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# THE TARRANCE GROUP

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: ED GOEAS

DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 2009

RE: FINDING OUR BEARINGS: THOUGHTS ON YESTERDAY'S ELECTIONS

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While voters were still going to the polls yesterday, the Democratic damage-control machine was already in full swing. The Democrats' key argument is that yesterday's elections represent absolutely nothing in the grand scheme of things, most of all they were certainly not a referendum on Obama. If anything, they continue, the elections represent troubling signs for a Republican party about to lose control to a conservative grassroots rebellion. They would have us believe that Republicans, in winning, have in fact lost.

If journalists print this spin with a straight face, then they will also have to report that up is down, black is white, and the Redskins will win the Superbowl this season. I would like to dispel the Democratic myths of the 2009 elections, and submit four points for consideration:

**While today's elections were not a referendum on President Obama as a person, they are a repudiation of the Democrat big-spending and big-government agenda being foisted upon voters.**

This is supported by more than the election results. A CNN poll released on Election Day showed that while voters still approve of him personally, the President's approval rating on handling the Federal budget deficit is down to just thirty-nine percent (39%). Furthermore, his approval ratings on the economy and health care are both net negative as well. On the three issues most important to Americans today, more voters disapprove than approve of the job the President Obama is doing. Voters are not rejecting a man, they are rejecting the actions that are driving our country farther into debt, while not creating jobs.

**The electorate has not fundamentally evolved as some predicted following the 2008 election.**

In 2008, several pollsters, political consultants and pundits bought the hype and announced that the voting electorate in the United States was undergoing a sea change. As a result, polling and turnout predictions were being based on assumptions rather than historical trends. In reality, overall turnout of voting age population increased by only two-tenths of one percent from 2004 to 2008. Similarly in 2009, several assumptions were made based on the same assumptions of 2008, relying heavily on youth and minority turnout. In the Virginia gubernatorial race, total votes cast was roughly the same from 2005 to 2009. In the New Jersey gubernatorial race, total votes cast grew by approximately 100,000 (2.2 million in 2005 to 2.3 million in 2009), but there is no evidence of a drastically different electorate than four years earlier.

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As yesterday indicated, a new electorate is not emerging, but the intensity among Republican voters is running much stronger than that of Democrat voters. Also, Independents have swung in the Republican direction (voting by almost a two to one margin for the Republican gubernatorial candidates in New Jersey and Virginia).

**The so-named "Civil War" within the Republican Party is a minor skirmish compared to the struggle for cohesion in the Democratic majority in Congress**

From health care, to cap-and-trade, to a second 'stimulus', and so on, voters are getting the message that despite having handed Democrats all the keys to government in 2008, the party is being pulled in different directions and faces significant defections on their key issues. It is problematic for them that Democrats in Congress are not focused enough to count all of their key issues on one hand. In addition, the "Blue Dog" conservative Democrats, who were primarily elected by Tea Party swing voters back home, are being pressured by the liberal leadership in Washington. Despite increasingly louder declarations of independence, few Blue Dogs will be able to disaffiliate from their first vote cast in 2009 for Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

**The conservative resurgence, including the Tea Party movement, is an energizing force for Republicans who live by fundamental fiscally conservative principles.**

Republicans who draw a line in the sand against the growth of big government will find that a motivated majority of the electorate stand with them. In a national survey of voters conducted for GOPAC almost exactly one year ago, forty-six percent (46%) of voters identified themselves as conservative on both fiscal and social issues, while another twenty-three percent (23%) said they were fiscal conservatives. While sixty-nine percent (69%) of the electorate are fiscally conservative and sixty-eight percent (68%) said government is part of the problem, Republicans must continue to earn voters' trust, as another sixty-eight percent (68%) said the Republican party had not fought as strongly for less government as historically. *The full analysis from November 2008 poll, for those who have not seen it, can be found here: <http://www.tarrance.com/GOPAC%20Post-Elect%20Analysis.pdf>*

One year out from the 2010 Elections, it is foolish to hazard a guess on the number of seats that will be won or lost on each side. However, we know that today Republicans won, and regardless of what anyone might say, our principles and our Party are stronger for it.

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