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To: Friends of Democracy Corps

From: Stanley Greenberg, Greenberg Research & Democracy Corps

Trump' GOP: Election Eve

President Donald Trump closed this campaign by warning of the grave danger people faced from criminal and violent immigrants and from the Democratic leaders who supported open borders and sanctuary cities. We think you will find that when the votes are all counted, Donald Trump and the GOP will have suffered a major defeat in the off-year elections. I wrote in the [New York Times](#) in June that Trump's base strategy produced an intense anti-Trump reaction among Democrats, the Rising American Electorate of people of color, unmarried women and millennials, and all types of women, but also an ambivalent or hostile reaction among parts of the GOP base.

The survey database *Democracy Corps* created with our partner organizations shows that Trump was able to elevate his strong approval and determination to vote among the loyalists of Tea Party and Evangelicals, but both fell short of the strong disapproval and determination to vote among all Democrats. At the same time, the database shows this fractured party includes some who will not vote to defend Trump on Tuesday and some who will vote for a Democrat.

I want you to have this close look at the GOP base, based on 6,069 interviews with self-identified Republicans conducted since April, half conducted in the past 2 months. This includes an on-going web-panel of Republicans in the battleground sponsored by *Women's Voices. Women Vote Action Fund*, the first wave of which was conducted in September and the follow-up interviews with the same participants are in the field now.

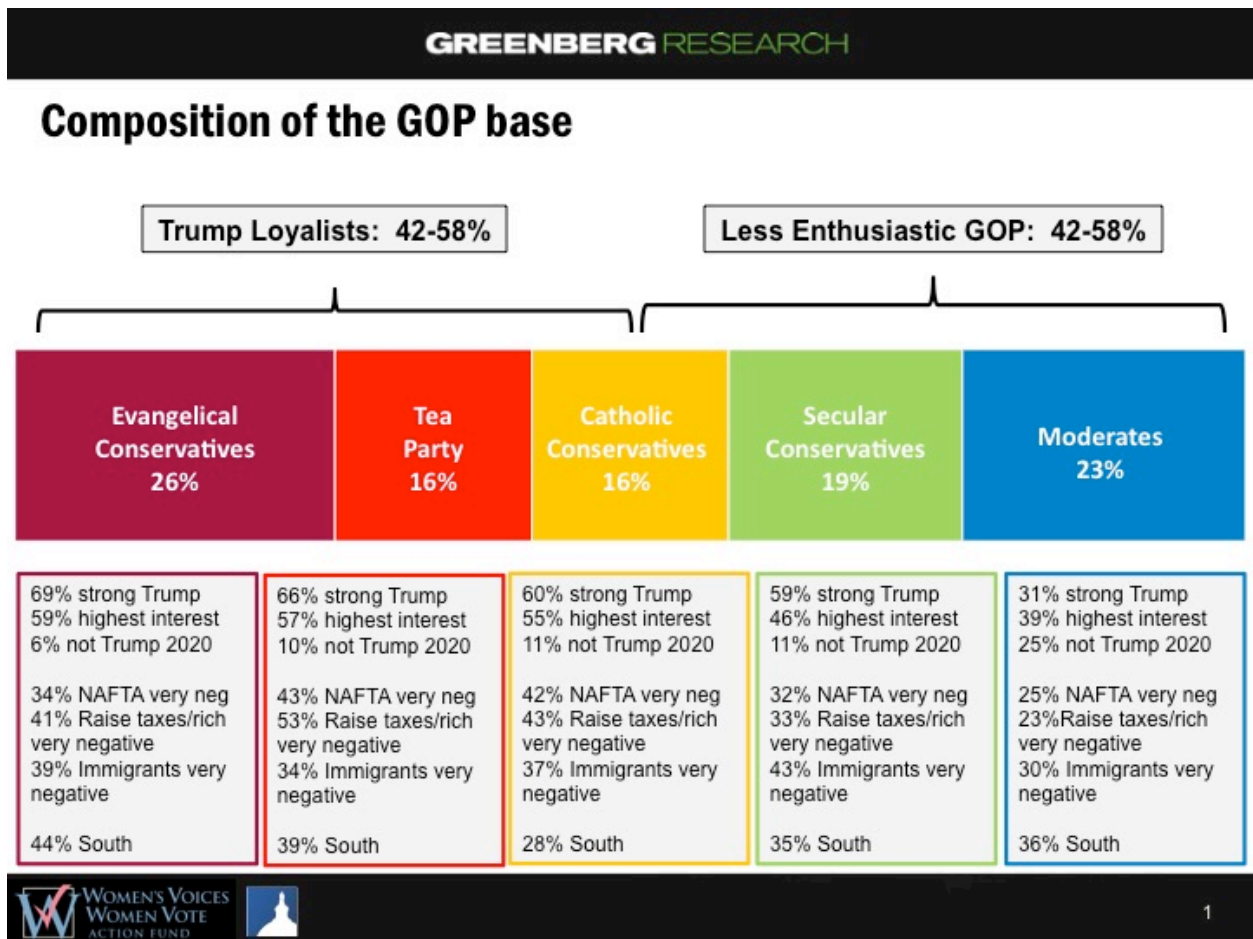
To understand why President Trump and the GOP closed on immigration, you need to understand how Trump came to dominate the GOP and what groups form his GOP base. Donald Trump won the GOP primaries in 2016 by first building a base among those who supported the Tea Party movement and then forging an almost holy pact with Evangelicals to create a socially conservative U.S. Supreme Court. The Tea Party are the most anti-President Obama, Obamacare, and immigration, and they are hostile to multiculturalism. Trump locked up the Tea Party base in the primaries by launching his presidential campaign with attacks on Mexican rapists. His Muslim ban, separation of immigrant children and parents, and sending troops to the border to stop the caravan allowed Trump to own the fight against immigration. It is first and foremost a fight against a more pluralistic, diverse, foreign and multi-cultural America.

