

Date: July 24, 2000

To: Friends of Democracy Corps

From: Stanley B. Greenberg¹
Anna Greenberg

RE: WINNING BACK MEN

In recent years, the Democrats and the press have spent a great deal of time focused on the gender gap and the voting behavior of women. There is no doubt that support from women has played a big role in the Democrats' presidential victories in the 1990s, particularly in Bill Clinton's re-election in 1996. Today, married non-college-educated women and senior women remain principal battlegrounds for the upcoming elections.²

Yet, this is a very incomplete historical and strategic picture. While most observers have identified the gender gap as rooted in the movement of women to the Democratic Party, in fact, the opposite movement – the flight of white men – has played a much bigger role. As a result, no amount of targeting of women will get Democrats beyond the near parity that has left the two parties locked in inconclusive struggle. Congressional Democrats have failed to win back white men in the 1990s, leaving them well short of winning a governing majority. To make real gains, Democrats will have to re-open the channels of communication with white men.

To explore which groups of men might be open to listening to Democrats and on what subjects, we created a special white male data set, composed of 3 components:

- ***The Pew National Surveys.*** Using the national Pew surveys in September 1999, November 1997 and July 1994, we conducted our analysis with a combined data set of 1187 white male voters. We incorporated questions on underlying attitudes and values.
- ***Democracy Corps National Surveys.*** Using three national surveys conducted from October 1999 to March 2000 for the Democracy Corps, we created a

¹ Stanley B. Greenberg is Chairman of Greenberg Quinlan Research. Anna Greenberg is Assistant Professor of Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government.

² The Democrats' fate will also depend on their ability to consolidate the gains they have made with Latino voters and to make sure this election matters for African-Americans and lower-income voters. In this period of economic prosperity, turnout among these solidly Democratic groups will be critical.

combined data set of 1,444 male respondents. The surveys compared the two parties on the issues and measured openness to the presidential and congressional candidates.

- ***The Michigan male focus groups.*** We used rich qualitative material from focus groups conducted for Democracy Corps in Macomb County (for non-college-educated, white-male independents) and in Oakland County, Michigan (for younger, college-educated, white-male independents).

This research project identifies five top white male groups – our prizewinners– where Democrats can get an audience and make gains this year. They are listed here at the outset and discussed in much greater detail later.

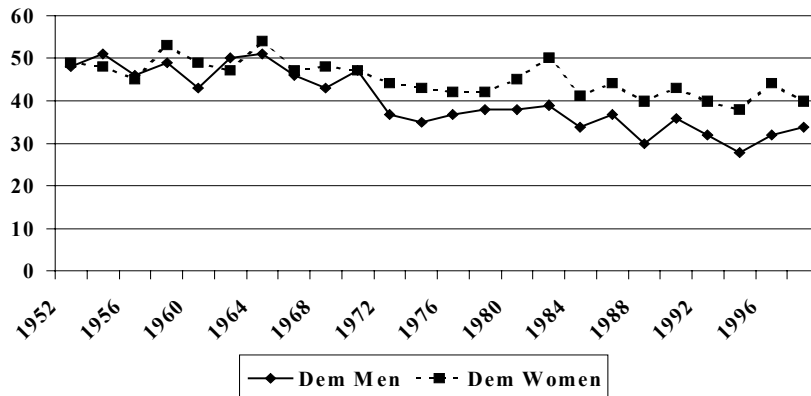
1. ***Young (under 30) men***
2. ***Catholic men***
3. ***Baby boomer men***
4. ***Younger (under 45) non-college men***
5. ***Younger (under 45) college-educated men***

These groups emerged at the top of the list due to a number of factors: the proportion of independents and swing voters within each group, age (younger voters are more tolerant, less religious, and militaristic), skepticism about markets and business, openness to regulation, and openness to Democrats on health care and education. (Again, the process for identifying and defining these factors will be discussed in more detail later.)

The Democratic Party is relevant for these target male voters when its candidates build a credible narrative around a number of possible issues: tax credits for education, HMO reform and prescription drugs, tax cuts for the working middle class (not broad-based tax cuts), high-tech business, standing up for Americans, the environment and open space (hunting and fishing), opposing religious extremism, and protecting privacy. These issues underscore a number of themes – individualism, strength, entrepreneurship, and fairness to responsible citizens – that can become part of a Democratic discourse.

