Richard Nixon Presidential Library
Contested Materials Collection
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| 45 | 47 | 4/18/1972 | $\square$ | Campaign | Report | Position Paper on the 1972 Campaign focusing on the American Electorate. 17pgs |

II. The American Electorate

1. Total Voters

In 1972 an estinated 139.6 million Anericans will be eligible to vote. This is about 19.4 million potential voters more than the 1968 total, or an increase of $16.1 \%$. Most of this large increase in eligible voters is attributable to the 11.4 million $18-20$ year olds who have been newly enfranchised by the Voting Rights Act Amendment of 1970.*

In 1968 about $61 \%$ of those eligible actually voted in the Presidential election. If that same percentage holds for 1972, there will be about 85 million votes cast this November.

| Est. Eligible Voters | Est. Actual Voters | $\frac{\%}{7}$ |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | 73.0 | 60.7 |
| 120.3 | 84.7 | 60.7 |  |

2. Voting by Region of the U.S.

The South, with the greatest concentration of eligible voters, has the lowest voter turnout of any region, while the North Central region has the highest voter turnout and provides the greatest number of actual voters.

More important, however, are the regions' electoral votes; the South, with 169 electoral votes, has over $31 \%$ of the nation's total, followed by the North Central, the North East and then the West.

* This act also enfranchises about 6 million other persons who previously had been unable to pass literacy tests.

|  | Est. <br> Eligible <br> Voters | Est. Actual Voters | Actual Voters as \% of Eligi- <br>  <br> Est. 1972 | \% of Total <br> U.S. Vote: <br> 1972 | Electoral Vote 1972 |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 19681972 | 19681972 |  |  | No. | $\begin{aligned} & \% \text { of } \\ & \text { Total U.S } \end{aligned}$ |
| orth East | 30.134 .2 | 19.221 .9 | 63.9 | 25.8 | 122 | 22.6 |
| iorth Central | 33.138 .2 | 22.225 .6 | 67.1 | 30.3 | 145 | 27.0 |
| outh | $36.8 \quad 43.1$ | 19.2 22.1. | 52.0 | 26.4 | 169 | 31.4 |
| lest | 20.324 .2 | 12.414 .8 | 61.3 | 17.5 | 102 | 19.0 |
| (Popular vote shown in millions) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Source of popular vote data: March 1972 Population Estinates and Projections, U.S. Department of Commerce |  |  |  |  |  |  |

3. Voting by Sex*

In 1964, about 2 million more women than men reported casting votes in the Presidential election. In 1968 the number of female voters was about 3 million more than male voters. Based on this, it appears that in 1972 women voters will outnumber male voters again by about 3 million.
4. Voting by Occupation

In 1964 and 1968 just over half of all voters were white collar workers and another third of all voters were manual workers. Service occupations accounted for $10 \%$ of the vote, and farm voters made up the remaining $5 \%$. Although it might be expected that the percentage of farm voters will decline and the voters from service occupations will increase sonewhat, the overall complexion of voters by occupation is unlikely to change substantially in 1972 ("students" are not listed as a census occupation).

* Voting breakonts by sex, age, occupation, education, race and income are based on a U.S. Bureau of Census survey reported in "Voting and Rogistration in the Mlection of November, 1968", Deceryer 2, 1969. These data shov that about $8 \%$ more people Sud they votad than (he Narch 1072 voting report of the 1968
election indicates) actually voted. Accepting this discrepency, the demographic breakouts of voters are still useful for assessing and analyzing the electorate.

5. Voting by Famjily Income

In 1968 approximately $20 \%$ of those who said they voted reported a total fanily annual income of less than $\$ 5,000$. About $40 \%$ reported earning between $\$ 5,000$ and $\$ 10,000$. The remaining $33 \%$ who reported their family incomes placed total earnings at $\$ 10,000$ per year. These figures fluctuated constderably from 1964 reports.
6. Voting by Education

The educational level of American voters is increasing, and may be expected to continue to increase in the 1972 election and beyond.

