


THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Sunday - July 23, 1972  
Camp David

MEMORANDUM FOR BOB HALDEMAN

FROM THE PRESIDENT 

In studying the New York Times release of the Gallup Poll on youth one lesson comes through loud and clear -- it is imperative that we limit our registration efforts wherever possible, without announcing that that is our tactic, to the non-college youth. Of course, some registration of college youth on a very selective basis should be undertaken, but generally speaking we have to realize that there is about a two to one chance that college youth will vote for McGovern. There is about an even chance that the non-college youth will vote for us.

If a youth registration drive begins, pushed by the McGovern forces, every effort should be made to get them to direct that drive to non-college as well as to college youth. I know that our plan is to register youth selectively by finding out in advance which side they are on and then going forward in the registration. Here it is very important that the question asked not be on partisan terms. Over half of all youth list themselves as Independents rather than Republicans or Democrats. Consequently, it should simply be a question of asking whether they are for McGovern or Nixon and then registering those that are for Nixon.

Of course, it could be argued that the registration drive among youth, even non-college youth, is not one that we should undertake at all, since at the very best they would split 50-50. This is much poorer than the national average and much poorer than what we would do among older voters. However, to avoid the effect on older voters of our conceding the youth vote to McGovern, we need to make some effort in this area. Let us limit it to the target states, particularly

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the big city areas and the down-state areas where we might pick up support and except for a token effort let us concentrate on non-college, blue collar youth, among ethnics and, of course, among those few that might lean to our side because of their background in a Republican family.

I emphasize again that the whole youth effort should be one that gets across the idea that youth will not overwhelmingly be in McGovern's pocket, that we have in the nation very substantial support among younger voters and that we are going to get more as they learn what the issues are. In fact, something can be gained by pointing out that we are concentrating on registering all youth and that the McGovern people are limiting themselves to the elite youth who have gone to college or are in colleges and universities.