

Richard Nixon Presidential Library
Contested Materials Collection
Folder List

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>	<u>Document Date</u>	<u>No Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Document Type</u>	<u>Document Description</u>
49	45	12/9/1970	<input type="checkbox"/>	Campaign	Memo	From Colson/Finch to Haldeman RE: 18 year old vote in 1972. 6 pgs.

DOCUMENT WITHDRAWAL RECORD [NIXON PROJECT]

DOCUMENT NUMBER	DOCUMENT TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE OR CORRESPONDENTS	DATE	RESTRICTION
N1 [126]	MEMO	From Finch & Cabson to Haldeman Re: 18 year old vote in 1972	12/9/70	C (NIXON)
N2 [127]	MEMO	From Cole to Campbell Re: Unsigned memo for R	3/9/70	C (NIXON)
N3 [128]	MEMO	From Butterfield to R N Re: VIPs at White House Worship Services	3/24/70	C (NIXON)
N4 [129]	MEMO	From Stein-Semino to unk. Re: Next steps in Anti- Inflationary Policy	3/24/71	

FILE GROUP TITLE

PDF

BOX NUMBER

10

FOLDER TITLE

President's Handwriting March 16-31, 1971

RESTRICTION CODES

- A. Release would violate a Federal statute or Agency Policy.
- B. National security classified information.
- C. Pending or approved claim that release would violate an individual's rights.
- D. Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy or a libel of a living person.

- E. Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information.
- F. Release would disclose investigatory information compiled for law enforcement purposes.
- G. Withdrawn and return private and personal material.
- H. Withdrawn and returned non-historical material.

Presidential Materials Review Board

Review on Contested Documents

Collection: President's Office Files

Box Number: 10

Folder: President's Handwriting March 16 thru 31, 1971

<u>Document</u>	<u>Disposition</u>	
126	Return	Private/Political
127	Retain	Open
128	Retain	Open
129	Retain	Open

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 9, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: H. R. HALDEMAN

FROM: ROBERT FINCH
CHARLES COLSON

SUBJECT: 18 year old vote in 1972

Before any effort can be made to organize what in 1972 will be the 18-21 year old vote, we need a much better understanding than we have now of the concerns and attitudes of what is today the 16 to 19 year old.

There have been many attempts to analyze the youth problem. While there are scores of theories on the subject, there is unanimity on only one thing: that each age bracket is very different. The things which affected college freshmen three years ago are completely different than things which affect college freshmen today. In short, it is very difficult to draw conclusions on last year's experience and even riskier to project what may lie ahead a year hence.

It is obvious, however, that this is and will continue to be a highly volatile, very emotional group. What is significant about the latest Harris survey is not that we do poorly with the kids (which we might expect) but rather that we declined so dramatically between September and November. Against Muskie we were 50% better off in September than we are today and were 100% better off against Humphrey. Interestingly, two years ago, Humphrey did very badly in this group which merely underscores its volatility.

We have talked with Harris about the underlying data for his latest poll. While he is totally unreliable (and his poll concentrates on the student group), some of his points are worthy of note. Harris believes that all kids tend to identify with each other; they stick together. More than any other previous generation, they resent being talked down to by their elders; hence, it is almost impossible to attack one without attacking all. In Harris' view when we even refer to the violent radicals, even the moderates take some offense. The wide spread belief among youth is that the President and, even more so, the Vice President are hostile to them.

Harris believes that prior to this campaign we were doing relatively well with the 18-20 year old vote. We were credited with ending the war, reforming the draft and our credibility was fairly good. The feeling developed in the campaign that we were "exploiting" student dissent, using the student issue for political gain and scolding the youth. This in Harris' view caused the dramatic shift downward.

He believes that the single most important issue with this age group is credibility. Humphrey was badly hurt by the credibility gap of the Johnson Administration and we, in turn, benefited during the first 18 months of this Administration. This is now, however, shifting on to us -- in part a natural consequence of being in power -- in part, a result of the campaign.

It is significant in analyzing the underlying poll data that Muskie's strength and Humphrey's results largely from the kids being against us. Neither one spark any genuine enthusiasm. Kennedy's support, however, is very strong and enthusiastic. He identifies very well with youth.

