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To: Interested Parties

From: Jim Gerstein

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Assessing Jewish Polling in the 2024 Election

As we see every 4 years, there is a great deal of media speculation in the 2024 election over whether "this is the year" that Jewish voters change their voting behavior due to Israel-related developments. While these pre-election stories often highlight a few people on each side of the partisan divide who are singularly focused on Israel, post-election data repeatedly demonstrate that these stories do a poor job of capturing what is actually happening in the Jewish electorate.

Given the horrors of October 7 and concerns over antisemitism, it is reasonable to ask whether this year may be different for Jewish voters. Rigorous studies of American Jews since October 7 indicate that emotional attachment to Israel has risen and Jews are highly concerned about antisemitism. Amid this environment, the data also show that Jewish political beliefs and values have not changed, and the top issues for Jewish voters are the future of democracy and abortion.

When reporting on the Jewish vote, it is critical for media outlets to scrutinize the various data released by different organizations. Some polls of Jewish voters are conducted with more rigorous methods than others, and it is not accurate to simply say "one poll says X and one poll says Y, it is up to the audience to decide."

Media outlets should take 4 things into account when considering whether (or how) to report on a poll that characterizes the Jewish vote:

1) **Did the poll use the Pew screener for a Jewish respondent?** The Pew screener asks people what is their religion. Respondents who answer "Jewish" qualify for the survey and are characterized as "Jews by religion." If a respondent answers something other than Jewish (such as atheist or nothing), they receive a follow-up question asking if they consider themselves Jewish even if Judaism is not their religion. Respondents who answer "yes" qualify for the survey and are characterized as "Jews of no religion." Pew's 2020 study showed this group to comprise 27 percent of the Jewish population and identify a net 18 points more Democratic than Jews by religion. ***Surveys that do not ask the Pew screener, including traditional media exit polls, are very likely understating the support for Democratic candidates.***

2) **Did the poll ask denomination?** One of the biggest predictors of Jewish voting behavior is denomination. Reform Jews and those who identify with no denomination comprise a large majority (68 percent) of the Jewish electorate and are the most Democratic audience. Conservative denomination Jews are 17 percent and also very Democratic, but not as much as Reform and no denomination. Orthodox Jews are 9 percent of the electorate and are very Republican. In order to assess the representativeness of a Jewish sample, denomination is an essential criterion and should be a minimum requirement for any publication. Similar to item 1 above, media

exit polls have not previously asked denomination because it is not necessarily feasible for them to spend the time and resources to ask this follow-up to such a small portion of the population.

3) **Did the poll release basic demographics?** In addition to denomination, any poll of Jews should include key demographics such as gender, age, synagogue membership, and party identification to ensure it is a representative Jewish sample. Pew collects this data and media outlets can compare the poll's demographics to see if it aligns with Pew's data.

4) **Where did the poll get its sample?** Most pollsters surveying the vote collect their data by contacting respondents who are on registered voter lists. Some continue to collect using RDD (random digit dial). Either of these sampling procedures are considered acceptable practice for election-related research. It is not considered accepted practice to do an election survey in 2024 through a non-probability web-based sample or a "Jewish list" from organizations or synagogues.

We can expect a range of polls of Jewish voters from a range of organizations and pollsters. Some will be high quality, representative polls of the Jewish electorate. Some will not be. For reporters seeking an accurate representation of what happened with the Jewish vote in the 2024 election, they should scrutinize the polls and not amplify nor give equal weight to those that lack transparency, do not ask essential Jewish screening questions, or do not have demographics that reflect the Jewish population.

We are in a turbulent political moment and the Jewish people have experienced a very traumatic year. There is a great deal of interest in the Jewish vote and as we seek to get an accurate understanding of how Jewish voters respond in this important moment, it is critical that coverage of Jewish public opinion does not provide false equivalencies between polls that reflect a representative Jewish sample and those that do not.

Please contact Jim Gerstein at jgerstein@gbaostrategies.com if you would like additional information or want to discuss Jewish research methods.