President Trump also crudely heated up the culture war with women to win the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court and deliver on his social conservative pledges to Evan-



gelicals. He embraced white men as the victims of the dominant PC culture that privileged the claims of women, particularly professional women. So in the close, his intent was also to make it a fight for the generations of white men, some of whom believed they had lost standing as women insisted on equality and respect.

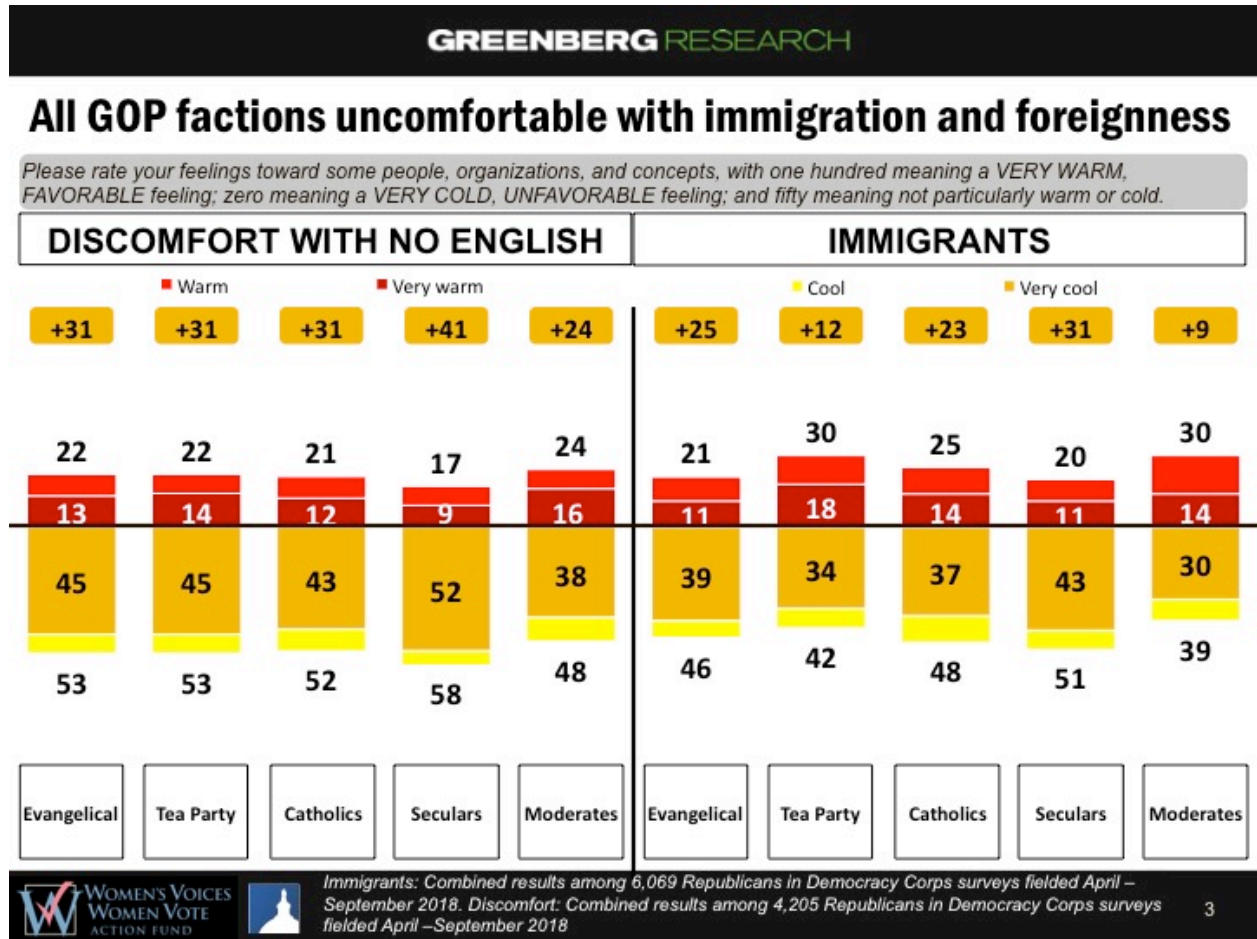
President Trump's base is the Tea Party supporters and Evangelicals who are the most alienated, anti-government, socially conservative, and most determined to stop the accelerated changes in the country. But that base was always just half the party. The Tea Party wave in 2010 brought GOP control in the House and the states, but only 50 percent of Republicans identified as strong Tea Party supporters. Donald Trump won just over half of the primary voters cast in the 2016 primaries and his base of Trump Loyalists forms just under half of those who vote in GOP primaries. But President Trump's economic nationalism, populism and opposition to abortion and gay marriage has enabled him to win strong support with conservative and observant Catholics. President Trump's coalition dominates within the GOP in the South and with the Catholics, in the Midwest as well.



