

# The American Leadership Project

Uncovering America's  
Unconscious Beliefs about  
the Kind of Leaders We Need



# PREPARED BY







## SUMMARY THOUGHTS

1

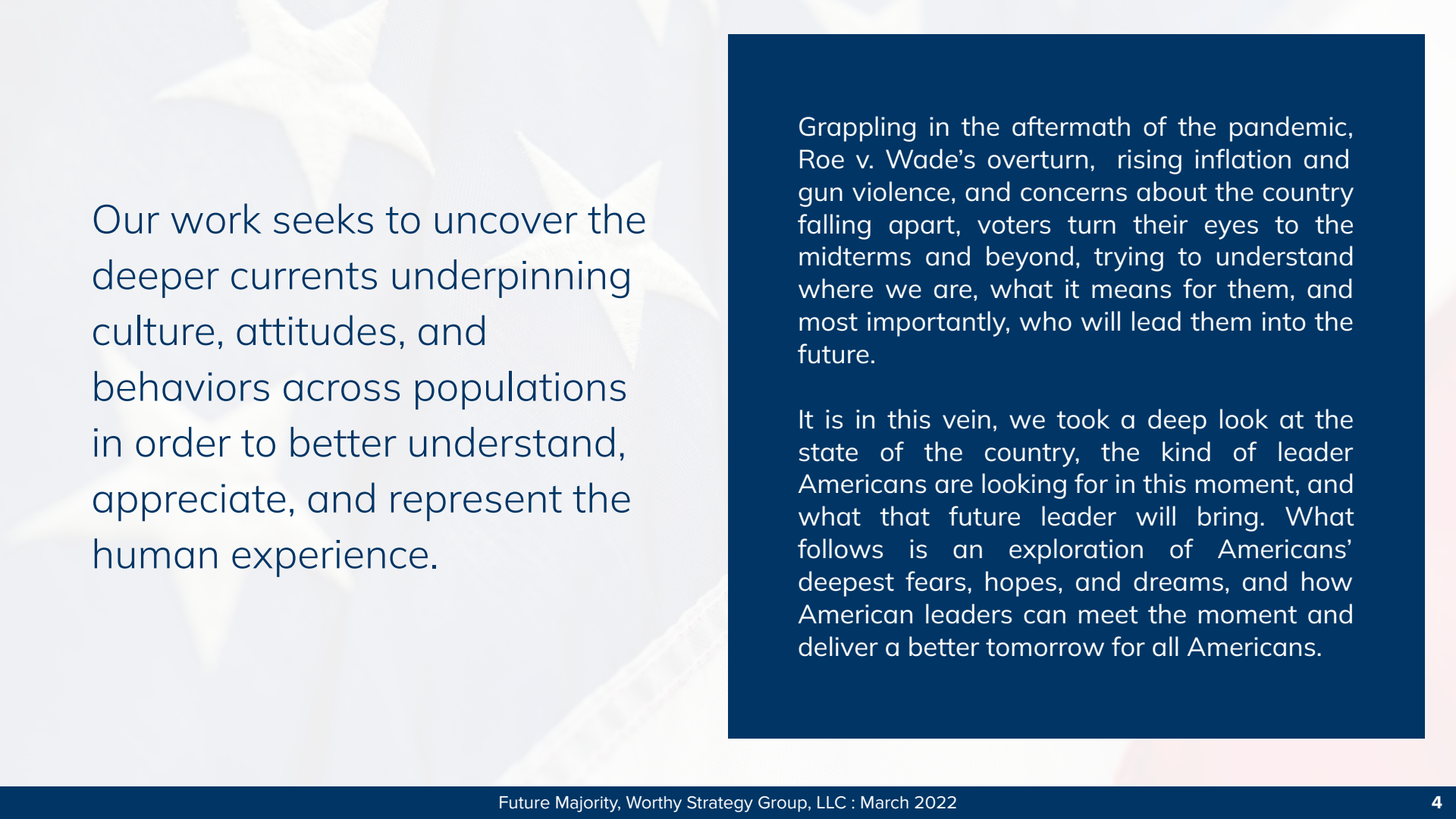
With looming uncertainty and anxiety about the future, **Americans are looking for a Coach to inspire and bring out the best in them so that they can win again and be the hero of the story.**

2

This Coach will have a **vision** and be able to **inspire Americans out of the jam they feel they're in**, will be both **tough and empathetic**, be both a **stable and confident problem solver**, a **transparent and forthright communicator**, and in many ways, be an **outsider and a rule bender**.

3

With this leader in place, **Americans see a brighter, hopeful future that directly contrasts to the despondency we see today**. In this future, everyone will have a role, the country will come together, and will move forward, into a brighter, stronger, more peaceful future.

The background of the slide features a close-up, slightly blurred image of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. The stars are prominent in the upper left and center, while the stripes run diagonally across the lower right.

Our work seeks to uncover the deeper currents underpinning culture, attitudes, and behaviors across populations in order to better understand, appreciate, and represent the human experience.

Grappling in the aftermath of the pandemic, *Roe v. Wade*'s overturn, rising inflation and gun violence, and concerns about the country falling apart, voters turn their eyes to the midterms and beyond, trying to understand where we are, what it means for them, and most importantly, who will lead them into the future.

It is in this vein, we took a deep look at the state of the country, the kind of leader Americans are looking for in this moment, and what that future leader will bring. What follows is an exploration of Americans' deepest fears, hopes, and dreams, and how American leaders can meet the moment and deliver a better tomorrow for all Americans.



# THE WHY BEHIND THE WHAT



# METAPHOR ELICITATION



# WHY THE DIFFERENCE: THE POWER OF DEEP LISTENING



In traditional focus groups, participants speak for an average **3-10 mins total**, sharing whatever thoughts they feel comfortable sharing publicly and are aware of, consciously.

With **polls**, researchers get off-the-cuff responses to closed-ended questions **for at most 10 minutes**.

In **METAPHOR ELICITATION**, participants are asked beforehand to spend several hours gathering images that resonate with them. Trained interviewers then enter into conversation with them for up to two hours in an open-ended discussion on their political thoughts and beliefs, in what often feels like a therapy session. Then, hundreds of hours are spent analyzing what participants have shared.

What this process does is unearth the raw, unvarnished truth - what people truly think and feel.

# THE PARTICIPANTS

**Who:** We spoke to n=40 gettable Democratic voters, including Democrats, Independents, and Moderate Republican voters, from the Far Left to the Moderate Right, all who expressed a willingness to vote for Democrats.

**Where:** The voters came from across the United States - and were a representative sample across measures of race, income, education, location, and gender.

We asked participants to bring in video clips representing:

- Where we are in the United States as a country

We also asked participants to bring in a series of metaphorical images, representing:

- The kind of leader the United States needs
- The impact of the kind of leader the United States needs being in power for eight years

We also explored:

- Their perception of America as a character and what America was asking of them
- Their perception of different American leaders and how they measured up to the moment and their ideals

All video and imagery that follow were provided by the research subjects.





# 01

## STATE OF AMERICA

A VIVID LOOK AT HOW  
AMERICANS VIEW THEIR  
COUNTRY





“As an army corpsman, I fought for my country so my country could continue to be free. So we could continue to be a democratic nation.

**But now it's not the land of the free. Now it's the land of the privileged. It's the land of the powerful. It's the land of the rich.**

And the middle class, the lower class are nothing. They don't matter anymore. They're not people. All they are, are statistics.”

# AMERICA,

# “YOU'RE AN

# ASSHOLE.”

-AMERICAN VOTER

## THE STATE OF AMERICA

# UNCERTAINTY, FEAR, DIVISION, & EXHAUSTION

Interview after interview, our voters shared stories of uncertainty, fear, division, and exhaustion.

- Shooting videos
- Disaster videos
- Videos that represented America as a joke

After all - what happens to a people when they're afraid to walk down the street, when the promises they once believed don't hold any more luster, when the things they counted on have fallen away?





**AMERICA IS DANGEROUS.**  
It's beautiful,  
but **can kill you in a second.**

*What does this say about America?*  
**"In America, I feel terrorized."**





**AMERICA IS SICK.**

It's not what it used to be or perhaps it  
never was what we were sold it to be.

