TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Marjorie Dannenfelser
SUBJECT: Rule Number One of Politics: Don't Abandon Your Base

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It's impossible to sugarcoat it. Tonight's election results are a disaster for the unborn, for their mothers, and for the country as a whole.

Democrats are on track to control two of the three pieces they need to legalize taxpayer-funded abortion on demand, up until birth, in all fifty states – something they promise to start pushing as soon as they take office in January.

We did all we could to try to prevent this. We contacted 10.5 million voters in top battleground races across the country including making nearly four million visits to voters at their doorsteps thanks to the hard work of 2,350 canvassers.

Moving forward, there are major problems that must be addressed if we're going to stop the pro-abortion left from winning a trifecta in 2028.

The Consultants Got What They Wanted, and It Was a Disaster

From the moment that *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, Republican consultants have been begging for an election without abortion as a major voting issue. This cycle, they got it. Ad spending from Democrats on abortion decreased from around half-a-billion dollars per cycle to practically nothing, while Republicans continued their 2022-onward strategy of ignoring, passing the buck to the states, or pivoting to the economy.

This line of thinking got so engrained that even functionaries within the Trump administration, (like the now-fired Dr. Makary at the FDA) purposefully delayed any action on abortion for almost two years, on the idea that this was necessary to save the midterms.

The results of this strategy are in. Leaving Biden's abortion policies in place didn't, in fact, win over the 20% of voters who oppose requiring a doctor's visit to get chemical abortion drugs. And giving Democrats a pass on late-term abortion didn't make converts of the tiny minority who support abortion until birth. The only tangible results of this strategy were turnout problems, missed persuasion opportunities, and hundreds of thousands of dead babies in the strongest pro-life states.

1. **Pro-life voters are starting to take the hint, and it's killing turnout.**

Republican turnout was the major problem in this election, and it was a major problem among the pro-life base. At the doors, we found almost *zero* pre-existing enthusiasm among pro-life voters for Republican candidates this election.

We warned this would happen unless the GOP changed course. In February, we released polling from Cygnal showing that "**32% [of Republicans] would be less enthusiastic about voting in the November midterm election if GOP leaders abandon pro-life policies and 34% would**

be less willing to volunteer – numbers that rise even higher among the most engaged GOP voters."

The GOP has spent the last four years explicitly telling voters that abortion *shouldn't* be a motivating factor in their vote, especially in federal races. The clearest GOP abortion message is now that Republicans won't pursue *any* pro-life policies at the federal level whatsoever, not even on late-term abortion.

This message is so bad that Democrats literally printed it on mailers and sent it to Republicans in close House and Senate races to suppress turnout. The attacks were inaccurate for some of the specific candidates, but the mailers were a completely fair re-statement of the general line that GOP candidates have been taking: don't worry, because Republicans won't stop states from allowing as many abortions as they want, even up until the moment of birth.

If your opponent can restate *your own position* to *your own base* and kill *your side's turnout*, you've got a major problem on your hands. Democrats understand the dynamics here in a way that many Republicans do not.

2. **We're leaving millions of votes on the table.**

Though we found little *pre-existing* enthusiasm at the doors, voters were still extremely responsive to our message about Democrats' support for late abortions after the point when the baby can feel pain.

It's hard to overstate how appalled normal voters are by late-term abortion. According to Gallup, a majority of Americans think that abortion should be generally illegal in the second trimester, and **70%** say so in the third.

We target voters to maximize our impact, but our message testing shows that late-term messages are effective with the electorate as a whole – moving the margin 4-5 points towards Republicans in swing states, and even more in our test of Hispanics in Texas.

If you're surprised by this, you live in a bubble. Unfortunately, most GOP campaign consultants do. To be blunt, this wouldn't be the first time that GOP consultants left a winning social issue on the table because it didn't match their sensibilities.

But candidates still instinctively know that this message works. When they're backed into a corner in a debate and have to state a position, Republicans will still attack Democrats for supporting late-term abortion on demand. This is a good instinct, and one the party should be building on. If the GOP *doesn't* support abortion on demand late in pregnancy, what specific policy does it propose to address it? Just articulating one could help to bring some of these millions of voters on board.

These problems are solvable, but they need to be solved soon. Democrats have told us exactly what they'll do if they win in 2028, and millions of lives hang in the balance. Over the next two

years, Republicans are going to have to figure out how to stake out a pro-life position that re-motivates the base and wins over some of the millions of cross-pressured voters who oppose the Democrats' abortion-on-demand-until-birth regime.

We're going to spend the next few years trying to make that happen, and we hope leaders in the party will do the same.