In that mix of issues and themes, these male voters find reasons to listen to Democrats and entertain the idea that government can work for them and their families.

Figure One
Party Identification 1952-1998



Source: National Election Study,
adapted from Seltzer, Newman,
Leighton (1997)

The History of White Flight

While most commentators think of the gender gap as driven by migration of women into the Democratic Party, in fact, it is more strongly rooted in the flight of white men from the Democratic Party. As Figure One shows, men and women’s identification with the Democratic Party was nearly identical in the 1950s and early 1960s. Starting in 1964, men’s support for the Democrats dropped precipitously from just over 50 percent to the high 30s, continuing to drop throughout the 1970s to a low of 28 percent in 1994. Overall, women remained more stable than men in their Democratic loyalty – women’s identification hovers around the low 40s from the late 1970’s to 1996.

The drop in white male support for the Democratic Party is equally dramatic in the 1990’s. Between the 1992 and 1994 elections, white male support for Democratic candidates dropped 10 points, and the Democrats have not since recovered. As Teixeira and Rogers show in *America’s Forgotten Majority*, this drop occurred mainly among white men with a high school degree or some college education, what they call the “new working class.” For instance, there was a 20-point drop for Democratic candidates among white high school-educated men, and a less dramatic 10-point drop among white high school-educated women.

By 1996, the women returned at nearly their 1992 level of support, while the Democrats never fully regained the lost ground with white working class men. That is why white men are playing such a key role in the fate of both parties today.

Table One
 Congressional Elections in the 1990s
 White Voters, Percent Republican Support

<i>Election</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
1990	52	48
1992	51	49
1994	63	53
1996	60	51
1998	59	54

Source: Voter News Service, *New York Times* 1998

The Causes of Flight

There are two central explanations for the departure of white men from the Democrats over the last four decades, centering on race and the changing role of government in men’s lives.

Race. The stirring of white male flight from the Democrats began in the South in the 1960’s. As Table Two demonstrates, there was a massive drop in Southern white male identification with the Democratic Party starting in 1960’s, which declined steadily until 1992. For instance, between 1964 and 1968, the Democratic advantage among Southern white men dropped 14 points (+43 to +29); by 1992, a 58-point Democratic advantage among these men had been transformed into a 1-point Republican advantage.

This story is well known – the Democratic Party alienated white voters, especially in the South, when Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson joined Northern Democratic lawmakers and began to champion civil rights, support federal intervention in the integration of schools, and push for legislation such as the Voting Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act of 1965. This is a proud history, but with political consequences. The presidential contest between Johnson and Republican Barry Goldwater in 1964 linked the Democrats with racial liberalism, and Nixon’s “Southern strategy” established the Republican Party’s political advantage on crime and law and order issues. Initially, this shift was limited to the national level, with white Southern voters continuing to support anti-Civil Rights Democrats at the local level. But Democrats reaffirmed their commitment to these principles and lost both white Southern Democrats and many Northern urban ethnics.

Table Two
 Partisan Balance in Party Identification, 1952-1992*
 White Voters

<i>Election</i>	<i>Non-South</i>		<i>South</i>	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
1952	4	3	58	54
1956	3	-2	58	38
1960	3	-2	47	34
1964	13	11	43	48
1968	4	4	29	39
1972	2	1	21	23
1976	3	-1	23	15
1980	2	5	6	15
1984	-8	-2	8	22
1988	-10	-9	-8	22
1992	-9	7	-1	11

Source: Miller and Shanks, *The New American Voter* (1996), American National Election Studies. *Proportion of Democrat identifiers minus the proportion of Republican identifiers. Negative sign indicates Republican plurality.

Government. The social and political changes in the 1960s also produced major changes in the beneficiaries of government policies. The New Deal welfare state and the post-World War II veterans and building programs, in the first instance, largely benefited white men. Great Society programs, on the other hand, sought to rectify inequities in programs such as Unemployment Insurance and to expand targeted, “non-universalistic” programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children. With the shift in the primary beneficiaries of government policies, white men’s stake in government decreased. White men, in particular, became particularly hostile to welfare programs, which seemed to operate by new, illegitimate principles.