President Trump finished the 2018 off-year election with a venomous campaign against immigrants who murder the innocent and police officers. This is because he understood in his bones that the Republican Party has emerged as the party prepared to fight for white people who are



competing and losing standing as the country grows more immigrant and foreign and increasingly embraces its multiculturalism.



All factions of the GOP base view immigration negatively, are uncomfortable with people not speaking English, and want leaders who look out for the interests of whites, including the conservative Catholics and ideological moderates. The moderates remain Republicans for a reason, though they are more modulated in their feelings and pushed away on other issues.

If the GOP faces significant losses in the House and among governors and state legislators on Tuesday, it will indeed be a reckoning for this battle against the emerging America.

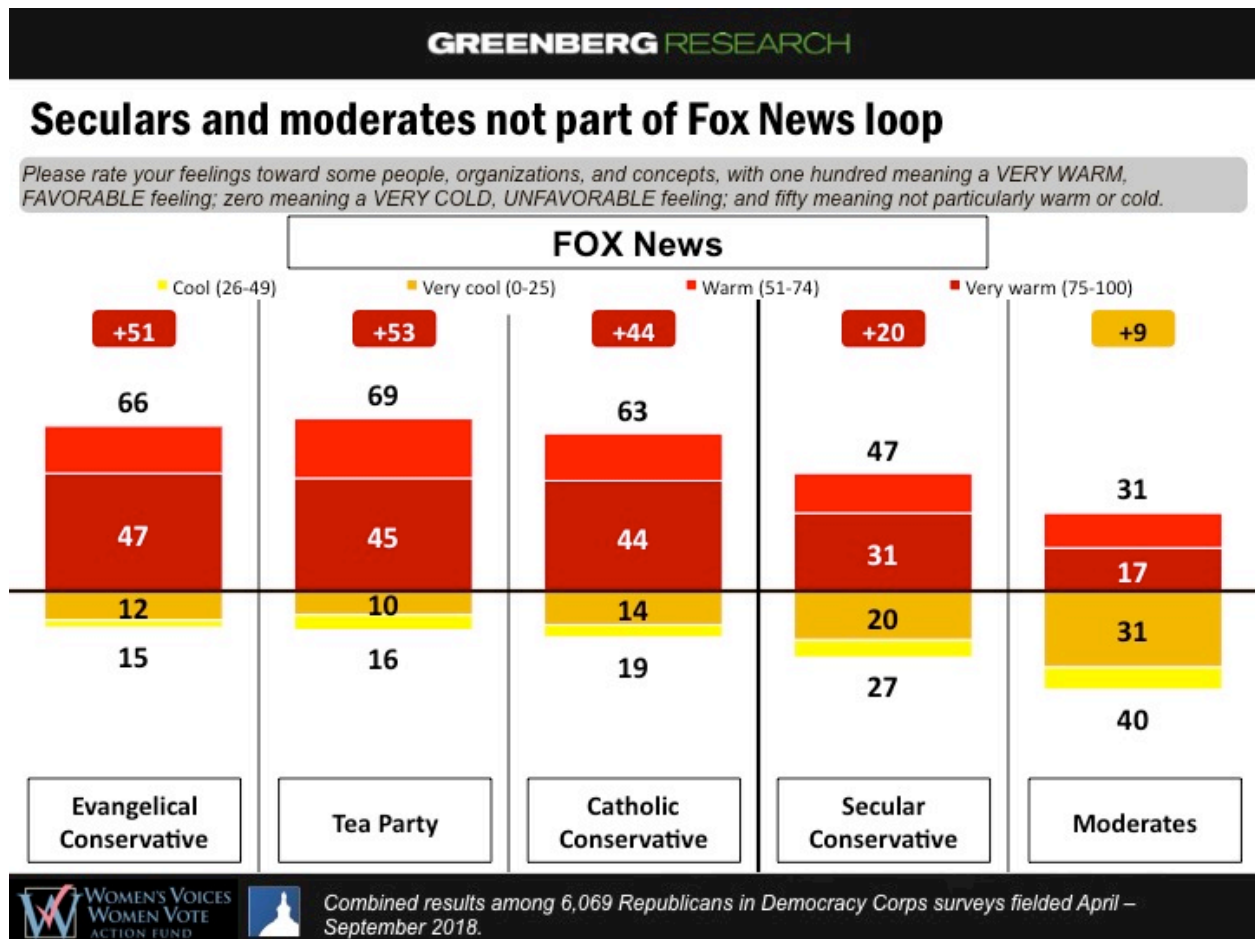
Donald Trump fractures the GOP

President Trump dominates but also fractures a Republican Party that has trouble consolidating its base and winning independents, energizes his liberal and Democratic opponents, and leaves his party ripe for defection. Almost one in five respondents in these surveys do not vote for President Trump when there is a 3rd party option.



President Trump is the dominant dimension in a factor analysis of Republicans and their attitudes and values presented in the attached graphs. That is a shift from the factor analysis we conducted in 2013 when hostility to President Obama was the dominant dimension. Today, Trump has reshaped his party to make himself the powerful current, along with *Fox News*, the NRA and tax cuts. That is consistent with Trump’s winning control from its Tea Party base that has given the GOP the backbone to fight against President Obama and how he wanted to change the country.

President Trump held wall-to-wall rallies since Labor Day, annoyingly interrupted by funerals of Senator McCain and the 11 Jewish congregants in Pittsburgh, but our focus groups showed that watching the rallies put off all of the moderates and most of the secular conservatives. The polling database of Republicans shows that secular conservatives and moderates are not part of the *Fox News* loop. Less than half of the former and just 30 percent of the latter view them favorably. But don’t underestimate the powerful role *Fox* plays for the 58 percent of Republicans who are Trump Loyalists for now: two-thirds view *Fox* favorably, with 46 percent viewing it very favorably.



The second most important dimension centers around the Republicans’ views on gay marriage, transgendered people, and feelings about mosques. That suggests a social conservative dimension in GOP thinking, rooted in Christianity and distrust of Islam. That is why President Trump still gets a rise from his rallies when he mentions President Obama’s middle initial, “H.,” or