Educational Level of Voters
Less than high school grad. High school grad. Some or Grad Colleze

| 1964 | $41.3 \%$ | $34.6 \%$ | $23.0 \%$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 1968 | 36.7 | 36.9 | 25.0 |

7. Voting by Age

If Arericans vote in about the same percentage by age group in 1972 as they did in 1968 (and 18-21 year olds vote in the same proportion as 21-24 year olds in the last election), it is esticated that the electorate would divide as follows:

Estimated 1972 Voters by Age

|  | $\frac{18-20}{}$ | $\underline{21-24}$ | $\frac{25-34}{}$ | $\frac{35-54}{}$ | $\underline{55+}$ | Total |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Est. \# of <br> Actua1 <br> Voters | 5.0 | 7.0 | 16.0 | 32.0 | 25.0 | 85.0 |
| $\%$ of <br> Total <br> Voters | $6 \%$ | $8 \%$ | $\ddots$ |  |  |  |

8. Voting by Race

Based on 1964 and 1968 voting patterns, it is anticipated that, of the estimated total 85 million voters, about 78 million, or $92 \%$, will be white and approximately 7 million, or $8 \%$, will be Negro. No data are available on other races.
(See Exhibit 1 for estimated "actual" voting percentages in 1972.)

## III. Voter Attitudes - Perceptions of the Candidates

It is probably impossible to separate voters' views of a candidate's personal attributes and qualifications from voter perceptions of the issues and how a candidate deals with those issues. The voting decision, especially among currently non-comitted voters or those who are ticket splitters, is likely based on a combination of feelings about both the qualities of the candidates and the issues.

Research suggests several things about how voters see the men who are now running for the Presidency:

1. Among those who approve of the way Richard Nixon is handling his job, the major reason given for this approval is the President's qualifications and attributes. This is true for ticket splitters as well as the general electorate, and holds for all sections of the country.

Approve/Disapprove of Way Nixon Is Handling His Job

|  | Approve | Disapprove |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Jan. '72 (Committee) | $54 \%$ | $35 \%$ |
| Jan. '72 (Gallup) | 49 | 39 |
| After China Trip | 56 | 32 |
| (Gallup) |  |  |
| (Total Sample) |  |  |

Thy Do You Approve? (Jan. '72 Committee)
Total Ticket Splitters
Personal quali- $\quad 57 \% \quad 54 \%$
fications and attrjbutes

Ending the war 17
21
Economic policy $8 \quad \therefore 6$
2. Those who disapprove of the President's job performance also cite personal attributes as a major reason. This appears to hold for all sections of the U.S.

## Why Do You Disapprove?

|  | $\frac{\text { Total }}{}$ | Ticket Splitters' |
| :--- | :---: | :---: |
| Personal dislikes | $17 \%$ | $23 \%$ |
| Hasn't kept promises | 14 | 13 |
| Done nothing about the <br> war | 17 | 17 |
| Economic policy | 13 | 13 |

3. Overall, most Americans believe that Richard Nixon is performing about average in comparison to previous Presidents, with voters from metro areas and the East slightly less inclined to rank Nixon as high as other voters.

|  | Total | Ticket Splitters | Metro Areas | East |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Better than average | 16\% | 17\% | 13\% | 12\% |
| About average | 61 | 66 | 59 | 66 |
| Not as good as most | 21 | 16 | 26 | 21 |

4. When asked to briefly describe Richard Nixon as a person, the majority of responses are positive for all sections of the country.

|  | Total | East | Midwest | South | West |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sincere/Honest Integrity | 19\% | 21\% | 15\% | 22\% | 17\% |
| Doing his best/ Dedicated | 5 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| Intelligent/ Swart/yducated | 8 | 7 | 6 | 11 | 8 |
| $\begin{gathered} \text { Strong-xinded } \\ \text { Anorossive } \end{gathered}$ | 8 | 9 | 7 | 8 | 7 |

5. When asked to rate the President and three Democrats separately on a series of descriptive attributes:
a. Nixon emerges with the strongest image on the "professfonal" attributes ("experienced", "trained", "informed", "competent") among all voter segments. His only competition comes from Humphrey, who is rated equally with the President in metro areas.

How Candidates Compare on Four "Professional" Attributes: (Percent of Time Each Candidate First or Second)

|  | Nixon |  | Muskie |  | Hunphrey |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Kennedy |  |  |
| Total Electorate | $100 \%$ |  | $25 \%$ | $75 \%$ | $25 \%$ |
| Ticket Splitters | 100 |  | 25 | 75 | - |
| East | 100 | 25 | 75 | 25 |  |
| Midwest | 100 | 50 | 75 | - |  |
| South | 100 | 50 | 50 | 25 |  |
| West | 100 | 25 | 75 | - |  |
| Metro | 75 | 25 | 75 | 25 |  |
| Non-Metro | 100 | 25 | 75 | - |  |

b. On attributes relating to "trust" ("open-minded", "honest", "just"), Nixon is perceived considerably behind Muskie, except among the important ticket splitter group. Humphrey and Kennedy receive overall ratings comparable to the President, but fall behind among ticket splitters.