Since the 1960s, men and women have become increasingly polarized around “compassion” and “social justice” issues. White men today are the most anti-government sector of the electorate and least likely to support social welfare policies. As Table Three shows, white men are significantly more likely than white women to agree that government is wasteful and inefficient and to disagree that the government should guarantee every citizen enough to eat and a place to sleep.

Table Three
Anti-Government Attitudes

	<i>Government is Wasteful and Inefficient</i>		<i>Government Should Guarantee Every Citizen Enough to Eat and a Place to Sleep</i>	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Completely agree	34%	26%	21%	30%
Mostly agree	40	38	33	36
Mostly disagree	20	31	29	24
Completely disagree	6	5	16	11
Net agree	+48	+28	+9	+31

Source: Pew Data

White men clearly see the Democrats as the party of big government and the Republicans as the party of individual initiative. In the focus group research just conducted in Michigan, these views are clearly reflected in the current thinking of white men. As one younger college-educated man explained, the Democrats “think that they can solve problems with bigger government and throwing money at problems.” Instead of rewarding entrepreneurial spirit and hard work, the “Democrats think that government subsidies can help society a lot better” (younger college). A younger non-college man explained, “[Democrats] tend to throw money at problems,” while another added that the Democrats give people answers, “instead of finding the actual solutions, let people learn and adapt. And they will do it.”

White men are discouraged because they think their tax dollars fund programs that they do not see as helping them or their families – “Frankly, I am tired of working and being taxed to support all these Democratic programs that don’t work” (Catholic men). Moreover, they see the current tax system as creating disincentives and, at times, support a flat tax because they believe it treats everyone “equally.” Overall, white men give the Republicans a strong advantage over the Democratic Party on handling economic issues such as the budget and surplus (+12), the economy (+13), keeping America prosperous (+18), taxes (+26), and keeping America strong (+37) (Democracy Corps data).

There is a gender angle to this story about government as well. In the Michigan focus groups, it was very clear that these white male voters see the Republicans as the party for men and the Democrats as the party of women. They were not always comfortable with the distinction, but it was believable. Democrats are the party of minorities, “because they concentrate on all minority segments, including women” (Younger college). Moreover, the Democratic Party, at least since Kennedy, focuses on “groups and classes of people rather than on the individual.” The women seem to be more supportive of spending and “social programs” – or “bullshit programs,” as some of the men put it (Younger non-college). The women are more apt to be

“spendthrifts” (Catholic men). The men are more committed to business and private enterprise, rather than government.

Conversely, the Republicans “seem to be very anti-women, like abortion and women’s rights, more against the women” (young men). The Republicans are seen as having a pro-life platform, which means the women “don’t have the right to choose anything” (Catholic men). The Republicans are seen to support a more traditional role for men and women – focusing on the men as “breadwinners” and ascendant in the household – “a responsibility [of] the men of this nation to tend to their households” (Younger non-college). As one of the Catholic men put it: “I still have this mentality of the men being the breadwinner type of thing, but I think the Republicans are hailing that philosophy.”

Finally, the Republicans are more likely to offer “strong leadership internationally,” leadership that will be tough and not use half measures. Kennedy, and even Johnson, “was more of a man’s President” (Catholic men). But Jimmy Carter represented a different, weaker kind of leadership. The Republicans are associated in these groups with Nixon and Reagan, who are more defense-oriented (Younger non-college men).

The Democratic Male Audience

It should not be surprising that Democratic campaigns hesitate before prioritizing these voters. For the most part, they are not very fond of Democrats, who they believe have done little to address their concerns. Based on decades of experience, they think Democrats are too committed to “social programs” and taxes; they are cynical about government’s ability to act in the broad public interest.

Our search for receptive white men begins with an examination of underlying attitudes and concerns, removed from the most immediate and partisan battles of the day. The following dimensions emerged as important ones in identifying where Democrats might potentially get heard among white men:

Role of the market. There are many men who think the market produces uncertain results – perhaps not rewarding those who work hard and perhaps making the rich richer and poor poorer. Those who are a little skeptical about the market may be more open to Democrats.