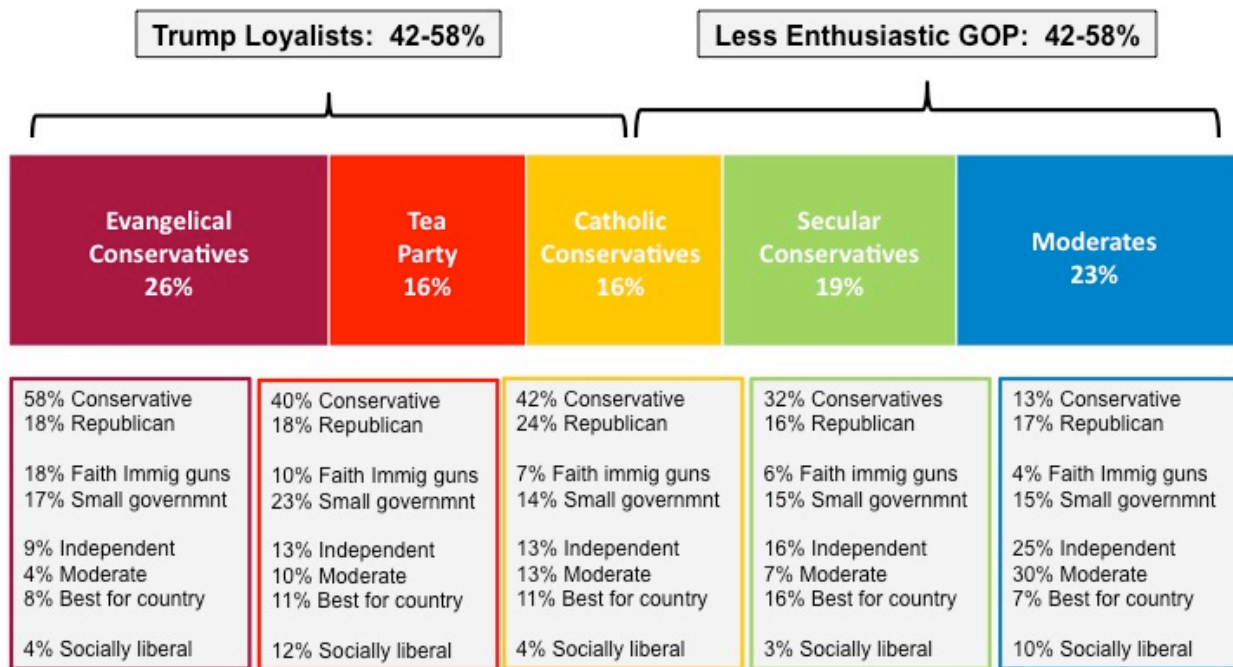
Hussein. That reflects the strong base Trump has been able to build with Evangelicals, but it also turns off the GOP moderates who are socially liberal. Moderate GOP women left the party over the past 5 years but moderates still form a quarter of the GOP base. More accept than reject the notion of most abortions being legal, and a majority view gay marriage favorably.

Other dimensions indicate an openness to Democrats and more importantly, an expansive view of government on taxing the rich, ensuring health care for all, and acting to prevent global warming. Big majorities support government activism in these areas, and in these, the observant Catholics look more like allies.