The conventional pollster wisdom has been that young people follow parental voting patterns; this is still somewhat valid but much less so than ever before. There is increasing independence and in many instances defiance and rebellion against parental behavior patterns.

The following ideas should be explored. Some are obviously desirable; other may well run counter to other more important political objectives. It is clear that we must walk a very fine line in appealing to this age group. Overplaying our hand could damage our support with large voting blocks which are resentful of students and student dissent.

1. Attitude of the President and the Administration. Al Capp who has spent a great deal of time on college campuses (he is about as hard line on the issue as anyone) believes that we have created the impression of rejecting the younger generation. This is something that a Capp, of course, can get away with but a President cannot. His view is that we should talk about what is good about this generation, speaking to the kids ostensibly but really appealing to their parents. We should talk about the extremists with sadness, not contempt. We should never attack their peculiar life styles and habits. For example, we should not talk about "long haired, shabbily dressed, bomb throwers" -- while most kids don't regard themselves as bomb throwers, a lot of modern youth like to dress shabbily and have long hair. They do not make the critical distinctions. They might identify with the long haired bomb thrower but not a bomb thrower with a crew cut.

Secondly, we must show that we do care and are concerned about those things which concern youth. (Harris and others believe that this is the single most critical ingredient -- that the youth not feel that they are being "written off" -- that they feel that their viewpoints are being listened to.) An obvious thought in this area would be for the President to speak very pointedly to youth in an appropriate forum early in the coming year on a subject or combination of subjects near and dear to their hearts -- elimination of the draft, ending of the war, ecology, the racial question (Harris says it is one of the biggest issues) and the right of dissent.

The biggest political fallout will not be with the kids but with middle America parents who are concerned about the future of their children -- witness the fact that throughout the campaign the President got his greatest response to his uplifting theme that the vast majority of kids are good and are going to be responsible leaders. Speeches -- what we say generally -- aren't going to change many attitudes unless they are coupled with other positive steps that can be taken. This is so because of the point which follows.

2. Protect against a credibility gap. This is obviously of importance broadly speaking but of special impact on youth who are much more sensitive to this issue than even adults. Youth tend to think that we are kidding them even when we aren't; hence, if we get caught in a credibility squeeze, it would merely prove what we are thinking anyway. What we do must not appear to be contrived or merely political.
3. Counter the myth of anti-intellectualism in this Administration.
 - a. the White House lecture series is an excellent start
 - b. we might consider a dinner for academicians (as we did with labor)
 - c. have the President personally make greater use of the contemporary works of respected intellectuals in mailings and speeches (not just the Sidney Hook kind of thing but more diverse kinds of material as well)
4. The Vice President's image is one that requires repair with youth. His rhetoric, much more than the President's is resented -- rightly or wrongly. As various changes come to pass in the Administration in the normal course, some appointments should be looked at with a view to their impact on youth. There are certain Administration officials who have a particular symbolic impact on youth -- FBI Director Hoover is an obvious illustration.

5. We need a much more active speaking program. Youthful, attractive Administration speakers should seek campus youth forums -- not to talk about foreign policy, except to point out that we are ending the war, but rather to talk about those domestic issues as to which we have done a vastly better job than most young people think we have. Finch and Rumsfeld are two prime candidates for this kind of assignment but we can also use lesser figures much more than we have. Stanley Thomas at HEW is an extremely articulate black; Ray Price in the White House comes through very well. We need a good inventory for use in this area. Someone should have the assignment of organizing a major speaking effort, employing our best resources. This should not be directed simply to the campuses. There are countless other youth forums which, in many respects, are even better -- Future Farmers of America, Junior Achievement, 4H and youth opportunity groups which reach both the non-student sector as well as the more moderate students.

6. The White House youth office apparently did not succeed; it was basically a one-to-one effort which is simply unmanageable and unproductive. We might consider bringing into the White House a coordinator for these activities (not a youth office). He could manage the speaking program in (5) above, maintain active liaison with youth groups, program the efforts of a Charles Stephens, for example, and oversee political organizing activities as described above.