Role of business. There are many men who question the concentration of power in bigger businesses and wonder whether businesses always strike the right balance between profits and the public interest.

Regulation. A sufficiently diminished cynicism about government may allow some men to think that government regulation sometimes produce positive results. The environment is a particularly important area where many men want strong regulation and believe government can be effective.

Universal or broad governmental functions. We focus on education and health care as two areas where men may prove receptive to Democrats, despite the broader concern with social programs that are seen to be targeted at minorities.

Social Tolerance. Social tolerance, in this research, is defined as less hostility to gay rights, immigrants, and new roles for women. Democrats, who are committed to social tolerance, will have a better chance with those men who are comfortable with the country's diversity, individual rights, and new patterns in the family.³

Secularism; religious practice. Democrats are likely to get a better audience where voters are less devout and attend church less frequently, both of which are correlated with greater openness to new family roles.

Militarism. Where voters are committed to a more aggressive use of the military, they are much less open to Democrats.

The strategic goal of this project is to identify segments where Democrats can make gains, not where they are currently doing the best or worst. Thus, we looked for groups with: 1) the highest proportion of independents (rather than partisans), and 2) the largest proportion of swing voters in congressional contests (open to switching their votes).

By focusing on these criteria, we have ended up excluding white senior men, even though they have the highest proportion of Democrats in that electorate. They are among the least socially tolerant, most militaristic, patriotic, and religiously devout. They are polarized in partisan terms, with few independents and few genuinely swing voters. They are among the most skeptical about the market, but the intensity of their views on social issues blocks them from turning any more to the Democrats. They are responsive on retirement issues closely related to their standard of living.

Older non-college men (over 45 years of age) are very difficult for Democrats, and we do not include them among our targets. Their populism on business and market issues is simply overwhelmed by other elements of their consciousness, including a deep hostility to the changes

³ The questions on these dimensions are part of the Pew database of national surveys. The questions used are presented in the attached appendix.

in the family and gender roles, disdain for the new social diversity, and a longing for a stronger defense-oriented leadership for the country.

There are five groups of men that stand out on at least some of these key dimensions and emerge as potential targets for the Democrats.⁴

1. ***Young men (under 30 years)***. This is the showcase demographic for the gender gap – where Democrats are doing well with women and very badly with men (net -20 points on party identification). This is also the age group most likely to stay away from the polls altogether. Nonetheless, over half of these voters (55 percent) are self-identified independents and 42 percent are volatile congressional voters.

These young men are very open to environmental regulation, including taxes to pay for it. Indeed, they are the least likely to “completely agree” that government regulation does more harm than good. They give the Democrats a 33-point advantage on the environment.

In the Oakland County focus groups, the young men show a strong interest in education and particularly skill training. They respond very strongly to a candidate who provides tax credits for on-going training: “the way technology is constantly changing;” “it’s on the job training;” “constantly going back to school to speak;” “it benefits the company making the person more productive, and it will benefit the person, helping them grow.”

Overall, they give the Republicans a 5-point advantage on education, which is very modest given the very strong Republican advantage on party identification. They seem more responsive to education when presented in a longer-term skill-training context, rather than public schools.

On the other hand, these young men are socially very tolerant – open to rights for gays and lesbians and extremely open to new roles for women. Religious practice is relatively minimal. They show much less interest than older voters in military defense and patriotism.

In the focus groups, they rejected a pro-life candidate and those that pressed for a greater role for religion in politics. They react against Republicans because “they tell you generally how they want you to live” and are “very close to some of these ex-

⁴ The graphs in the appendix display the target groups and their scores on these dimensions, compared to the results for all men.

tremists.” “I don’t think any religion should be pushed on anybody at all.” As a consequence, there are many young men uncomfortable with the Republicans.

These young men are not very populist or hostile to the market and business, which will be important in the thematic and policy recommendations below.

- 2. Catholic men.** The Catholic men are an important swing bloc: 31 percent are congressional swing voters and include a large number of the voters most “winnable” for Democrats; the swing segment is even larger for the least devout Catholics (two-thirds of all Catholic men); and congressionally, Democrats are under-performing badly (net –15 on the generic vote, even though the Republicans enjoy only a net 4-point advantage on party ID). Many of these Catholic men – 48 percent – are independents.