In an early September web-survey for *Women's Voices. Women Vote Action Fund*, we asked Republicans to write down the words they use to describe themselves politically. Just as we found in focus groups, many more referred to themselves as conservatives than Republicans. That was true most of all for Evangelicals. Conservative was the dominant identity for Evangelicals, the Tea Party and conservative Catholics. Interestingly, the latter was the group mostly likely to call themselves a Republican, reflecting their history of joining the Republicans after it became a firmly pro-life party. The Evangelicals' identity also includes their motivation by faith and active engagement on social issues. Tea Party Republican identity includes a strong dose of fiscal responsibility and small government.



How the GOP Base Identifies Itself Politically



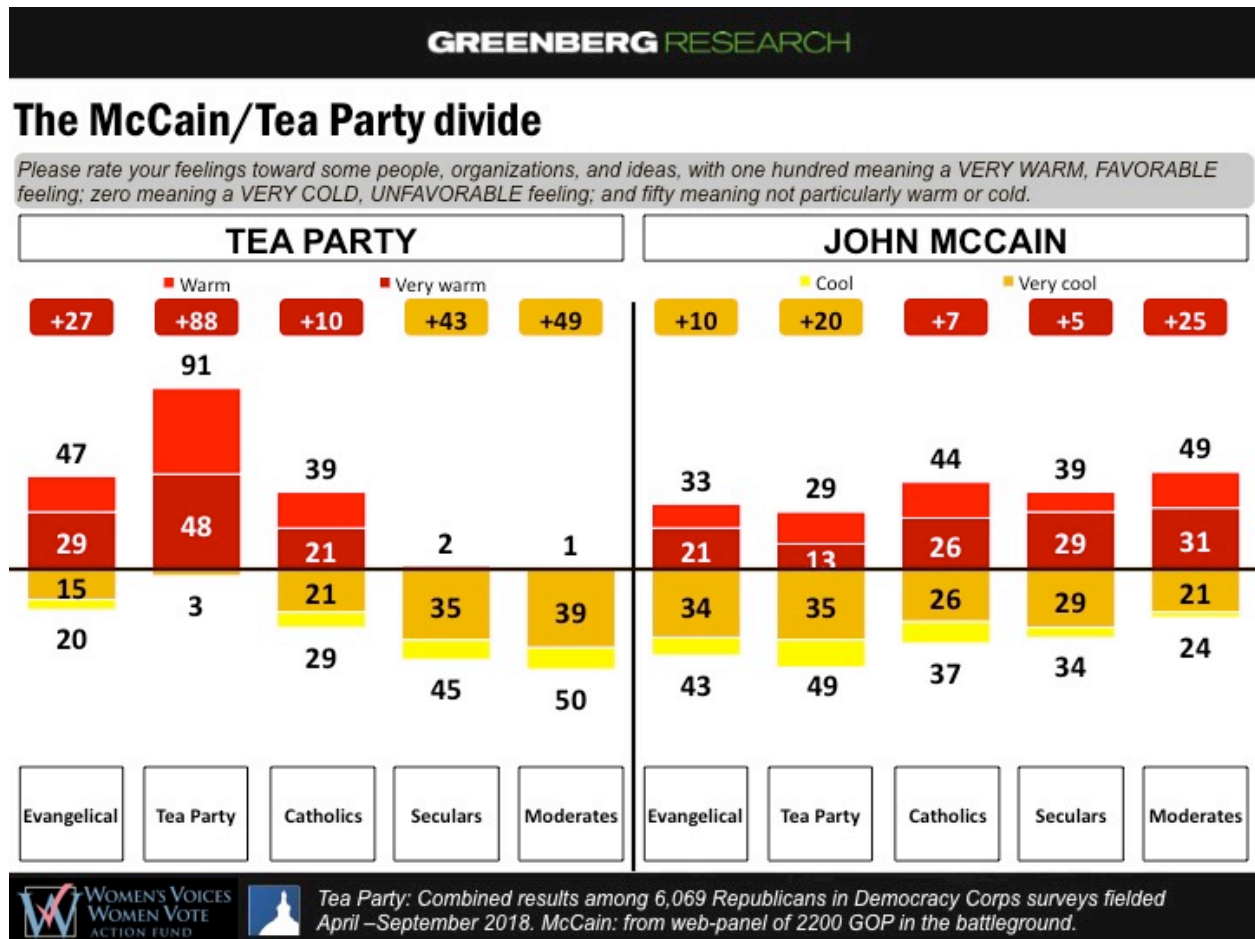
Typologies from web-panel of 2200 GOP in the battleground