**AMERICA IS FAILING US.**





# AND TO MANY, AMERICA IS A JOKE.

Where promises are made and not fulfilled.  
Where people are treated as disposable  
and nothing they do or say can make a  
difference.





**AND AMERICA IS BROKEN.**  
It's unfixable.



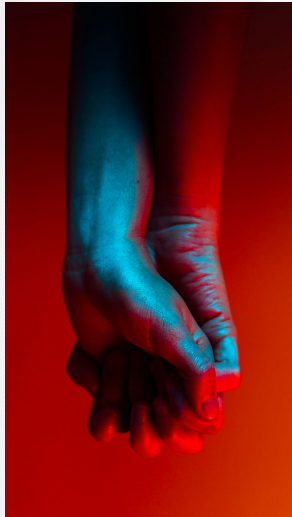
A person is walking away from the viewer down a long, dark, brick-lined tunnel. The tunnel is made of dark bricks and has a high, vaulted ceiling. At the far end of the tunnel, there is a bright, glowing light source, creating a strong silhouette of the person walking. The overall mood is one of hope and perseverance.

**AND YET,**

**DESPITE FEELING  
TRAPPED,  
OVERWHELMED WITH FAILURE,  
AND LESS FREE THAN EVER...**

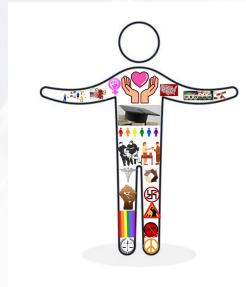
**THERE IS STILL  
A SPARK  
AND  
A VISION  
FOR WHAT COULD BE.**

Because they still dream of  
an America where  
Americans can  
**come together and  
compromise**  
to do things that make life  
better for everyone.

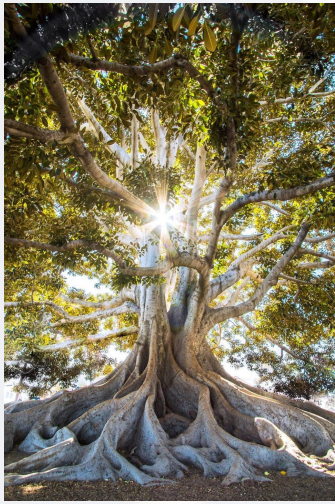




Where Americans can  
**invest in each other,**  
**where everyone**  
**matters...**



And where Americans  
**cultivate a better  
America across  
generations.**





The idea of America has always been about  
**RISK** and **OPTIMISM**.

**We may not be the greatest nation,  
but if we work together, we could be.**

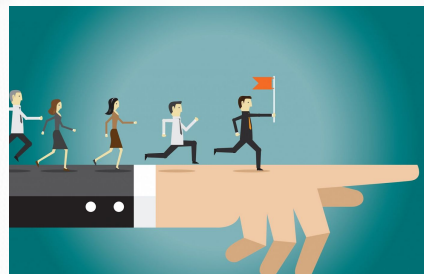






Right now, **we're  
working against  
ourselves** instead of  
working together...

# WE NEED A LEADER.



“WE NEED  
SOMEONE  
**WHO CAN LIFT  
US ALL UP,**  
SO THAT WE AS  
A COUNTRY CAN  
**ACHIEVE  
EVERYTHING**  
THAT WE CAN.”



AMERICANS ARE  
LOOKING FOR  
SOMEONE WHO CAN  
HELP THEM BE **THE  
HERO OF THE STORY.**



**BUT HOW  
DO WE GET  
THERE?**



# 02

## THE KIND OF LEADER THE UNITED STATES NEEDS

QUALITIES AND ARCHETYPES



# WHAT AMERICANS ARE TELLING US IS - **WE NEED A COACH.**

**01**

They're a  
**nurturer.**

**02**

But they're also  
a **challenger.**

**03**

They're  
**fundamentally  
American.**

**04**

And they're **an  
innovator.**

**05**

They **meet the  
moment.**

**06**

And, they're  
**strong, stable,  
and visible.**



## AN INNOVATOR

The get 'er done at all costs quality of Clint Eastwood or any military guy



The innovative and visionary brilliance of a Steve Jobs or Jean Luc Picard or Paul McCartney.



# THE KIND OF LEADER THE U.S. NEEDS

## STRONG, STABLE, AND VISIBLE

A FEARLESS, CLEAR COMMUNICATOR. TRANSPARENT, FORTHRIGHT, NO TELEPROMPTER



STRONG - PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY - TO TAKE DOWN MOUNTAINS AND HELP OTHERS UP



## FUNDAMENTALLY AMERICAN

The earnest, American decency thing - work hard, be nice, look out for the little guy, be the American dream



The peacemaking, calming, and wise qualities of a monk or Mr. Rogers



## A NURTURER

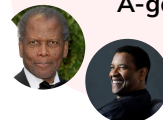
The sacrificial love, devotion to, caring for and attentiveness to people - they see you, they care about you - you are their mission



BALANCE OF HARD/SOFT - JUSTICE WITH COMPASSION



Worthy of respect, a total professional, you got to bring your A-game with them



## A CHALLENGER

The ability to get people to be their best selves; to see more in them than they see in themselves



The calm bravery and rule breaking of standing up to power or bending or changing the rules

Charismatic superhero. Outside the system, uses abundant resources for good,



# CRITICAL WATCHOUT FOR DEMOCRATS

It is not lost on us that when participants sourced imagery for this study - not of politicians - but of characters from history, movies, TV shows, and stories that represented the qualities of the kind of leader the United States needs.

**The overwhelming number of leadership images were of white men. We're not the first to see this problem, and it is clearly something that still needs work.**

A couple of observations. First, we absolutely need more representative and diverse people depicted as leaders in the stories we tell. America's imagination is limited to what they see elevated in their culture, and right now, we're not telling enough stories that show women and people of color as leaders.

Additionally, it is both telling and interesting to see where women and Black, Latino, AAPI, and multiracial leader archetypes did show up in our study.

Women were more likely to show up in the leadership categories of nurturer, challenger, and meeting the moment, but didn't show up at all in the innovator category and barely at all in the fundamentally American category. They also didn't show up as clear and visible communicators.

This tracks with research that we've seen where women are more likely to ascend to leadership when things are especially bad (e.g. "the glass cliff") and echoes the endless labyrinth we understand women have to traverse in order to succeed in business and beyond.

We also want to acknowledge the weight of the fundamentally American category and how some people have historically been included as American and others excluded because of their gender or color of their skin. We don't present this to discourage or exclude, but rather to show where we are, give people a sense of the existing mental models for American leadership and also highlight the opportunities storytellers and those in the political space have to connect with, expand out and redefine these categories in order to include a space for everyone to be a leader.

# THE KIND OF LEADER AMERICA NEEDS

In a Key Senate State Future Majority Poll, participants were asked:

Thinking about your ideal President and the kind of President America needs right now, what kinds of qualities and attributes do they hold?

A Leader	85
Believes America can get better	75
Focused on helping America grow	75
Brings people together	75
Transparent	70
Focused on helping America be strong	69
Focused on helping America heal	67
Focuses on taking care of citizens who are doing the right thing	66
Strong	61
Believes America is great	60
Promotes diversity and inclusion	58
Focused on helping America be great	57

% of Voters



We see the desire for these coach-like qualities reflected in Americans' list of top attributes for President.

They want a leader, of course, but someone who believes in the infinite potential of America and the American people, who can heal and bring the nation together across differences, who can make it stronger and better, and who attends to all citizens' needs - making them better, all while being strong, stable, and visible.

Americans don't want leaders who believe the nation is a lost cause, but rather see America as the underdog who can still pull it out - who know that America's greatest days are ahead of her if we all work together.

Key Senate State Future Majority Poll - FL, AZ, GA, WI, NV, NM, March 2022



## THE LEADER WE NEED

# THE LEADER WE NEED IS A NURTURER

### A NURTURER



The peacemaking, calming, and wise qualities of a monk or Mr. Rogers



The sacrificial love, devotion to, caring for and attentiveness to people - they see you, they care about you - you are their mission





## THE LEADER WE NEED

# THE LEADER WE NEED IS A NURTURER

***They see you and YOU are their mission.***

From Jesus to Leslie Knope to Mr. Rogers, voters talked about **the importance of a leader who really cares** - not just about their constituency, but about everyone. They sought a leader who demonstrated sacrificial love and dedication to others - who saw them, invested in them, cared about them and knew that what really mattered was Americans' well-being, their potential, and their future.