Democrats are already preferred here to the Republicans on broad social issues – ahead of the Republicans by 3 points on education and a striking 17 points on health care.

Catholic men are also more populist – that is, less certain that the market rewards hard work and less certain that corporations strike a fair balance. They are more receptive than other voters to environmental regulation.

In the Macomb County focus groups, they were very supportive of a political candidate who proposed incentives for education and training. They talked of government action here enhancing “somebody’s opportunity to grow and learn and develop and contribute....” They speak of education initiatives in broad terms: “I would say he is trying to make the middle class smarter, trying to help the people, get them more interested in technology.”

They expressed a great deal of concern about health care and responded strongly to a new prescription drug benefit for seniors. They expressed a great deal of inter-generational concern: “whatever you have to do to do that – you put your time in and you reward it – I think the seniors should be rewarded.” In the process, they expressed a lot of hostility to the pharmaceutical companies.

The Catholic men’s positive responses on broad programs like education, health care, and retirement are not blocked by their views on social issues. Catholic men are among the most socially tolerant and open to new roles for women.

- 3. Baby boomer (45 to 58 years) men.** Baby boomers have had a special experience in life – living through the 1960s, the disillusionment with government, the fall and rise

of the American economy – and it has created a large swing bloc. Over a third are congressional swing voters and one-in-five are the most “winnable” for Democrats. Reflecting their historic experience, almost half (49 percent) are independent and politically dislodged.

But these voters are very open to Democrats on the issues: on health care (by a net +24 points), on retirement (+17), on education (+12). Democrats crash with these voters on taxes (-22) and crime (-25) – reflecting great issue volatility. Nonetheless, they are very receptive to Democrats when the issues turn to health and education.

The boomer men are a little skeptical about business striking a fair balance between profits and the public interest, but they are also skeptical about government.

The baby boomers are open to new roles for women and rights for gays, but they are strong on defense and patriotism and quite devout. The Republicans have a remarkable 43-point advantage with these men on keeping America strong.

- 4. *Younger (under 45 years) non-college men.*** These are among the most difficult voters for Democrats, and Democrats are badly under-performing here now: while these voters identify with the Republicans by 15 points, they support Bush over Gore by almost 50 points. With almost half independent (49 percent), there is obviously opportunity for gain.

These are the most populist – and anti-establishment – of the male voters. They are most likely to believe that the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer and most concerned about the concentration of corporate power. About a third (and more than other groups) believe the market does not reward hard work.

Their populism, however, does not translate into support for countervailing government regulation: they remain skeptical of government too. Nonetheless, they are strongly supportive of environmental regulation.

These voters are financially squeezed, talk a great deal about money, and are very committed to tax cuts for working people. In the Macomb County groups, people talk about how “the pay scale for the general worker is deteriorated.” For things to be better, they spoke without pause about “more money,” “well, if I had a better income I wouldn’t have to work as hard,” “taxes kill you, gas prices right now,” “I would like to have my 40 percent in my pocket.”

While skeptical that tax cuts will get to ordinary people, they respond strongly to targeted tax cuts for the middle class. (Democrats, however, begin with a 22-point net deficit on the tax issue.)

Non-college men in general are much less socially tolerant, more anti-foreign, more assertive on defense, more devout, and uncomfortable with the new social roles and changes in the family. Among those *over* 45 years, these views are so strong as to crowd out the populism, which is the Democratic opening. Among the non-college *under* 45, the social intolerance and militarism is reduced, which may allow the Democrats to get heard on populist and other issues.

5. ***Younger (under 45 years) college men.*** This bloc does not include very many swing voters according to the surveys, but there is an openness to Democrats and underlying Democratic concerns that demands our attention.

Education is a very big concern there, and Democrats get respectable marks on the issue (+5 points). In the Oakland County groups, these voters were very focused on the “degraded education level” and the need to raise education standards, particularly for teachers. They talk about moving beyond baby-sitting to teachers who are well paid and who “are really teachers and really understand what they’re teaching.” They talk about wanting politicians who will “promote education” and “raise the bar.”

Democrats even get high marks on health care (net 14-point advantage), which is reflected in the Oakland County discussion of reducing prescription drug costs (“definitely the right thing”).

