

To: All Interested Parties
From: John McLaughlin & Jim McLaughlin
Date: March 20, 2017
Re: March National Poll Results

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S NEW AMERICAN OPTIMISM NEEDS AN ECONOMIC BOOST

At the White House on the day before St. Patrick's Day, President Trump hailed a "new optimism" across America. However, the results of our latest national survey of likely November 2018 voters show that political turbulence is stalling President Trump's momentum. Specifically, the following trends which compare our February 20th national poll to our March 20th poll show that the progress the President had in February which launched a "new optimism" needs a new boost.

One of the major factors that allowed President Trump to win last November was that two-thirds of all voters thought that the country was on the wrong track. From this January through February the sentiment about the direction of the country was rapidly turning around. In that time there was a net positive 27% increase with those who thought the United States was on the wrong track declining from 62% to 48%, and those who thought the U.S. was headed in the right direction increasing from 28% to 41%. This month the right direction is at 38% which is better than the last three years, but not as good as a month ago. The wrong track is at 52%. Still below the roughly two-thirds who said we were on the wrong track for the past three years. So more American voters were optimistic, but not the majority.

Analyzing the President Trump's and Congress' issue objectives show which goals account for the new optimism and which are holding him back. The three in ten voters who agree with his security goals as a top priority say that the country is headed in the right direction 53% to 40%. So the President and Congress should continue his efforts to protect the country from terror, secure the borders and strengthen our defenses. The one in ten voters who say that repealing Obamacare should be the top priority say that country is headed in the right direction 62% to 29%. (As we write this article and Congress stalls that goal, this may change. But it's the top priority for only one in ten voters.)

However, the majority of voters, 54%, say that the President's and Congress' top priority should be economics (either creating jobs, 37%, or cutting taxes 17%), and they believe that the country is still on the wrong track 60% and only 29% say right direction. Among those voters who say that creating jobs should be the top priority for the President and Congress they say that the country is on the wrong track 59% and only 28% say right direction. Among the voters who say that cutting taxes should be the top priority they see the country on the wrong track 51% and only 35% say right direction.

It's pretty clear that as we wrote in NRO in January, the President and Congress needed to make economic growth and jobs their first priority and address health care after. Otherwise President Trump and Congress would be repeating the mistake made by President Obama and the Democrats eight years ago. It's very clear from public opinion that the President needs to get Congress focused on economic growth for their own good, as soon as possible, so that the positive impact will be realized before the 2018 midterms.

From our published national polls since September, 2015 through election day, the majority of voters wanted to change direction and move away from the policies of President Obama. Last month the majority preferred change 51% to 40% who said to continue Obama's policies. This month it closed to change 48% to continue Obama's policies 42%. The perception that the country is headed in the right direction and the President's positive job approval are directly tied to change. Those voters who give him a positive rating want change 81% to 14%. Those voters who say that the country is headed in the right direction favor change 75% to 21%. Enacting change will raise the number of voters who say the country is headed in the right direction and will raise the President's approval rating.

Last month the President had his best job rating with 51% approve and 44% disapprove. It's now closed to a polarized 49% approve to 48% disapprove. Of course Republicans, 89%-10%, and conservatives, 74%-22%, give the President positive ratings while Democrats, 19%-78%, and liberals, 27%-71%, give him net negative approval ratings. Voters who see the country headed in the right direction give the President a very strong positive job rating of 93% approve to only 6% disapprove. While those who say that the country is on the wrong track give the President a negative rating of only 17% approve to 80% disapprove. Although polarized by party and ideology, the President's job rating is directly tied to the perceived priorities of the President and Congress. Those voters who care most about security issues give the President a positive job rating of 67% approve to 30% disapprove. However,

those voters who say the top priority should be the economic issues of creating jobs or cutting taxes, give the President a negative rating of only 36% approve to 61% disapprove. Once again it's clear that the President should continue his success on security issues, but he needs to get Congress working on growing the economy to create jobs by cutting taxes.

Although 35% of the voters believe the economy is in recession and 54% say we are no longer in recession, the majority of all voters 57% say that the economy is getting better while only 32% say that it is getting worse. Those voters who say that the country is headed in the right direction believe that the economy is getting better 81% to only 13% who say it's getting worse. Among those voters who say the country is on the wrong track, only 42% say that the economy is getting better while 47% say that it is getting worse. President Trump's job approval is directly tied to the perception that the economy is getting better. Those voters who approve the job the President is doing say the economy is getting better 77% to only 15% who say it's worse. Among those who disapprove the job the President is doing only 39% say that the economy is getting better, while 50% believe it's getting worse. If the President wants to keep improving his ratings he needs to maintain and broaden the belief that the economy is getting better.

Ironically as we released our poll the majority of voters approved the goal of repealing and replacing the Patient Affordable Care Act also known as Obamacare 56% to 39% disapprove. However, it's not the top priority for the vast majority of voters. So once again Congress and Washington seem out of sync with most voters. Most voters see economic growth by either creating jobs or cutting taxes as their top concern for the President and Congress. Enacting a pro-growth economic plan that cuts taxes to create jobs is the boost the President needs to regain his momentum and boost the New American Optimism. President Trump is doing very well with security issues. It's now time for the President to match that success with economic issues.

Methodology:

This survey of 1,000 likely general election voters nationwide was conducted between March 16th – March 20th, 2017. All interviews were conducted online; survey invitations were distributed randomly within predetermined geographic units. These units were structured to correlate with actual voter turnout in a nationwide general election. This poll of 1,000 likely general election voters has an accuracy of +/- 3.1% at a 95% confidence interval. The error margin increases for cross-tabulations.

Demographics:

Party	TOTAL
Republican	33.0
Democrat	36.0
Independent	31.0

Race	TOTAL
Hispanic	11.1
African American	12.1
Asian	4.0
White	71.0

Age	TOTAL
18 – 29	18.9
30 – 40	18.8
41 – 55	26.5
56 – 65	19.6
Over 65	16.2

Gender	TOTAL
Male	47.0
Female	53.0