How Candirates Compare on Attributes of "Trust"
(Percent of Time Each Candidate First or Second)

|  | Nixon | Muskie | Humphrey | Kennedy |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Total Electorate | $33 \%$ | $100 \%$ | $33 \%$ | $33 \%$ |
| Ticket Splitters | 100 | 100 | - | - |
| East | 33 | 100 | 33 | 33 |
| Midwest | 33 | 100 | - | 66 |
| Snith | 66 | 100 | - | 33 |


|  | Nixon | Muskie | Humphrey | Kennedy |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| West | 33\% | 33\% | 33\% | 33\% |
| Metro | - | 100 | 33 | 33 |
| Non-Metro | 100 | 66 | - | 33 |

Another indication of this public perception of "trust" is seen in responses to questioning about the information which the Nixon Administration releases to the public. About half of the total group surveyed believes that the administration "tries to make things more favorable than they really are." A quarter of the respondents feel that information is "held back or slanted". Only $19 \%$ believe that the administration is "always frank and truthful".
c. In the area of "personal" qualities ("warm", "extroverted", "frank", "sense of hurnor", "relaxed"), the President is viewed far less favorably than any of the three Democrats. In addition, Edmurd Muskie, probably because he is not as well known, is scen by virtually all voter groups as less personable than either Humphrey or Kennedy.

How Candidates Compare on Five "Personal" Attributes:
(Percent of Time Each Candidate First or Second)

|  | Nixon |  | Muskie |  | Humphrey |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Kennedy |  |  |
| Total Electorate | $-\%$ | $20 \%$ | $80 \%$ | $80 \%$ |  |
| Ticket Splitters | - | 20 | 100 | 80 |  |
| East | - | 40 | 100 | 80 |  |
| Midwest | - | 40 | 100 | 80 |  |
| South | - | 60 | 80 | 60 |  |
| West | - | 60 | 60 | 80 |  |
| Metro | - | 20 | 80 | 80 |  |
| Non-Metro | 20 | 20 | 100 | 40 |  |

(Sce Exhibit 2 for rankings on each attribute. The attributes shom above in categoties of "professional", "trust" and "personal" were

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## IV. Voter Attitudes - The Issues

Based primarily on research conducted in January, 1972, voter attitudes on fssues are as follows:

1. Vietnam - The war in Vietnam was viewed as the single most important and the second most important issue facing the United States today. Also, when asked specifically about the war, $82 \%$ of all voters queried said that Vietnam is an important problem to them. When asked which issue would be most important in voting for a President, total respondents and all sectional groups except the South cited Vietnam as the most important voting issue.

The war appears to be seen as both a positive and negative factor for the Nixon Administration. The President's performance on the war is listed first as both the major accomplishment of the Nixon Administration and also as the major failure.

With the relatively low level of American troops currently in Vietnam, and the troop withdrawel continuing, it will be necessary to measure voter perceptions repeatedly over the next half year to determine whether the war issue remains as important as the January, 1972 study indicates.
2. The Economy - This issue was listed after Victnam as the most important problem facing the U.S. Inflation is regarded as an fimportant personal problem to $82 \%$ of total voters, and taxes, which may be indirectly related to economic conditions in voters' minds, are viewed as an important personal problem by $74 \%$ of the total sample.

Generally, the President's performance on economic issues receives positive ratings from the majority of voters, with the lowest overall ratings coming from voters residing in metro areas and the East.

VOTER RATINGS OF NIXON PERFORMANCE - ECONOMY

|  | ECONOMIC COMDITIONS |  | INFLATION |  | TAXES |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Approve | Discpprove | approve | disapprove | approve | disapprove |
| Total: | 49\% | 38\% | 64\% | 33\% | 56\% | 40\% |
| Ticket Splitters | s 55 | 31 | 72 | 25 | 58 | 37 |
| East | 46 | 41 | 62 | 35 | 48 | 48 |
| Midwest | 52 | 36 | 67 | 29 | 56 | 40 |
| South | 47 | 39 | 62 | 35 | 60 | 36 |
| West | 53 | 34 | 66 | 32 | 56 | 38 |
| tro | 44 | 44 | 57 | 41 | 51 | 46 |
| Non-netro | 52 | 33 | 65 | 33 | 58 | 38 |

3. Unemployment - This issue is rated behind Vietnam and the Economy as the most important problem facing the country today, although in non-metro areas and in the South umemployment receives less emphasis than elsewhere. The problem is most acute in metro areas, where $81 \%$ of those surveyed rate unemployment as a serious personal problem.