These voters are open to Democrats, in part, because of their intense reaction against the religious-right extremism of the Republicans. These are very secular voters who are socially tolerant on gay rights and, above all, on the role of women.

In the focus groups, the younger college men talk about the Republicans having “associated themselves with their religious right.” They give the impression of accepting “a certain amount of intolerance.” They have many “extremist elements.” One man concludes, “they shouldn’t dictate morals.”

These voters are a little skeptical about corporate behavior and open to environmental regulation, but in the context of an overall positive view of the market and business.

These younger college men simply do not trust the Democrats on the economy, possibly reflecting their views of business. They clearly believe the Republicans will do

a better job on the economy (by 22 points over the Democrats) and keeping America prosperous (by 30 points).

Thematic Openings to the Target Men

The current issue focus of the Democrats has, for the most part, left out many of these men, who see the Democrats as trying to represent someone else or other groups in society. In the focus groups, we tried to block out some of the partisan history and get right to people's issue concerns and things they would like to see happen in America today. It is apparent that these men can be very open to leaders presenting creative government initiatives – when the need and benefits are broad (beyond target groups), when men are conceptually at the center, and when the solutions are sensitive to taxes and the economy.

This section sets out the initiatives, which generally fall within four thematic areas. First, many of these initiatives reinforce the *individualism* that is so important to men's self-identity. That is reflected in support for skill training programs that allow individuals to grow, but it is also apparent in the desire for greater privacy and less meddling in people's lives by the religious right. The individualism is even a factor in the prescription drug and HMO issues where these men feel powerless before corporate power.

Second, these prospective initiatives reinforce the desire for greater *strength* in our national leaders, which includes standing up for America in economic and military affairs. It is reflected in the support for the death penalty, which is still very strong here.

Third, the initiatives reflect a male demand for "fairness" – which is reward for those who are responsible and hard working and constraints for those who take advantage of the ordinary citizen. Targeted tax cuts send that signal, as do initiatives that seek to constrain the pharmaceutical and insurance companies.

And finally, the initiatives reflect the view of the economy where entrepreneurship and hard work are valued. That is why tax credits for training and support for high tech industries are part of this receptive worldview.

We conclude this memorandum with a description of the initiatives that got an audience among the target groups and seemed to open up these voters to a new Democratic discourse.⁵

1. ***Tax credits for training and education.*** The men in all the groups respond very positively to the idea of giving tax credits to companies (or individuals) for skill training.

⁵ The initiatives are presented roughly in order of intensity and level of support across multiple groups of men.

To these men, that sounds like a policy that allows people to get “retooled,” “stay on top of new technology,” “it will benefit the individual, help them grow,” “learn and develop,” and it would lead to Americans getting the training they need for new jobs.

The focus on training and education grounds the education debate *in a workplace setting* and allows many men to think this is about them and their growth and opportunity.

- 2. *Corporate issue (1): HMOs and a patients’ bill of rights.*** The HMOs stand with the pharmaceutical companies as large corporations that victimize consumers on price and that leave people feeling powerless in the marketplace. The feelings transcend class. College-educated men responded, “100 percent” for a patients’ bill of rights, “I’m sick and tired of HMOs telling me where I can and can’t go.” The young men declared, “these HMOs are running wild without anybody controlling them...”

The discussion of HMOs was part of a general discussion of health care, which has become less and less affordable and full of companies and institutions that leave people feeling powerless.

There was not a lot of interest in seeing increased litigation as part of the solution. (Too many people looking for a windfall.)

- 3. *Corporate issue (2): Prescription drugs.*** As we indicated earlier, there was strong support for a prescription drug benefit for seniors – mostly because it is the right thing to do for seniors (“it’s very important”), but also because drug prices have become very high (“you don’t need to be spending \$100 every time you need the pills”). The cost for seniors is the starting point, but many also talk about the companies that are subsidized by the taxpayers and that charge less abroad or when the pill is for a horse.
- 4. *Tax cuts for the working middle class.*** To have a real opening with these men, one needs to talk about tax cuts that will reach them. The non-college men feel financially squeezed, and nearly all of them complain about “the burden of taxes” and think that the government mostly wastes their money. At the same time, there is a lot of skepticism about Republican tax proposals that may keep the country from doing important things and will only go to the special interests and wealthy.