**They also wanted someone with peacemaking and calming qualities** - who could bring peace to the chaos voters were feeling and model the way we should treat each other.

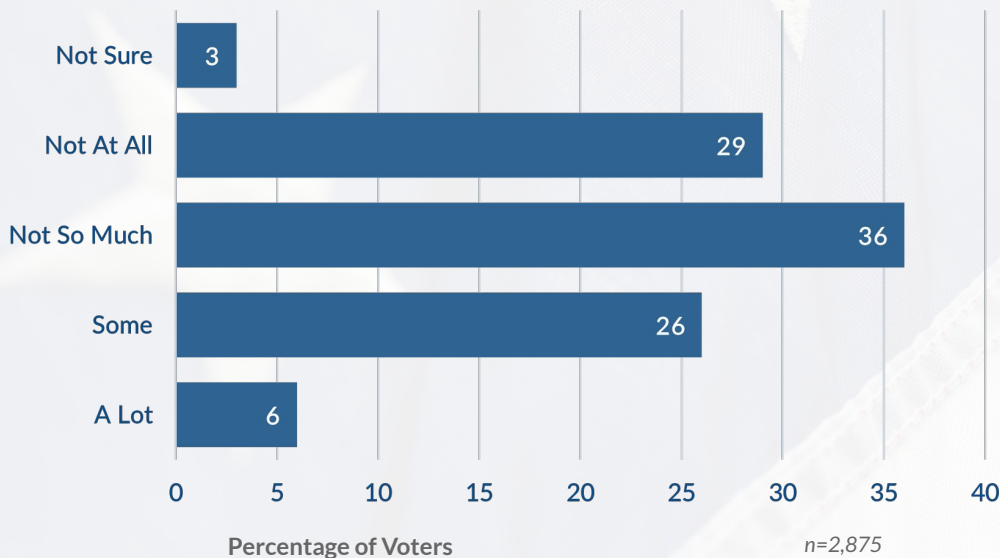
This echoes our larger body of research that suggests both that **Americans don't feel like they matter in America or valued, and they are deeply distressed by America's divisions.**

## THE LEADER WE NEED

# WILL HELP AMERICANS FEEL VALUED

In a Key Senate State Future Majority Poll, participants were asked:

How much do you feel like you matter in America?



**65%** of participants answered  
not so much or not at all.

### Democrat

**54%** of participants answered  
not so much or not at all.

### Republican

**71%** of participants answered  
not so much or not at all.

### Independent

**73%** of participants answered  
not so much or not at all.

Key Senate State Future Majority Poll - FL, AZ, GA, WI, NV, NM, March 2022





## THE LEADER WE NEED

### IS SELF-SACRIFICIAL AND DEDICATED TO OTHERS

For voters, a leader who put others first was tops. Disenchanted with the feeling that their politicians weren't listening to them or attending to their needs, voters shared that a leader who dedicated themselves to their concerns - as opposed to their own - would make a world of difference.

"That's Leslie Knope. Her level of caring and concern for not only for her city, but all the people who live in it, speaks volumes about being a leader. I mean, even if she doesn't get her way, she's going to do the will of the citizens and is going to do it well, she's going to do it quickly and she's going to do it with accuracy. If she came in as leader, she would just put her head down and get things done." **ADAM, DEM VOTER**

"Why is it important that we feel like our leaders care about us? " Because, **like with Jesus, we don't want to feel like a number.** We don't want to just feel like we're robots or that we're just there for them to wait to give their little boring speech or whatever to get our hopes given to them or their applause or are applause for them. **It brings out something that makes me feel good. It makes me feel warm. It makes me feel that I'm cared for. It makes me feel wanted.** It's a very human quality and it's something that people need. People want to know that they're cared about and that they're wanted, that they're not just a number." **CHERYL, INDIE VOTER**

# HAS PEACEMAKING AND CALMING QUALITIES

Concerned about the chaos and division in the United States, voters shared we need a leader who taps into deep wisdom, who is able to center us and remind us of what's important, who can bring us to a more peaceful state and calm the country down.



“Every time when I'm doing my walks, if there's something I don't like, I think, **Mr. Rogers would take it in stride and just keep on walking and enjoying the fact that the sun's shining, the birds are chirping at me to let their little ones know I'm close by, and he would not be upset or irate.** It's almost like a form of meditation. **He calms me and this country needs some calming down.**” **JOSEPH, DEM VOTER**

“A monk has wisdom, taking the time out to really assess things, gain wisdom and knowledge. And that insight that is going to benefit you and everyone around you. So when I think about the monk, I think that **everything they do is for the betterment of the world around them. They seek and they meditate and channel, in a way where they get, they seek a wisdom and a knowledge to be able to guide and to have those things,** I think, to empathize, to have those things for the people to see what's better for everyone.”

**VICTOR, INDIE VOTER**





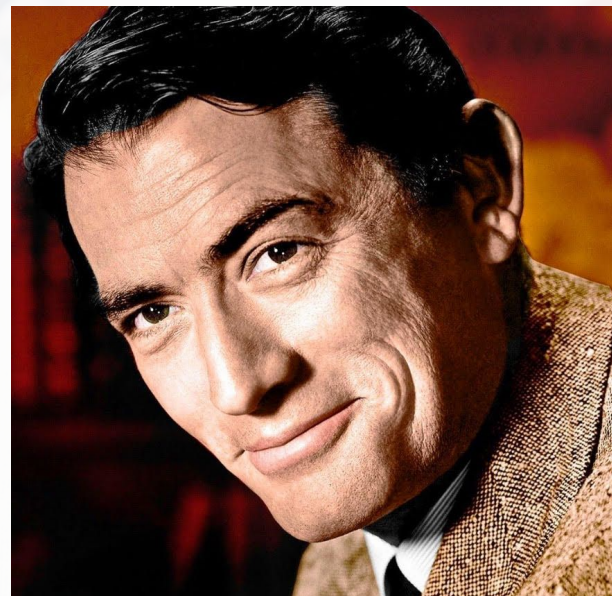
## THE LEADER WE NEED

# IS SOMEONE WHO REALLY CARES

For voters, a leader who put others first was tops. Disenchanted with the feeling that their politicians weren't listening to them or attending to their needs, voters shared that a leader who dedicated themselves to their concerns - as opposed to their own - would make a world of difference.

“When you are a compassionate individual, you stand true to your ideals, you're not easily swayed. **People that are truly compassionate - that's the best of what we got.** Because the ability to see things from another person's perspective is huge...In our divided society right now, it's harder than ever to see something from someone else's perspective. Compassion and empathy mean you can truly get in that other person's shoes, sit across the table from somebody who has ideals that you vehemently disagree with and still try and see where they're coming from and be able to, in a civilized and maybe even in a positive way, address these situations.” **ALLISON, DEM VOTER**

“Gregory Peck came across as very empathic, very emotional. And I don't mean that he cried a lot. He was aware of the emotion that all humans have and he could control them. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which was an early version in our history of racism at its worst. And he was thrust into that position in that movie, but he was able to maintain an integrity and honesty and much more sympathy and empathy than most of us could conjure up maybe in a lifetime in that character.” **RICHARD, DEM VOTER**





## THE LEADER WE NEED

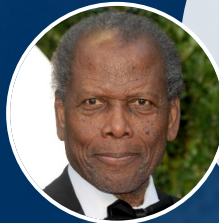
# THE LEADER WE NEED IS A CHALLENGER

## A CHALLENGER

The calm bravery  
and rule breaking  
of standing up to  
power or bending  
or changing the  
rules

The ability to get  
people to be their  
best selves; to  
see more in them  
than they see in  
themselves

Worthy of  
respect, a total  
professional, you  
got to bring your  
A-game with  
them





## THE LEADER WE NEED IS A CHALLENGER

***They stand up to power, demand your A-game, and challenge you to better than you think you can be***

While voters were looking for someone to care for and nurture them, so too were they looking for someone who would see their potential, lift up the country, and bring everyone along.