But look at the 28 percent of the Republicans who say they are independent or moderate. Fully 55 percent of the moderate bloc describes themselves that way, but so do 23 percent of the secular conservatives and 26 percent of conservative Catholics. Further, more than one-in-ten of the Tea Party, Catholics and secular conservatives say they want what is best for the country. Clearly, a majority of moderates and a third of secular conservatives and Catholics have built political identities positioned against the conservative orthodoxy in the party. And it is worth noting that 12 percent of Tea Party supporters describe themselves as “socially liberal.”

The GOP is fractured by the Tea Party takeover of the party since 2010 and the gridlock and polarization that drove away John McCain’s supporters. The GOP is painfully divided by the Tea Party-McCain struggle that President Trump tastelessly exploits. This is a Republican Party divided over the intense partisanship that Senator McCain hated and tried to address at his funeral.

What’s going on? The Tea Party took on the GOP establishment that fecklessly challenged President Obama and Obamacare. They forced government shutdowns that were hated by the GOP leadership. As a “birther” from beginning, Trump quickly won the support of the Tea Party supporters and Evangelicals. The Tea Party fought the “PC” trends in the country. Thus, right now, both embrace the Tea Party, though results for the Tea Party bloc is circular since it is defined in part by positive view of the movement.





But just a handful of moderates and secular conservatives, 1 and 2 percent respectively, view the Tea Party positively. In fact, over a third of seculars and 40 percent of the moderates view the movement intensely negatively. This coalition that forms over 40 percent of the GOP base is ambivalent or hostile to the Tea Party that threw away civility and bipartisanship to fight the current direction of the country.