7. We need to develop better materials on issues of interest to youth and then see that they are widely disseminated on campuses and to other groups. This could be another function of a youth office. Some of the topics might be governmental reform (kids are turned off by government because they haven't learned enough about it and because they believe that it does not respond to the problems they think are important); obviously, the 18 year old vote (why not take credit for it, if we are stuck with it); draft reform, the all-volunteer army, the generation of peace and ecology are very saleable issues.

8. Young people tend to identify with individuals much more than with political parties but it is wrong to assume that they cannot be sold a philosophy. They are very idealistic. When you really think about it, we have a much better case on philosophical grounds than do the Democrats; hence, a very well written paper about some of the basic principles of Republicanism could have great appeal to youth. We stand for the individual, his ability to meet his own responsibilities, determine his own future, individual rights and the protection of individual liberties as against the dominance of "repressive" big government. This is something that has not been done in a long while; it could not be just

another propaganda piece filled with political platitudes. We should commission a very respected Republican intellectual to write it, or perhaps a series of papers on New Federalism. This could be widely circulated on campuses. If nothing else, it would give our troops something to rally around and at least make the moderates think.

9. The most difficult task of all will be to put together a nationwide Nixon organization. If LeTendre does well in recruiting key men types around the country, one of the tasks the key men could be assigned would be recruiting teenagers in their communities. It is very difficult to get a handle on this until the campaign organization is structured. The big man on campus today may be nothing next year.

The only feasible way to do this is on a community to community, campus to campus basis. It would fit perfectly into a citizens-type operation. One of the targets of a citizens committee recruitment program would be teenagers, making this a special assignment of each citizens committee in each locality. We should, perhaps, have LeTendre's men and also our party organization start submitting names in 1971 of promising teenagers who would then be put on a master mailing list to begin receiving materials from us from time to time and later be recruited as part of the citizens effort.

10. On the domestic policy front, we should consider whether the all-volunteer army can be made a serious and major Administration objective in 1971 and 1972. As noted above, this one is right on target.
11. Another issue of great concern to youth is ecology. We have an excellent vehicle available both substantively and from an organizational standpoint in the Environmental Education Act which the President signed last month. An analysis of the Act is attached as Tab A. The administration of this is under the Commissioner of Education but if the following idea has merit, we should seek to get control of it at once.

There is a \$5 million kitty in fiscal 1971. The authorization reaches \$25 million in fiscal 1973. Many of us recommended that the bill be vetoed because it appears to be a real boondoggle -- just another Federal handout program which would probably have very little measurable impact.

It provides for such things as developing curricula relating to the environment, training of teachers, business and labor, setting up ecology study centers, distribution of material to the mass media and grants to non-profit organizations.

*H. G. Whitaker et al can't sell it
mortgage?*

Blatant
News?
Not inconsistent with the purposes of the Act, we could use this to create an Ecology Corps, something akin on a very modest scale to the Peace Corps. Teenagers (basically high school students) would "join" the corps for a combination of education and on the job training. Anyone "joining" would be required to spend a certain number of hours each month both in courses and, for example, in neighborhood clean-up projects. At the end of six months the student would receive a certificate evidencing his successful service; this might be signed by Richardson. Competitions could be arranged with Presidential citations for particularly effective accomplishments. Teenagers who made outstanding contributions could from time to time be invited to the White House for personal presentations of their certificates. All of this could be promoted through individual school systems, which would readily cooperate.

This idea could be greatly expanded upon and the modest expense involved, very legitimately, funded out of the Environmental Education Act. One of its virtues is that it could be implemented almost immediately and be in full operation by next fall. If we had a real organizer running this program at HEW -- our man -- it could become a very effective political tool. It would demonstrate to teenagers that Government can accomplish something and that we want their help. They would earn recognition by working. It would identify the President with an issue of great appeal to youth. It would probably help us recruit teenagers for other political activities and it would spread the Presidential Seal around to a lot of schools and communities. If this has merit, it should be pursued very quickly.

12. We should and will encourage youth programs on the part of other organizations that are sympathetic to us, the American Legion essay contest, for example. We are trying to get Freedoms Foundation involved in basic patriotism education at the high school level. We have some similar ideas circulating with the Jaycee's which will be a project that LeTendre will assume. Other veterans groups could take on similar projects. The Future Farmers of America already have a very good program in this area which has had Presidential recognition each year.