The kind of leader they felt the country needed was a professional, worthy of respect, who had the rare ability to see more in people and the country than they saw in themselves and get them to be their absolute best.

They also wanted someone comfortable with breaking or bending the rules, understanding that true leadership was, at times, standing up to pre-existing systems, having the vision for better, and finding ways to deliver a better world against all odds.



## THE LEADER WE NEED

# IS SOMEONE WHO DEMANDS OUR A-GAME

“The way Denzel Washington carries himself - he’s definitely maintained a positive image. **He just has a demand for attention and respect without calling for it because of the way that he carries himself.** So I can definitely see him being a good leader for sure. **The way that you carry yourself and the way that you speak to people and the tone of voice that you use, definitely makes people respect you without you even having to ask for it** because he'll listen and understand, "Okay. He's to be taken seriously. He doesn't play." I can still talk to him and approach him, but I know that I have to come a certain way.”

**PARIS, DEM VOTER**

“**Sidney Poitier was amazing.** He went through a tough era. He did movies, he was respectful. He's the type of person you would admire. He accomplished a lot. He was a well-liked person. I think [because] he handled himself in a professional way. **If let's say he would walk in the room, you would want to stand and say, I'd like to shake his hand and just have a conversation with him. To know his thoughts on things.** Other people walk in the room and I'd walk out of the room. **My kids have such respect for him.**” **SANDRA, REPUBLICAN VOTER**





THE LEADER WE NEED

# CHALLENGES INJUSTICE



“I feel like **this represents ideal leadership - she's standing up for justice and she's so calm and very dignified while doing it and I think that the whole energy of her is something that I would love to see in more leadership and less competitiveness and meanness and stuff like that.** Yeah. And bravery too. She's very brave. I think that when it's done correctly, when you have a good message and you speak your truth and you don't bring others down with it and you are thinking of the absolute greatest good possible, not just a few people, yeah, I think that that is brave. If we're quiet and we are scared, then we'll never get what we want.” **ALLISON, DEM VOTER**

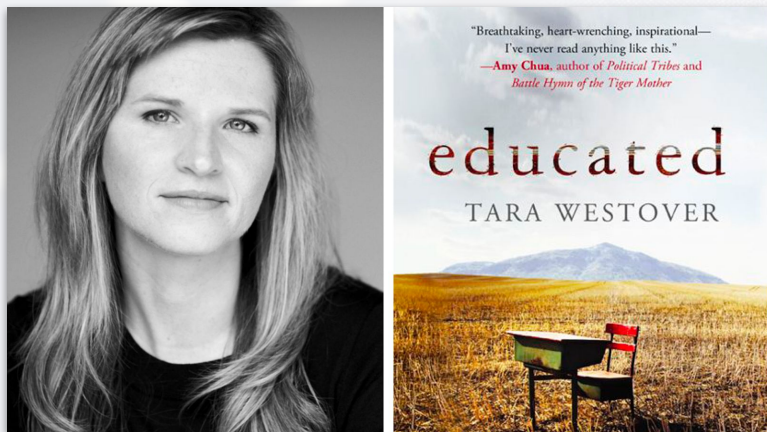


## THE LEADER WE NEED

# BREAKS OR BENDS RULES

“Number one, he's a good guy. And what does that mean? It means that he plays by the rules. He doesn't always agree with them. Sometimes he stretches them. And at the end of the day, he has the world's best interest in mind. So that's the first reason that I chose him. **The second reason I chose him is kind of specifically honing in on, he knows when to bend the rules. He gets the job done. He's fair, but he's not going to put up with those who play unfair.**”

**GEORGE, REPUBLICAN VOTER**



“Tara Westover represents just an incredibly strong person who used education to find what she truly believed in. She was taught one thing as a kid and could have just said, okay, this is how I grew up. But instead **she wanted to learn, and when she went to school, she figured out, well, shoot, this isn't right. The way we treat people and the way we operate in society is not right and came up with her own values and morals and code.** I think she'd be an especially strong leader because she's an independent thinker who took things into her own hands to develop her opinions through education.”

**ADAM, DEM VOTER**



## THE LEADER WE NEED

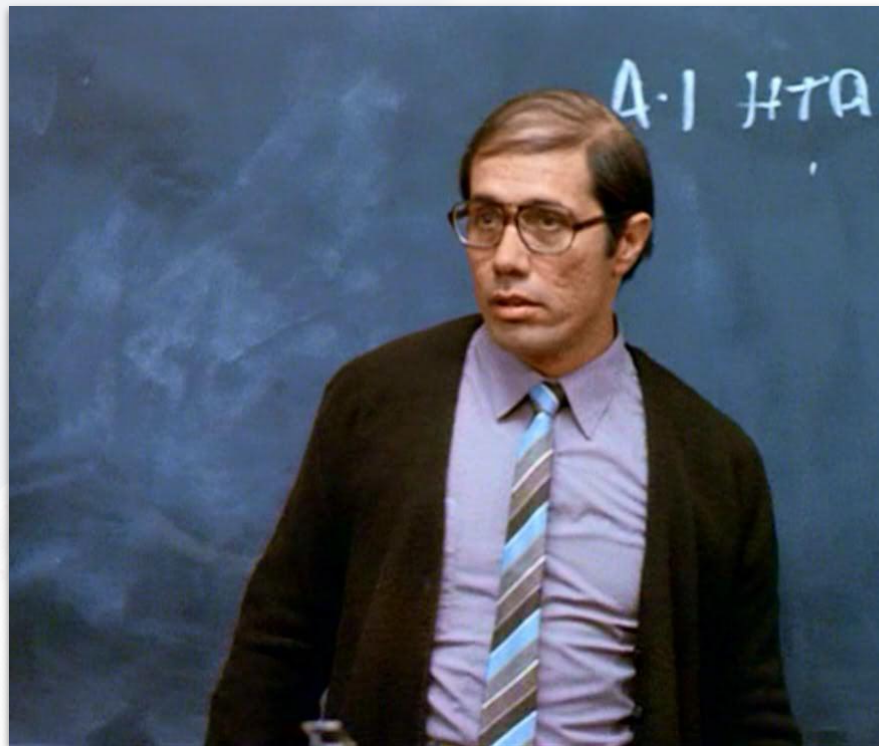
# SEES MORE IN US THAN WE SEE IN OURSELVES

“This teacher takes a classroom of kids that nobody ever thought would do anything or be good at anything and they end up going from basic to advanced math so they end up passing the AP math test. **The task he was able to do - he inspired these kids that had pretty much lost hope. They didn't think they were going to be anything, or didn't have much confidence in what they would be.**

**He empowered and encouraged them until they were able to achieve the things he believed they could achieve, so he helped them reach their maximum potential...**

When it comes to leadership in the United States, **a leader like this would inspire us to do things that would be good for everyone and maybe also inspire people to try to achieve more or do more, or pursue that American dream that we all hear so much about.”** **RANDY,**

**REPUBLICAN VOTER**







**THE LEADER WE NEED**

**MOTIVATES OTHERS BECAUSE THEY INSPIRE**

**“Well, yes, they can inspire, get you excited, want you to get active in things. We've had leaders on both sides of the aisle that have gotten the other side riled up because they've made people so mad. They haven't made them inspired to do good things. They've made them mad to go out and act against them. I mean, maybe it motivates, in some cases, but if you're inspired out of anger to act, that's kind of scary.**

**But if you're motivated because you can see how much they care about the country and us doing well I mean, that's a positive thing, obviously. But it takes a charismatic leader to do that. With that, you win people over. People like you. People want to follow you.”**

**DON, INDIE VOTER**



## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

# CHALLENGES AND BRINGS OUT THE BEST IN US

“**Vince Lombardi** represents integrity. This is a solid, honest man. His players used to say, "He treats us all the same, like dogs." He was a tough guy. He really asked a lot of people. **That's what I'm looking for in a leader, is someone who challenges people.** Someone who says, "Hey, we expect certain things from you. We have a right to make certain demands of you, and that you meet certain challenges." I think that kind of a guy is a motivator, which is what he was above all else.

