



MEMORANDUM

CELINDA C. LAKE
President

To: Interested Parties

ALYSIA R. SNELL
Partner

From: Celinda Lake; David Mermin; Rick Johnson
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Subject: Findings from a survey of registered voters

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Date: September 25, 2007

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Research conducted by Lake Research Partners¹ on behalf of Change to Win (CTW) indicates that **voters are increasingly anxious about the chances for them and for their children to achieve the American Dream.** As voters see it, the American Dream consists of four key cornerstones: a job with pay good enough to support a family, quality health care that is dependable and affordable, opportunities for your children to succeed, and a secure and dignified retirement. **These are the core issues of an emerging progressive majority that will have a profound effect on the 2008 elections. In a significant shift from the politics of the last two decades, voters see a strong role for government, particularly the next president, to take action to ensure the survival of the American Dream.** Another key finding of this poll is that **voters see a significant role for unions and believe that workers joining together is an effective way to keep the American Dream alive.**

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Vice President

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Chief Financial Officer

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Chief Operating Officer

- **By a large margin, voters think the economy in this country is headed on the wrong track.** When asked, sixty-one percent of registered voters said the economy was “pretty seriously off on the wrong track,” with only 31% saying the economy was “going in the right direction.” We see very similar numbers among swing voters² with 59% of these voters saying the economy is headed on the wrong track.
- **The American Dream consists of four cornerstone issues: jobs with pay that can support a family, access to quality health care, chances for your children to succeed, and a secure and dignified retirement.** When asked to rate from 0 to 10 how important several issues are to achieving the American Dream, the

¹ Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey that was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers between September 6th and September 20th. The Random Digit Dialing (RDD) survey reached a total of 800 registered voters. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.5%.

² Swing voters are defined as voters who do not identify themselves as strong Democrats or strong Republicans.

leading issue was “having a job that pays enough to support a family,” with a mean rating of 9.5 and 78% of respondents rating it a 10. The next three cornerstone issues were “having affordable quality health care that you can depend on” (mean 9.3, 73% rate 10), “being able to ensure your children have the opportunity to succeed” (mean 9.3, 73% rate 10), and “having a secure and dignified retirement” (mean 9.3, 71% rate 10).

- **Unfortunately, voters see the American Dream getting harder and harder to reach, and they worry that their children will be worse off.** When asked if the American Dream is becoming easier or harder these days to achieve, seventy percent of voters say it is getting harder to achieve, and only 8% say it is getting easier, with 21% saying it is the same. When asked about the next generation, only 9% of voters say it will be easier, with only 7% of swing voters agreeing that it will be easier for the next generation to achieve the American Dream.
- **When asked what is making the American Dream more difficult to achieve, voters point the finger at greedy corporations and a government that is serving the interests of powerful CEOs instead of the interests of ordinary people.** When voters were asked to rate reasons the American Dream is becoming harder to achieve on a 0 to 10 scale, the highest ranked reason was “corporations are breaking their promises to their workers by cutting health care and retirement benefits,” which was rated 10 by 52% of voters and received a mean rating of 8.4. That was followed by corporations wielding too much influence with the government (mean of 8.4, 51% rate 10), and outsourcing that has moved millions of good-paying, middle class jobs overseas (mean of 8.2, 51% rate 10).
- **Voters also believe that big corporations and CEOs have more influence on presidential elections than working people** (69%, 60% “a lot” more influence). Swing voters especially believe this is the case, with 73% believing corporations and CEOs have more influence (63% “a lot” more). Because of this, a majority of voters believe that the government policies of the past seven years have actually made it harder to achieve the American Dream (57% harder to 15% easier), and 91% want the 2008 elections to bring a change from the policies of the last seven years.
- **Voters are mixed about whether any of the candidates running for president are addressing the issues of the American Dream.** Swing voters are especially mixed, with a plurality of 39% not seeing either party really addressing the issues they care about. Democrats do have an advantage over Republicans with swing voters (33% to 13%) and all registered voters (40% to 18%), but there are still a significant number of voters who are up for grabs.
- **Despite their anxiety over the present and future, voters see the next president as key to restoring the American Dream. They also see a prominent role for unions fighting on behalf of working people.** A substantial majority of voters (66%) agree that the next president can make “a lot” or “some” difference in creating an America where every family can achieve the American Dream. Voters also believe it is very important that the next president support the right of workers to organize, with 86% agreeing (61% strongly) that “the next president needs to support the right of working Americans to freely join a union if they want.”
- **Indeed, when asked if labor unions could help in restoring the key foundations of the American Dream, voters state by huge margins that unions can be helpful.** Ninety-five

percent of voters believe that unions can help workers with the number one American Dream issue, having “a job that pays enough to support a family” (73% definitely help), and the same number believe that unions can help workers to have “a secure and dignified retirement.” Voters rate the helpfulness of unions at 90% or above for all four of the core American Dream issues.