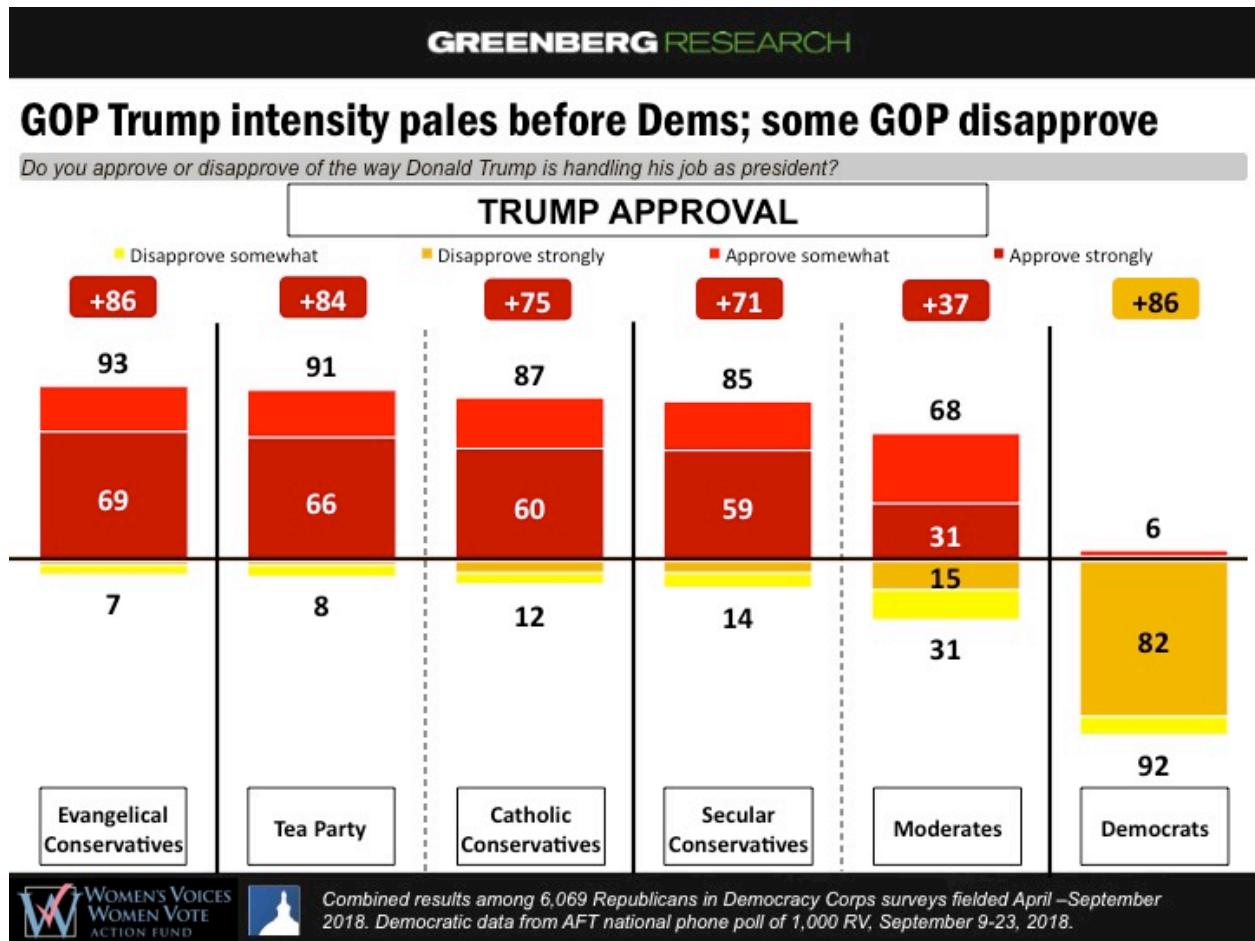
Senator McCain's hope for a return to bipartisanship and civility was on full display at his carefully staged funeral. The Tea Party, which McCain had to defeat in his own primary challenge, represents an uncompromising conservatism that must defeat the other party at all costs. Despite such a momentous funeral, just a third of Evangelicals and under 30 percent of Tea Party supporters viewed him favorably. The latter viewed McCain negatively by a margin of 20 points.

The blocs that form a majority of the GOP base viewed him favorably, including a large plurality of both conservative Catholics and secular conservatives. Moderates viewed him favorably by two-to-one, suggesting a longing across large parts of the party for a politics that could transcend the Tea Party revolt now led by President Trump.

Will Trump's base strategy work?

President Trump and the GOP have bet everything on a base strategy, infused with Tea Party and Evangelical energy, the high stakes fight against immigration, and the need to protect the forgotten Americans disrespected by the PC-elites and liberal media. They took their case to the country with campaign rallies and *Fox News*.