Just absolutely rock solid as far as beliefs and values. Untold players have said that they went on to successful careers after their football career ended because of him. I think he can help people be successful. Build up their self-confidence. **Sometimes coaching is two things, who to pat on the back and who to kick in the butt. And Lombardi knew that.** He was very good at motivating people. He knew which kind of buttons to push, which guys were maybe a little more sensitive, and you couldn't get on so much, and others who were maybe a little lazy, and you pushed a little bit more. I think that's the kind of guy who would get the most out of his cabinet, his constituents, whatever kind of role that he has. This is a guy who will set expectations for people, but then he will help support them in order to get those, in order to meet those expectations, and to achieve those goals. I just, I look at him, and I just have the feeling of possibility of things that could be done.”

**BRIAN, REPUBLICAN VOTER**



# “We must invest in America because Americans are worth it. When you invest in Americans, **OUR POTENTIAL IS LIMITLESS.**”

Swing State Future Majority  
Messaging Poll, December 2021

In the research we've conducted, we've found that Americans want a government that clears away barriers to productivity and invests in their success, without controlling them.

The notion of a coach who knows how to get the most of Americans speaks to Americans' deep-seated belief that American potential is limitless and that the American people are worth investing in.

91%

**of Democrats**  
Agree or strongly  
agree with this  
statement.

82%

**of Republicans**  
Agree or strongly  
agree with this  
statement.

81%

**of Independents**  
Agree or strongly  
agree with this  
statement.

85% of participants agree or strongly agree with this statement.



## THE LEADER WE NEED

# THE LEADER WE NEED IS FUNDAMENTALLY AMERICAN

**FUNDAMENTALLY  
AMERICAN**



The earnest,  
American decency  
thing - work hard,  
be nice, look out for  
the little guy, be the  
American dream





## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED IS FUNDAMENTALLY AMERICAN

***They embody the best American ideals - hard work, respect, and looking out for the little guy***

Beyond the desire for a nurturer and a challenger, voters desired a leader who was fundamentally American.

For voters, this meant a longing for that uniquely American kind of decency, the kind embodied by Mr. Rogers, Ted Lasso, Keanu Reeves or even the Rock. They wanted somebody who lived out the American Dream to give them confidence that it's still possible - who spoke forthrightly, worked hard to achieve, who always saw the good in others and inspired people to be their better selves.

It was about earnestness, being nice, and looking out for the little guy - getting mad at injustice and then doing something about it. And it was about the kind of optimism that allows you to dream big - whether it's making it to the moon first or imagining something better for everybody and then putting in the hard work to make it so.





## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

# IS A DECENT HUMAN BEING

“Someone like Keanu Reeves - he’s compassionate. The most important reason to have a compassionate leader is **to meet people where they’re at and understand their their frustration, the pain that they might be going through and empathize and listen to them.** Instead of just talking, taking the time to sit and listen with them. I think that more **people would get behind a leader like that for the good of the country.** The more people that are rallying behind the leader, the more change and good we can do moving forward. That's how I see it.” **LINDSAY, REPUBLICAN VOTER**



“I was a supervisor for about 20 years and always told people, any management tidbits I picked up were from watching Andy Griffith on the Andy Griffith Show. He represented someone who was **very reassuring, very honest, very straightforward with people. He was supportive. He had a lot of social intelligence in how he could work with all the different people.** He was somebody people trusted. He was somebody that they believed in and that they thought if something came up, he could handle it. He would take care of it and it would be fair to all sides. So that's what I was looking for in my choice of him. Now he could get angry and that's fine. There are things worth being angry about. He made mistakes sometimes. But he overcame them. He was able to admit when he was wrong.” **BRIAN, REPUBLICAN VOTER**





THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

# IS A CHEERLEADER FOR AMERICA

"This is a character from a game called Street Fighter V. He's very Abraham Lincoln inspired. He's very much a cheerleader for America. You could even compare him a little bit to a Black church pastor. He is very excited, energetic. This is America. This is one world, one Earth. Unite us all with the ability of one Earth. And he's got that showman's charisma, that positivity, that energy that I do think America needs. He's a cheerleader for America in the ways that some people saw Ronald Reagan as a cheerleader for America. There's also this idea ingrained into its cultural identity. America's cultural identity is in a crisis state right now. And a person like this could really help to make that better and restore it, by being a cheerleader for America, acknowledging the problems of the present, acknowledging the problems of the present and the past, but still having faith and having the energy and optimism to move forward and say that, "Hey, we can get these problems done and we're going to get them done." **BAILEY, DEM VOTER**

## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

# EMBODIES OPTIMISM AND DRIVE

Optimism was a critical component of the kind of leader voters needed. With a feeling that there isn't enough for everyone and tension around who gets what, an optimistic leader who messages that there will be enough for everyone and that Americans have the potential to deliver that future will deeply resonate with what voters need to hear.

**“Ted Lasso is about optimism and determination and being honest and fair, and all about doing what's right for the team. He could take criticism, but still did what was right for the team. He had a backstory of a lot of difficulties but was still optimistic and determined to build a winning team...I think having somebody that behaves that way is a good example. He expects people on his team to behave that way. When people see somebody acting honest and fair and trying to do what's best for everybody, they have a tendency to gravitate toward that as well, to act like that. The recent things that have happened on a national perspective, if you've got politicians that are name calling and basically stabbing people in the back or turning their backs on people because they have a different opinion, that trickles down to everybody in society.”** **ROBERT, REPUBLICAN VOTER**

**“We need someone like Dwayne Johnson - who embodies a good heart and is doing stuff, not so much for a photo op, but out of the genuineness of doing something good for someone else...The impact of that is its going to reach a broader audience, because it's organic and natural, rather than an act fake - more people can get behind a leader who is genuine, rather than a leader who is acting the part. People can read through the authenticity degree, if it's real or if it's fake eventually, so I think that's huge and the fact that I can relate to someone if they're being true or not, and more people will help relay the message and help change if that message is authentic.”** **LINDSAY, REPUBLICAN VOTER**







**THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED**

## **FIGHTS FOR HER COMMUNITY**

“A leader like Michelle Obama is very powerful, very outspoken, but in a positive way. Doesn't back down to anyone, but really fights for what's right...what should be given since it has been earned. And that would be for all people, White, Black, anyone. Since it's pretty much a birthright when you're here, born in the United States, or no matter where you're born. You should have access to basic necessities easily. And even things aren't basic - you should have access to things that you want and that you desire. Then you should have the resources to be able to know how to get them as well. I think she would ask me to be a light in the community, gather resources to help young women get where they need to be. Be a mentor and just prepare the younger generation for the future. And do it in a positive way.” **PARIS, DEM VOTER**



## THE LEADER WE NEED

# THE LEADER WE NEED IS AN INNOVATOR

## AN INNOVATOR

The get 'er  
done at all costs  
quality of Clint  
Eastwood or any  
military guy



The innovative and  
visionary brilliance of  
a Steve Jobs or Jean  
Luc Picard or Paul  
McCartney.



## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED IS AN INNOVATOR

***They see the way forward, casting a positive future vision and finding new ways to push through sticky problems***

Our research continually confirms that Americans are afraid of the future and see the nation at a tipping point. Devoid of a positive future vision for America, voters talk about their fears - of losing their jobs, of their kids being worse off, of the planet being destroyed - and strongly desire an innovator to lead - who can see a better future ahead for them where there is enough for everyone, and find ways to get us there.

This innovation is two-fold. The first is the kind of innovation embodied by the genius of Steve Jobs or a Star Trek Captain. It is seeing something better and plunging ahead into the future, taking big risks to ensure a better future for everyone. And the second is a Macgyver kind of innovation - the ability to get things done and make things happen, regardless of the tools at hand.

With America at a perceived standstill due to partisan bickering, our voters are looking for an innovator who can pull them through to a brighter future.





## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

# TAKES RISKS AND IS A VISIONARY

“Well, the first one who would be an ideal leader is Steve Jobs. He wasn't great at everything, but he was an innovator, and had a lot of drive, and a very succinct vision. **A leader is someone who helps cultivate a shared image of us.** JFK did a good job of doing this. Abraham Lincoln, of course, George Washington, of course, all of these leaders, they create a good sense of group identity. And they define, what is our group? **I think a lot of the vision for America that's really good is forward-thinking, technological, innovative.** And to have a person who embodies that notion would be really good for this country.”

