Youngstown, twelve days apart. In each of these surveys, we conducted an oversample in the Youngstown media market to ensure that specific sub-cell consisted of over 200 interviews to decrease the volatility of the data in that particular market and increase the confidence level.

Even with the oversample, we had to normalize partisanship within the Youngstown market to ensure an apples-to-apples comparison. Using an analysis of 2012 presidential voting, **we set partisanship at 33% Republican, 43% Democrat and 23% Independent. This partisan benchmark is actually less Republican and more favorable to Democrats than we saw in the raw data. It may prove to be too Democrat but given the nature of the test, a more conservative view of the market is prudent.**

**Between the two surveys, we ran 800 gross rating points (GRPs) of [our 60 second positive TV ad titled “America Soaring”](#) ONLY in the Youngstown market. ([Link to view the spot here.](#)) We did not air this or any other positive, pro-Trump TV ad in any other Ohio market.**

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**This positive ad was the ONLY spot we ran in the Youngstown market between the surveys.** The results are unexpected to say the least. Stunning would be a more accurate descriptor.

- **In the Youngstown market, Trump went from being up 2 (statistically tied) to up 18.**

During this test, we continued to run negative, anti-Clinton ads in the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati markets. While there were some minor fluctuations in the other markets, **Youngstown was the only market to see such pronounced ballot movement.**

Further analysis suggests we moved Republicans and Independents that were sitting on the sidelines or voting for Hillary or Johnson. For instance, **Trump's Republican support went from 83% to 93%.** And his **support among Independents went from 46% to 60%.**

This test reveals a few things about the voters we can move:

- They hold unfavorable opinions of both candidates.
- They are moderate to somewhat conservative. In other words, they are somewhat right of center but, more importantly, they are not particularly ideological.
- The open-ended questions about both candidates demonstrate that while they fear Trump may be too arrogant, undisciplined or obnoxious to be president, **they voice no concerns about his honesty.** They do not feel that way about Clinton. By and large, these voters believe Clinton is dishonest, untrustworthy and unethical. In short, they are begging for some reason, any reason, to NOT vote for Clinton.

## **OUR CONCLUSION: IT'S TIME GO POSITIVE**

Our conclusion, based on this data is that it is time to try something different than just continuing to hammer Hillary Clinton with negative TV ads.

We can't burn down the same house twice: Both Clinton and Trump have unfavorable ratings we've never seen before. It's difficult to drive them higher.

An old rule: "If you tell voters what they already know, they stay where they already are." More negative ads, at the moment, just seem to tell voters what they already know about each candidate. Negative ads may hold this race where it is today but they do not seem to have the capacity to "unlock" this stalemate.

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If this campaign remains one in which we only match our negative ads against their negative ads, we will conduct WWI: Trench warfare where both sides struggle to move a few inches. **At this moment, our test indicates that a positive campaign (who would have thought?) affords us an opportunity.**

Underneath two candidates with very high negatives, voters are hungry for change. A positive ad like “America Soaring,” with an optimistic, aspirational message of transformative change, promising renewed American strength, prosperity and progress, seems to give voters **a door out of an otherwise locked room and permission to vote for Donald Trump.**

With positive, aspirational, pro-change messaging, we can move right of center voters still on the sidelines. In Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Florida and North Carolina, as well other states, that could make all the difference.

All this leads us to one conclusion and recommendation: **We need to “go positive.”**

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