Unemployment should be anticipated as an issue which the opposition will attack heavily, since it is here that the President receives low ratings for performance.

## HOW WELL IS NIXON HANDLING UNEMPLOYMENT

| -’ | Total Voter | S Ticket Splitters | East | Midwest | South | West |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Positive | 42 | 43 | 36 | 41 | 48 | 42 |
| Negative | 54 | 52 | 60 | 55 | 46 | 54 |
|  | Metro | Non-Metro |  |  |  |  |
| Positive | 34 | 50 |  |  |  |  |
| Negative | 64 | 46 |  |  |  |  |

4. Crime and Drugs - Both these issues rate lower than the war and the pocketbook issues of the economy and unemployment as the single and second most important problems facing the nation today. However, when asked to respond to specific problems in personal terms, crime and drugs rank above all other issues.

In addition, voters tend to rate the President low on his handing of the drug problem and are about evenly split in rating his performance on dealing with crime.

## HOW WELL NIXON IS HANDLING DRUGS/CRIME


5. Other Issues - Race relations are cited by voters, especially among ticket splitters and those residing in the East, Midwest, and South as one of the second most important U.S. problems. At the same time, a majority of American voters from all sections of the country believe that "treatment of Blacks is improving under Nixon". *

* The sample size of the survey does not permit a breal:out of attitudes atmong Black voters.

The environment is not listed by voters as one of the nation's most important problems, but $74 \%$ of respondents later said that enviromental pollution was an important personal problem. In addition, $65 \%$ of all voters sampled would pay higher taxes if the money were used to clean up the environment. Only $20 \%$ disagreed with this proposal. Westerners and metro area residents are most in accord with this concept.

Bussing is not cited in this research as a significant issue, probably because the study was completed before the Florida prinary and other events brought this issue to the front. The research does confirm, however, that three out of four voters are in favor of integrated schools, but against bussing as a means of integration.

Surprisingly, "general unrest" is considered to be a concern which ranks behind only Vietnam and inflation as the issue most important in selecting a President. The issue does not surface among voters' lists of important problems facing the nation today, and therefore may be the reflection of the national concern over the social disruptions of the late 60's. Another possibility is that "general unrest" is indicative of an unarticulated, broad feeling of dissatisfaction with current conditions in the U.S. - the same area that Wallace, and now other Democrats, are attacking with their "populist" approaches.
(See Exhibit 3 for full information on issues.)
V. Voter Attitudes - Trial Heat Indications

There appear to be no available data on correlating trial heat trends in presidential election years with actual voting performance. Therefore, the value of trial heat trends at various stages in an election year as a predictor of election results is unknown. However, trial heats do appear useful as:
a. Indications of general voter attitudes towards the candidates,
b. Reflections of voter response to events, such as a Presidential action, a primary result, or some outside influence,
c. A tracking of the opposition.

Reliable trial heat data on a national basis are currently unavailable from Comaittee research. Published trial heats from Gallup, Harris, etc. are being compiled for the November Group's competitive analysis.

Briefly, here is where the President stands vs. potential Democratic contenders, as shown in most recent public polls:

Three Way Race

|  | Nixon | Muskie | Wallace | Not Sure |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 3/72 Harris | 47\% | 35\% | 12\% | 6\% |
| 2/72 Harris | 44 | 40 | 11 | 5 |
| 2/72 Gallup | 43 | 42 | 10 | 5 |
|  | Nixon | Humphrey | Wallace | Not Sure |
| 3/72 Earris | 48\% | 35\% | 12\% | 5\% |
| 2/72 Harris | 47 | 36 | 12 | 5 |
| 2/72 Gallup | 46 | 39 | 10 | 5 |
|  | Nixon | Kennedy | Wallace | Not Sure |
| 2/72 Gallup | 47\% | 39\% | 9\% | 5\% |
| 11/71 Gallup | 44 | 41 | 10 | 5 |
|  | Nixon | McGovern | Wallace | Not Sure |
| 2/72 Gallup | 49\% | 34\% | 11\% | 6\% |
| 11/71 Gallup | 49 | 33 | 12 | 6 |

Two Way Race

## Nixon Muskie Not Sure

2/72 Harris $47 \% \quad 45 \% \quad 8 \%$


TOTAL ELECTORATE: 85 MILLION


OCCUPATION


RACE


AGL


## RANXINGS ON ATRRIEUTES

Exhbit 2

Rankings on attributes



[^0]:    -1...- - - - mannio of matrame nf rocinonse clusters.