**BAILEY, DEM VOTER**



“Patrick Stewart in Star Trek was willing to take risks often, but it was always very calculated. He was portrayed as always being in command, in charge even of the risk that he involved himself, the Federation, and his ship. I mean, it was a very calculated risk, and he always came across as very knowledgeable, very intelligent. I mean, he seemed to have a strong sense of intuition. His intelligence was more than just the average person because **I don't think small minds can think on a large scale. You need a bigger mind, and be more open minded.** You have to be more open about your surroundings, about different opinions, but you have to have the intelligence to weed the good from the bad, to weed out the good possibilities from possibly the bad alternatives.” **RICHARD, DEM VOTER**

## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

# PUTS THEMSELVES ON THE LINE

With a feeling that the country was a standstill, voters indicated the need for someone who got things done, hand in hand with the American people. Military experience was brought up a lot for its ethos of delivering against all odds as well as the notion of doing whatever it took to complete the mission.

**“Bill Paxton in Independence Day puts himself on the line.** I think a lot of it for me, the Commander-in-Chief of the country doesn't necessarily have to have any military background. **I hate to say that you have to have a military background to be President, but it wouldn't hurt.** Just going through bootcamp, going through the rigorous conditions, and the way of thinking, and the discipline, as opposed to being in Congress for 30 years and indebted to the lobbyists... Somebody that just cuts through the nonsense and does what's best for the people.” **SHAWN, DEM VOTER**

**“This is Daredevil - he is almost proactive to a fault,** but he has a reflective side to him. I feel like a leader should be able to make a snap judgment if necessary, and then be able to walk it back, and be able to bring that in.” **VICTORIA, INDIE VOTER**







## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

# IS SOMEONE WHO GETS IT DONE

Not succeeding is not an option for the kind of leader voters say we need. They want someone who is able to execute, no matter what, and fulfill the promises on hand.

“What I like about Jack Bauer - he gets things done. Like **when he makes a promise, he gets it done**. His ability is to execute and get things done and make promises, so make promises and fulfill those promises.” **MAURICE, INDIE VOTER**

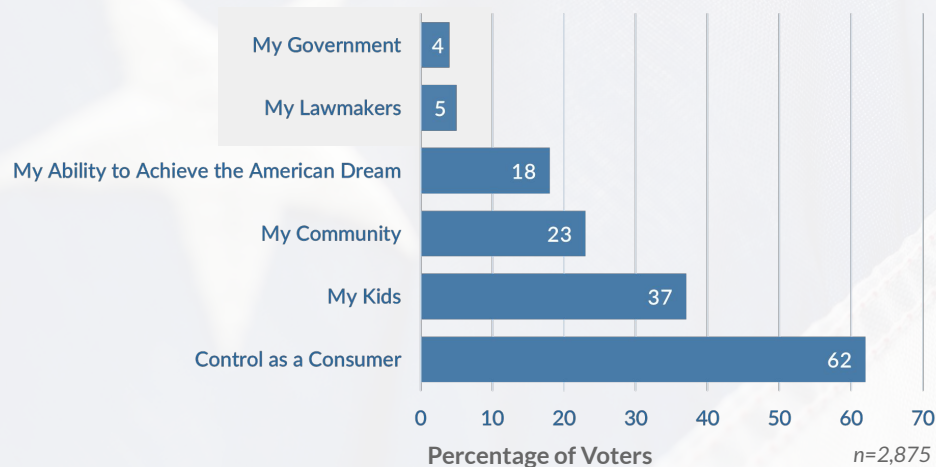


“Clint Eastwood would be the type of president that I could see getting there, getting his hands dirty, and then smoke a cigar on top of that. Get the two parties to butt heads and get it done. He takes no nonsense. He's straight to the point. **He doesn't mind doing the dirty work. That's what we need now. We need a leader that will go into it.** Just butt heads with everyone and put him in a room and box it out and don't leave until they both find an agreement.” **OWEN, INDIE VOTER**

# GETTING IT DONE IS ABOUT RESTORING CONTROL

In a Key Senate State Future Majority Poll, participants were asked:

Where do you feel like you have control these days, if anywhere? Please select all that apply.



**9%** of participants answered “my lawmakers” or “my government”

## Democrat

**16%** of participants answered “my lawmakers” or “my government”

## Republican

**05%** of participants answered “my lawmakers” or “my government”

## Independent

**06%** of participants answered “my lawmakers” or “my government”

Key Senate State Future Majority Poll - FL, AZ, GA, WI, NV, NM, March 2022



## THE LEADER WE NEED

# THE LEADER WE NEED MEETS THE MOMENT

MEETS THE  
MOMENT



Reluctant leader  
(history calls them),  
charisma, ability to unite,  
innate nobility, decency,  
value-driven, self-sacrificial,  
deep experience “been  
through it” factor, strong -  
inside and out, does  
what’s best for  
the team



## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED MEETS THE MOMENT

***HISTORY CALLS THEM - THEY RISE UP BECAUSE WE NEED THEM, NOT BECAUSE THEY SEEK POWER***

The reluctant leader trope came up again and again across our voters, who shared that they were looking for someone with a certain innate nobility, decency, and self-sacrificial quality. Who wasn't looking to lead or seek power for themselves, but in this moment, because of larger forces at play, had been called to do so.

This leader was value-driven, self-sacrificial, and had an essential, "been through it" factor, whether it was having to face down enemies, bring people through tough times, or take on incredibly difficult situations.

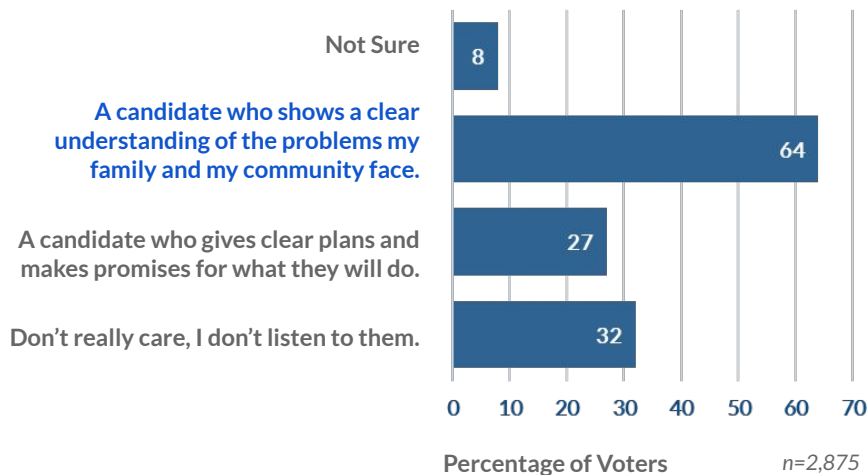
They were strong, they were able to unite the people by leading a team, and had the innate charisma and skill set for the moment to have people follow them and take on bigger problems.



# THE KIND OF LEADER AMERICANS NEED WILL DEEPLY UNDERSTAND THEM

In a Key Senate State Future Majority Poll, participants were asked:

What is more important to you when you think about which candidate to vote for?



This idea of a leader who had been through it was echoed in our research about voters' desire for a candidate who "shows a clear understanding of the problems my family and my community face" over one who gave clear plans and made promises for what they will do.

The deep understanding that comes from having been there and having skin in the game deeply resonated with voters when thinking through the kind of leader they need.