There was an undercurrent of flat tax discussion, though less than in the past. People would respond to a progressive option in this area.

Cynicism leads them to doubt they will ever see a “worthwhile tax cut” and there is a belief the country has other important things to do.

5. ***High-tech business.*** It is important for Democrats to promote their ideas on business, particularly since these voters will likely be increasingly critical of the HMOs and pharmaceutical companies. Some, like the younger non-college and Catholic men, have a populist, anti-establishment streak that invites a more critical business tone. All the more important that these men hear that Democrats want to promote business growth. High technology is a special opportunity. Democrats are associated with openness to change and new things and the future. People believe that Democrats would support the education and training required for new technology. Thus, Democrats should take the lead in promoting what is seen to be the vital part of the American economy.
6. ***A big across the board tax cut: better priorities.*** People reacted very cautiously to the idea of an across the board tax cut. They suspected, first of all, that the politician was lying. They thought it imprudent since “there’s not always going to be a surplus.” And many thought, “let’s just use the money better” – seeing “better roads, better schools, better educated across the board.” Do things that “will benefit us in the long term,” like strengthening Social Security and retiring the national debt.” (Young men) Some Catholic men said, if the cuts are really big and “worthwhile, then how are you going to increase defense spending, improve education, and do the job training.”
7. ***Standing up for Americans.*** Throughout these discussions, there was a sense that Americans are “saps,” even though they are leading in global trade. Democrats should push the pharmaceutical companies who have benefited from US taxpayer support to charge Americans no more than their customers overseas. There was a lot of support for training and upgrading American workers to get the new jobs in the high technology industry, rather than bringing in more “temporary” workers. At least in the younger non-college male group, there was a belief that trade was supplanting American companies and jobs.
8. ***Anti-religious extremism.*** Many of these men, particularly the youngest, but also the college-educated and Catholics, were very uncomfortable with the Republicans’ embrace of religious extremism. They resent politicians trying to impose their beliefs on other people and meddle in their lives: “he is trying to limit personal freedom.” There is a strong libertarian streak that brings these target groups closer to the Democrats. In addition, politicians who want to deny people rights and liberties seem “backward” to many of these men.
9. ***From parental responsibility to high quality teachers.*** The men place a very strong emphasis on parents taking greater responsibility for their children learning right from wrong. That is the starting point for elevating the schools. However, in some of the

groups (younger college and young men), there was a discussion of having better teachers, operating at a higher standard.

10. *The environment.* Across these groups, there was a general openness to increased environmental regulation and to the government carving out more open space. People are open to the idea that we should act now before our resources are expended in the short term.

Most of the discussion of the environment, however, moved very quickly to hunting and fishing. This perspective needs to be at the center of any environmental discussion with these target men.

11. *Privacy.* Privacy is a sleeper issue with the men because the threat is real, there is growing consciousness of the genome project, and companies are the potential culprits. The insurance companies will start misusing the records and “start cherry-picking certain people.” The men also feel powerless on their own to address the problem: “it needs to be kept more private and more within our control.” A political leader who steps up on the issue demonstrates “that the individual is still supreme. ... And it’s kind of one of the American ideals, that individualism – ... private ownership, private property, privatism.” One man concludes of a political leader who champions this issue, “he’d be pro-voter.”

Appendix

Pew Values Statements

- People like me don't have any say about what the government does.
- Hard work offers little guarantee of success.
- Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good.
- Business corporations generally strike a fair balance between making profits and serving the public interest.
- There is too much power concentrated in the hands of a few big companies.
- There needs to be stricter laws and regulations to protect the environment.
- People should be willing to pay higher prices in order to protect the environment.
- I am very patriotic.
- We should restrict and control coming into our country to live more than we do now.
- The best way to ensure peace is through military strength.
- Prayer is an important part of my daily life.
- School board ought to have the right to fire teachers who are known homosexuals.
- Women should return to their traditional roles in society.
- AIDS might be God's punishment for immoral sexual behavior.
- Labor unions have too much power.
- Today it's really true that the rich just get richer while the poor get poorer.

Source: The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, Values Surveys (September 1999, November 1997, July 1994)