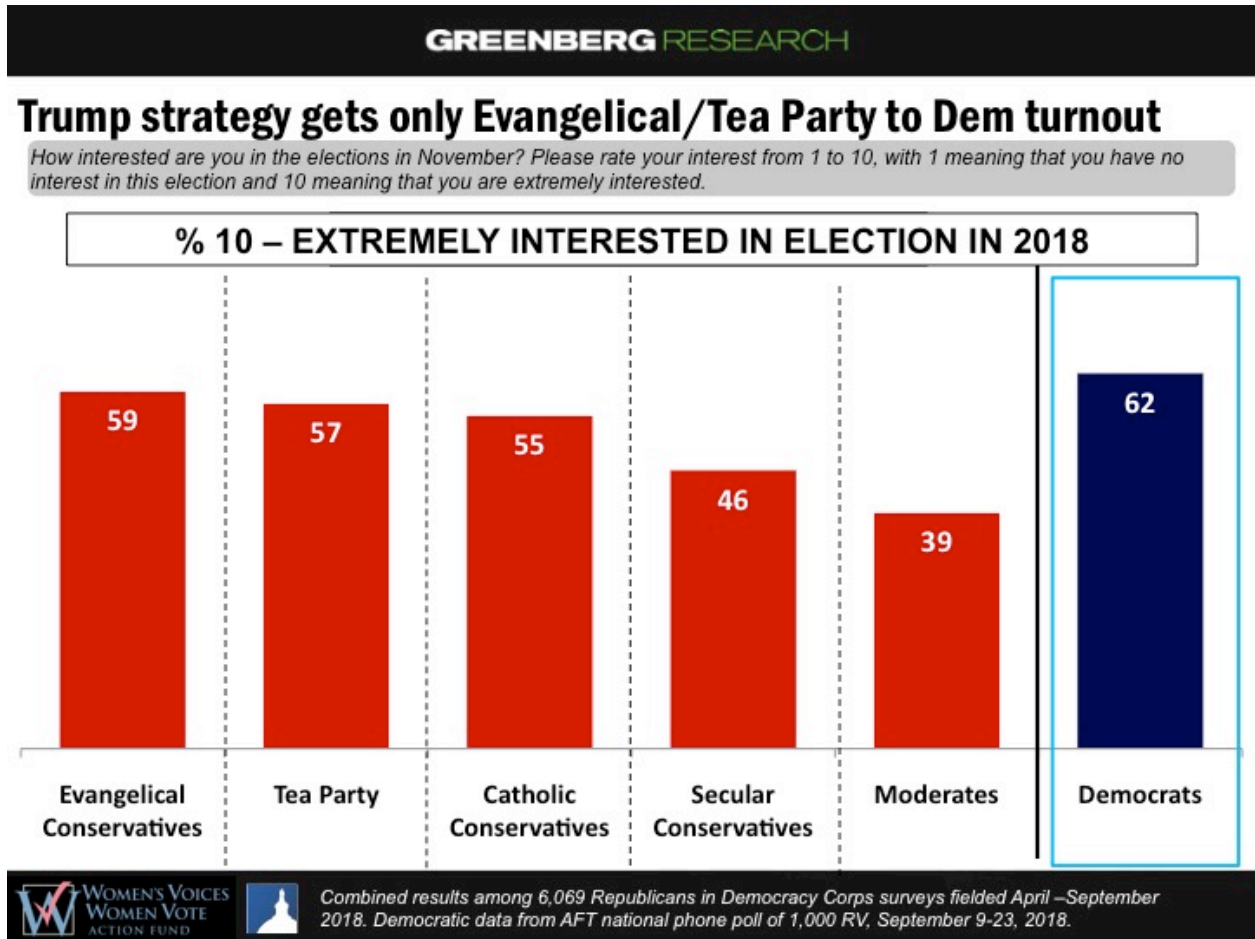
The verdict of these interviews is not encouraging for Republicans. President Trump has driven up Tea Party and Evangelical intensity in their embrace of him and their determination to vote in the midterms. But approval of Trump for these two Loyalist factions just matches disapproval of the president among all Democrats. Critically, strong approval reaches two-thirds, well short of the 82 percent of all Democrats who strongly disapprove of Trump's performance in office. Yes, President Trump has pushed up the determination of the Loyalists to vote, but they fall short of the 62 percent of all Democrats who show the highest interest in the election tomorrow.



Trump does own the Evangelicals and Tea Party, where over 90 percent approve his performance, more than two thirds strongly. The intensity, however, falls off to about 85 percent strong approval among Catholics and secular conservatives. And a third of moderates disapprove. Just 31 percent strongly approve.

The contrasting reactions to Trump play out on our validated scale for voters rating their interest in the election. “10” means “extremely interested.” President Trump has succeeded in pushing high interest among Evangelicals to 59 percent, to 57 percent with Tea Party supporters, and to 55 percent with Catholic conservatives. Only the Evangelicals come close to the level of interest expressed by Democrats: 62 percent say they are extremely interested in the upcoming election.

Four-in-ten GOP base voters are secular conservatives and moderates, but only 46 percent of secular conservatives put their interest at the top of the scale and just 39 percent of moderates. Moderates and Evangelical conservatives each comprise about a quarter of the GOP base – and the turnout enthusiasm gap stands at 20 points before the election.



Finally, we asked all of our Republicans how they would vote in a 3-way race with Governor John Kasich leading an independent ticket against the Democratic nominee and Republican Donald Trump. One-in-ten Tea Party supporters, conservative Catholics and secular conservatives say they won't vote for Trump in 2020 general election, as well as one-quarter of the moderates.

Can Trump unite, consolidate and mobilize this party on Tuesday?