MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: NO LABELS

DATE: OCT. 30, 2023

RE: TRUMP/BIDEN CAMPAIGNS ARE A HOUSE OF CARDS

For months, D.C. elites have been sowing fear and doubt about the No Labels effort to get on the ballot in 2024.

An unprecedented share of voters is seeking an alternative to Donald Trump and Joe Biden in 2024, but D.C. elites keep pushing a different narrative that:

- An independent can’t win; and
- It can only “spoil” the election in favor of Trump because he has a hardcore base that will never abandon him, while support for Biden is soft.

In fact, an independent presidential candidate has a chance to win the support of as much as three in five American voters.

Here’s why the opening is so big, and the critics of the No Labels effort are so wrong:

1) Trump’s Hardcore Base is Small, Representing Only 18 Percent of the Overall Electorate.

Trump does indeed have an unshakeable base – the people Trump infamously said would still vote for him if he shot somebody “in the middle of Fifth Avenue.”

But No Labels’ opponents claim Trump’s base is 40 percent to 45 percent of the general electorate.

Not even close. Only half of Republicans have a “very favorable” view of Trump; and in the 2024 general election, Republicans will – at most – represent 36 percent of the electorate (based on 2020 exit poll data).

Half of 36 percent is 18 percent. This is Trump’s hardcore base. Given that 158 million Americans voted in the 2020 election, we can expect just over 28 million voters to be with Trump no matter what.
2) Biden’s Hardcore Base is Small Too, Representing Only About 14 Percent of the Electorate.

Only 39 percent of Democrats “strongly approve” of President Biden’s performance as president, and Democrats will – at most – represent about 37 percent of the overall electorate in 2024.

Thirty-nine percent of 37 percent is 14 percent. This is Biden’s hardcore base, which represents about 23 million voters.

So, let’s do a final tally. An estimated 18 percent of American voters are hardcore Trump supporters. Another 14 percent are hardcore Biden supporters. And another 10 percent of independents say they like Trump or Biden.

It all adds up to a historic opportunity for a No Labels Unity ticket in 2024.

3) The Biggest Risk Factor for Another Trump Presidency May Be Joe Biden’s Candidacy.

If the D.C. elites overstate the size of the hardcore Trump base, they radically understate Trump’s ability to beat Biden in a head-to-head matchup. They say President Biden will beat Trump because we can assume 55 percent to 60 percent of the electorate will not vote for Trump under any circumstances and will stick with Biden so long as there is no independent in the race to siphon votes from Biden.

Consider:
• In the latest RealClearPolitics national polling average, Trump leads Biden by 44.8 percent to 44.1 percent.
  
  o The picture for Biden is much worse in swing states. A recent Bloomberg News and Morning Consult poll shows Trump winning five of the top seven swing states. It also shows “voters in those states favor Trump over Biden on the economy by a 14-point margin.”

• No incumbent president since Harry Truman has won reelection with an approval rating under 40 percent. Joe Biden’s current Gallup approval rating is 40.8 percent, and last year it dipped under 37 percent.

4) Independents Always Break Away from Presidential Incumbents

There have been four presidential elections since 1996 with an incumbent on the ballot. The incumbent lost independent voters every time. Pick any national poll released in the last two months and Trump is clearly winning independents, in some cases by a wide margin.

That’s bad news for Biden, but it isn’t necessarily good news for Trump if a No Labels ticket is in the race in 2024 because Trump is beating Biden among independents in a head-to-head matchup.

In a multi-candidate race, many independents could ultimately view Trump like an incumbent since they already have lived through his presidency.

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Since late 2021, No Labels has polled over 60,000 registered voters to understand the dynamics of the 2024 race, and we’ve regularly compared our results to other publicly available data.

Three fundamental findings have remained consistent over time:

• The national mood is dark, and the public has rarely been this pessimistic about the future of our country, the direction of our economy and the ability of our current leaders to right the ship of state.

• Two thirds of all voters don’t want a rematch of the 2020 election.

• Americans are more open to an independent presidential candidate now than ever before. In fact, since No Labels began polling and modeling this race in December 2021, the universe of voters who are open to a No Labels presidential ticket has grown by 18 percent.
Both Joe Biden and Donald Trump have profound vulnerabilities that likely will not get better with time. Their respective campaigns are a house of cards that could be tipped over by a compelling independent alternative in 2024.

Despite this accumulating evidence that an independent presidential candidate could get traction in 2024, much of Washington still hasn’t caught up to where the voters are. They assume this next election will unfold much like previous ones, even though it has never been clearer that Americans are open to an independent ticket and that America needs a fundamental reset of our politics.

They also assume an independent ticket could only benefit Trump’s candidacy, ignoring the simple fact that whoever ends up on a No Labels ticket would be the biggest determinant of where they would draw votes from. In fact, we’ve already seen evidence of how different flavors of independents could have different impacts on the race. The only named alternatives to Trump and Biden are currently Cornel West and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., and the recent USA Today/Suffolk University poll shows Kennedy’s presence in the race “costs Trump a narrow lead.”

So, anyone who makes the claim that a No Labels ticket would indisputably “spoil” the election in one party’s favor is just throwing things against the wall.

There’s a lot of uncertainty about what’s ahead but we can be certain most Americans want something better in 2024 than they are likely to get from the major party presidential nominees.

We can also be certain that, in the five months to come until No Labels offers its ballot line to a ticket, our opponents will continue to mislead the public about our intentions and try to downplay the growing enthusiasm for a No Labels ticket.

Given Americans’ growing divisions at home and the growing danger abroad, the 2024 election needs to offer voters something better than a year-long slog, with both Trump and Biden painting apocalyptic visions of what happens to America if the other side wins.

We’ve got to get out of that cycle, and that begins with ensuring Americans have a choice to vote for a No Labels Unity ticket in 2024, if that’s what they want and the moment demands.

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