Preliminary Findings and Brief Summary: Battleground State Poll on President Trump's Coronavirus Response and the Economy

ALG Research for CAP Action, June 19-24, 952 likely general election voters in AZ, FL, MI, MN, NC, NH, NV, PA, WI

The survey, completed by ALG Research, finds battleground state voters have deep concerns about President Trump's response to the coronavirus pandemic and significant concerns about who benefits under Trump's economy--both before the crisis and as part of the recovery.

Trump's overall approval in this poll is slightly more favorable than other public polls, though he remains significantly under water (-9). The head-to-head match-up found 49% of voters committed to or leaning toward Vice President Joe Biden, and 44% total for President Trump.

Overarching Views on Trump
Across the full survey, voters' chiefs concerns with Trump are:

1) That he cares more about the wealthy and big corporations than small businesses and working people. His signature tax law and ongoing attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act remain powerful proof points for this argument.

2) That his reckless actions create chaos and make it harder to solve problems, including addressing the current pandemic. That he ignored numerous warnings from public health experts about the virus, including more than a dozen in his daily intelligence briefings, that his coronavirus tasked force has stopped meeting regularly, and that he still has no plan for containing this crisis are very effective proof points to support this critique.

Amongst voters who have mixed feelings on President Trump, that he "cares more about the wealthy and big corporations" and that he is "creating chaos and making problems worse" represent the biggest two concerns about him.

Voters View Trump's Handling of the Pandemic as a Complete Failure
The data is crystal clear that voters have negative views of Trump's handling of the pandemic. His approval rating on the coronavirus crisis matches his overall approval (43-56), and voters have deeply negative views on key dimensions of the issue:

- 60% agree that "Trump's response to the coronavirus has cost lives"
- 59% agree that "Trump's response to the coronavirus has made the health crisis worse"
- 57% agree that "Trump's response to the coronavirus has made the national economy worse"
- 55% agree that "Trump has no plan to deal with the coronavirus pandemic"

Negative messages against Trump's handling of the crisis were effective especially if focused on the fact that he ignored repeated warnings from experts and still has no plan:

- *Starting in early January, Trump ignored numerous warnings from experts inside and outside the government about the coronavirus, including more than a dozen warnings in his daily intelligence briefings. By ignoring these warnings, Trump wasted a critical 70-day window to prepare for the virus.*

- *Five months after the U.S. got its first case and more than 100,000 Americans are dead, Trump still has no plan to deal with the crisis. Trump's coronavirus task force has even stopped meeting regularly. Despite all of this, Trump said "I don't take responsibility at all."*

These messages show that it is effective and important to remind voters how Trump failed initially in responding to the crisis AND continues to fail five months later. It is also worth noting that Trump's attempts to deflect blame to China largely fall flat outside of his base as a strong majority of voters hold Trump responsible for the failed response.

Voters Give Trump a Narrow Positive Rating on the Economy But Overwhelmingly Believe His Economic Policies Benefit the Wealthy and Corporations over Small Businesses and Working Families

President Trump's approval on the economy is only narrowly positive today (51-48) and he faces stiff challenges in rekindling the populist economic message he used in 2016. In fact, by more than a 2:1 margin (62-25), battleground state voters believe Trump's economic recovery has benefited "big corporations and the wealthy" over "small businesses and working families."

Similarly, 64% of voters agree with the statement that "Trump cares more about the wealthy and big corporations than he does about people like me."

Two compelling proof points to support these views are Trump's tax bill and his push to repeal protections for people with pre-existing conditions.

- A message hitting Trump on his tax bill benefiting the wealthy was the most effective of the 14 messages we tested against him among voters overall and key audiences. It is particularly dominant among voters who are persuadable on Trump and is also the most effective among those who somewhat disapprove of his job performance--a critical group Trump will have to win over to win re-election.

- Another strong message focused on the fact that in the middle of a pandemic Trump is suing to take health care away from 20 million Americans and end protections for those with pre-existing conditions.