Key Senate State Future Majority Poll - FL, AZ, GA, WI, NV, NM, March 2022

## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

# PREPARES US FOR THE CHALLENGES WE FACE

**“Gandalf is someone that's an educator.** I think that's important. Getting the next generation ready to handle these problems is what's most important. It's the next generation that's going to be the ones dealing with climate change, that's going to be dealing with resource shortages... **The problems are not going to go away so we need to mentor these other generations into being able to handle their problem. That's what Gandalf did. He took the little hobbits and knew that there was a big problem that he couldn't solve on his own.** And he knew that he had to take these little hobbits and lead them to solve the problem.” **MACY, INDIE VOTER**

**“Obi Wan Kenobi helps train people.** Those are great values to have. I feel like if you're able to train somebody, even though now I think about it, of course, they did not go down the right path. So they did try to provide multiple opportunities to help train people. **Not everybody's capable of training people. It's very valuable. Being able to lead people into battle or, I mean, I think, just in general, just leading people. That's very important.** And not everybody can be born a leader or molded into a leader. Having pursuing that route, **that shows a level of skills and knowledge that other people do not possess.”** **JASON, DEM VOTER**



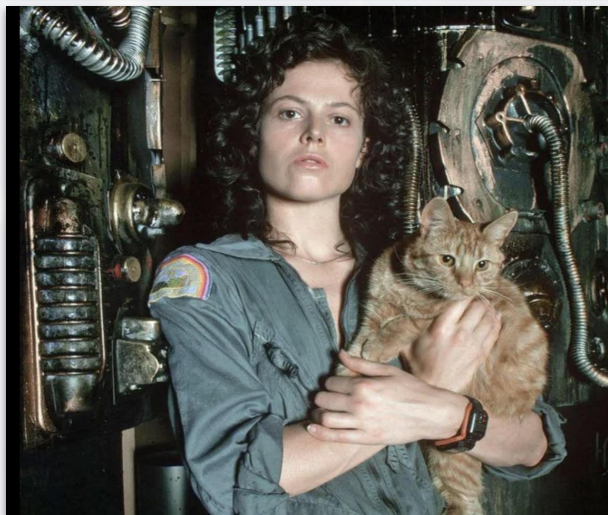




## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

# IS CHOSEN BY HISTORY

“I think his reluctance was more indicative of a person who was conflicted as to whether or not he had the right qualities to lead our country. Not that he couldn't lead but rather was he the right person? And I think it's important for people to take a good introspective look at themselves in order to ensure that they're always reflecting on who they are as a person and whether or not they have the right ideas, the right principles to lead a nation. I mean, I've obviously seen people that were not qualified to lead a nation.” **JOHN, DEM VOTER**



“She's not a leader at all. She is actually one of the disgruntled crew members who is just really pissed off that they have to stop. But as they begin to realize that they've got an alien on board, the captain of the ship sends them out. They all head out and one by one they die. She's right there. She doesn't run away. She's right there with everybody, but she survives. She ends up setting the ship to blow up. Manages to get in the escape pod, ejects the thing and the ship blows up and what a wonderful life. She persevered, she helped out everybody else as best she could, but she didn't, she didn't, she didn't give up when they fell by the wayside. She just kept on keeping on, and she did whatever she had to do.” **GEORGE, REPUBLICAN VOTER**

“Jon Snow embodies a lot of the same characteristics that Obi-Wan does, they're just two different people. I mean, if you look at it from a high level, I feel like they share, literally, all the same traits. They're both strong with their morals. I think they also have great leadership skills. I mean, that's why they were able to unite people when literally there was no people to unite, or trying to help unite people. Because I know, in the shows for Star Wars with Obi-Wan, they have to go to other countries and help try to rid them of the bad people, of the droids, and whatnot. **So uniting the citizens there with the Republic, that was something that Obi-Wan had to do, while Jon Snow also has to do that with the people up north, and then all the just different kingdoms in general to fight against Cersei. So it shows you need that ability to unite people, which is what the president needs to do. They need to unite everybody, so then we can proceed as a country, different kingdoms and whatnot....**I think, personally, both Obi Wan and Jon Snow have their ability to be charismatic. So when they're presenting speeches, you know what you're getting. You're enticed just how their speeches are. I feel like they're structured in a way to where it motivates you. I feel like a lot of politicians today aren't really that motivating or they shouldn't be politicians anymore, but more because they're getting old and they don't really have that passion, I feel.” **JASON, DEM VOTER**



THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED CAN **UNITE THE PEOPLE**



## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

# INSPIRES OTHERS

“This character here, he's not the strongest, nor the smartest. There's a big, strong, older brother that if you're looking for someone who can power through or take care of whatever issues he'd be it. There's another kid in their crew who's a little Asian kid that's really smart and has all these devices and inventions he creates. He's really intelligent. There are other charismatic kids that can sway what they do or where they go. **But this guy was an odd one that ended up being a leader. He's a average sized kid who's got asthma, needs his inhaler, and inspired them all to go on this hunt for this treasure. And there were many instances where they wanted to quit, they wanted to leave, but he was the one that was the inspiration, rallying cry to keep everybody going forward until they finally succeeded and found the treasure.** He's not necessarily someone that has external qualities that would make you think, "I'm going to follow this person," but the way he was able to talk to everyone else in the group inspired them to rally behind him.”

**RANDY, REPUBLICAN VOTER**



## THE LEADER WE NEED

# THE LEADER WE NEED IS STRONG, STABLE, & VISIBLE



**A fearless, clear  
communicator,  
transparent,  
forthright, no  
teleprompter**



**STRONG,  
STABLE, &  
VISIBLE**

**Strong -  
physically and  
mentally - to take  
down mountains  
and help others  
up**



**Balance of  
hard/soft -  
justice with  
compassion**





## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED IS STRONG, STABLE, & VISIBLE

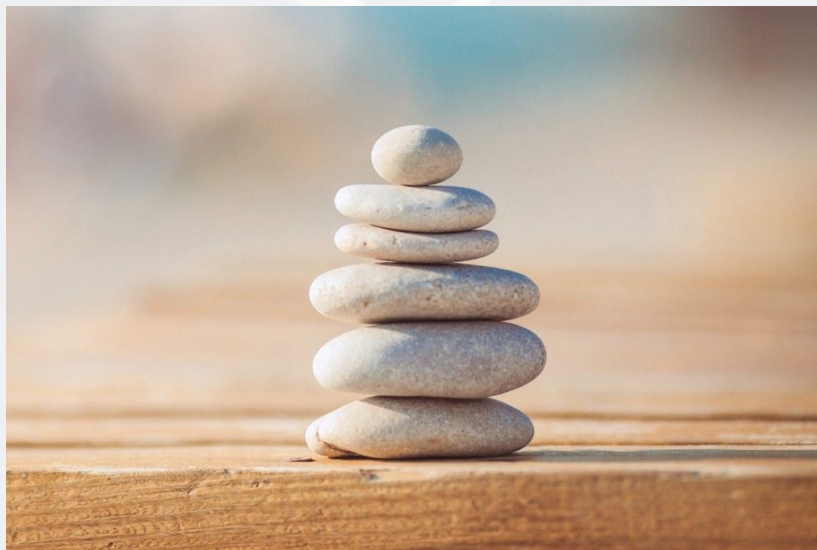
***On top of everything else, the kind of leader we need must be strong enough to take on big things, stable to keep things in balance, and visible, to build trust***

In our research, we continually find that three essential elements must exist for any kind of leader that the American people want - they must be strong, they must be stable, and they must be visible.

First, strong - they must be strong enough to take on the task at hand and project strength. This can show up as a physical requirement - to look strong - but it also shows up as mental toughness - being able to stand up for America, as Americans want to see their leaders keep them safe.

Second, stable. Americans need to know that their leaders are stable and won't swing wildly one way or another. They need to know their leaders are dependable and anchoring the country so they can sleep at night.

Lastly, visible. Americans need to see what their leaders are doing. They need transparency and they need clarity so they can trust their leaders.



## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED IS STRONG

“I think Batman was very respected. He had the correct issues at heart. He was looking out to do good for the people, he wanted to protect Gotham City, he would do anything that it took to get rid of the bad guys. He was, I think, honest. And he was very much loved by his peers. **And I think he showed strength, he showed strength, he showed power, he showed that there's nothing he wouldn't do to get the job done.** Like Zelensky, he's fighting for his people. I don't think there's anything that he wouldn't do to fight for his country. He's proven that. He's gone above and beyond. He doesn't show fear. He is really trying to take care of his people. He loves his country. He shows strength and he is not going to go down without a fight. And I think that he's really somebody to be really respected. *[What's the impact of these qualities that you're describing to me?]* I think it makes the country come together as a whole, and to fight as a team. People become more patriotic. People really care about each other. You don't see them fighting amongst each other, you see them really coming together to protect their country. You see them showing love for each other. It's not a country torn apart, like I think we are right now.” **ELAINE, DEM VOTER**

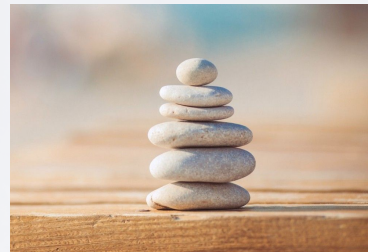




## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED IS STABLE

“I think with just having a very stable leader, I think who, like I said, is supportive of all those type of things would lead to more calmness amongst us. I feel there's a large population of people that just feel like they're never going to get ahead. They're never going to have that ability. This is all stacked against us. But if we have someone who can overcome those thoughts, I think we can, as a country, just get along better.” **JENNIFER, REPUBLICAN VOTER**

“I think that so many things happening, you have to remain level headed to make good decisions, and you just can't do that by being a hothead or being someone who knows everything, because even as a leader you still have to be laid as well because you won't know everything. I think that just helps being a leader, especially when you would be waiting in entire country...I think it allows people to respect you more and you... It allows you to be approachable. I know it allows people to be able to deal with issues that they have no matter how good or bad, because they feel as if you at least listen to what they had to say to try to come up with a solution.” **PARIS, DEM VOTER**





## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED BALANCES JUSTICE WITH COMPASSION

**“Lola Carmichael balances justice with compassion and mercy. And sometimes that gets her in trouble.** So it gets her in trouble where she decides, instead of punishing a guy who was, I think, in a DUI and sending him to treatment, he ends up going back and I think he ends up in a police chase and great, like you should have punished him, and she has to deal with those repercussions.

**And I like that. I like the balance of justice and humanity and compassion because the reality is people make mistakes. And where do we err on compassion?”**

**MAURICE, INDIE VOTER**



## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

# COMMUNICATES CLEARLY AND FORTHRIGHTLY

“Michael Douglas in the movie, The American President, starts dating, and everyone is bothering him for just dating. He finally has had enough and goes out to make a speech that just puts everybody in their place. **It was inspiring because he went out and he wasn't afraid of what people were going to say about him. He wasn't afraid about what the opinions he was going to have or anything. He just went out and just said what he needed to say. And that was it.** After he was done with that, you had to look up to him. You had to revere him as a leader. It's one of the points that's always stuck with me. **He didn't give any BS or beating around the bush. He just laid it out, and that was it.**

Leaders nowadays are afraid of what they say. Not what they say, but how they say it, because they're more afraid of offending people than just saying what needs to be said. I think that while you should not offend people, I think they're being a little too careful. **I think being clear and concise in what you're saying and doing, what you need, what you want - someone like that would be someone to really look up to.”** JAY, INDIE VOTER



## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

# IS TRANSPARENT

“And so I think a leader of this country, the idea of encouraging to persevere, I think that it comes with transparency. I think that's very important. I don't believe that the leaders we've had are transparent enough. We're talking to the nation, to followers. And I think that's a part of it. That's a major part of it. **And in that transparency, even if it's not so great, being able to say, Hey, we can get through this. We're going to, so this is the plan, right. And this is how we're going to move forward. This is what I'm going to do. This is what we're going to do as a country. And I'm here with you. So I think that is very, very important.”** **VICTOR, INDIE VOTER**

“The kind of leader we need would **have to be super transparent and be super honest because with politicians, I always assume that they're putting up a front.** I never take what they say at face value...it would have to be someone that is so honest and open with where they get their funding, their motives are, where they came from, **that it wouldn't leave any room for lies or ulterior motives.”** **MACY, INDIE VOTER**



**“It's tough to be transparent and tell it like it is.** For example, if the state of the union address was just him being like, **look, man, I don't know what's going on. We got school shootings, we got racism, we got COVID, we got this, that and the third and I'm just trying to do the best I can, but I can't do it alone. If it would just be like that, I'd be like, oh shit, he's talking to me instead of talking politics.** Because I really don't know what you're talking about, I don't know this committee... I have no idea. But if you're just like, Hey, I need help, I'm working with people, this is what I think. And that's another thing you got to be willing to say what you think, because that's also tough because a lot of times, if I say what I think I'm probably not going to get voted. So it's tough, but I **just want someone to be real with me, that would be great.”** **ERIKA, INDIE VOTER**



## THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

# IS PEOPLE SAVVY

**“I actually think the kind of leader we need would have to be really, really savvy about crowd and tribe psychology. They would have to understand how to have people want to cooperate with them. You don't antagonize them. You try to build rapport with them. Maybe if you're starting the conversation, highlight some similar sort of principle that you both believe in. They would be able to be a good judge of character and find people elsewhere in government who really shouldn't be there and are doing more harm than good and then can find replacements for them because they can't do it all alone. And it has to actually be not just this one person, but because the US government is very complex, there are different branches, more people than just a president need to be similar to this for something to change.”** **HELENA, INDIE VOTER**

## A NOTE ON OUTSIDER SUPERHEROES



The charismatic superhero who is outside the system and uses their abundant resources for good was identified in our research. It was notable both how infrequently they showed up and how disconnected they were in voters' minds from the other qualities they associated with ideal leadership, namely, coaching and leading a team vs. acting as an individual coming in to save the day. This echoes our finding about Americans wanting to be the heroes of the story (not their leaders) and underlines how critical it is for America's political leaders to tell a story that not only includes, but features Americans as the star players in the equation.





“The military picture shows how **we need strength in our leaders**. Because we’re dealing with other countries - we need to be strong and signify that no one can attack us or we’re not going to roll over if something happens. With that military background, it gives you more of a perspective - they know about sacrifice. Not everyone is willing to do that. **The way he’s looking that guy in the eye - it shows he can connect with and lead a diverse population. And it represents comfort. The fact that he’s holding his head and letting him know that he’ll be there for him and support him.** But then also give him direction and just say, “I’m a leader. This is what you need to do. And if you follow my instructions, everything will be okay.” It helps that you see **someone who’s capable of leadership, who has the youth, who has the strength, who looks strong, who’s done the work themselves.** It’s easier to follow **someone that has already sacrificed** and knows how to do it and succeeded at it. He’s out there with them, working with them.” MARY, INDIE VOTER

The background of the slide is a dark blue-tinted image of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. A white rectangular border frames the central text area.

# 03

## THE IMPACT OF THE KIND OF LEADER WE NEED

8 YEARS IN POWER



“It's after forest fire,  
after the cataclysm,  
after this terrible  
thing has happened -  
it's a sense of renewal  
and it's not like the  
whole thing's going  
to be better, but  
you're going to see  
that progress is  
happening and things  
are starting to grow  
back. Things are  
starting to be  
repaired.”

**ROB, INDIE VOTER**



# EVERYONE HAS A ROLE AND **DIFFERENCES ARE RESPECTED AND APPRECIATED**



With the ideal leader in power for 8 years, **participants envisioned a future where everyone matters– no role or part was too small – and differences were not only respected, but appreciated, eliminating some (if not all) of the tension and strife they feel today.** There was **hope we could come together with our different and varied experiences and perspectives to solve problems,** and ultimately see each other as the humans we are.





“You need to have the ideas flowing in a logical sense because if you have someone trying to throw you off track, then nothing's going to move. Right now - everybody in America's part of that image but this isn't how we are today. Right now, [some] people [are] facing the other direction...[and] nothing's moving. They've got good ideas probably, I don't really know what those ideas would be, but we're all trying to work towards something, but some people want to do it like this and some people want to do it like this, and it's kind of like, you're not going to do anything, but if the ultimate goal is world peace, but we're fighting wars because we can't figure out the best way to do that, it's just so silly.”

**ERIKA, INDIE VOTER**

# EVERYONE HAS A ROLE AND DIFFERENCES ARE RESPECTED AND APPRECIATED

“Nobody in this image is alike. But everybody in this image look like they having the best time of their life. Nobody is dead. Nobody has a gun. Nobody is cursing. Nobody is putting somebody on the ground. But **everybody is different**. We got a few different shades in there. We got different genders, different cultures. But everybody's enjoying themselves... To me, it's **embracing the difference**, but still just like, "I could have fun with you. You want to wear your tutu? Let's still have fun." *Why is it important to have this?* Because I feel like, as kids, we're all raised different... So the togetherness is embracing every type of person, no matter what they're different from you. **Just because they're different don't mean that something is wrong with them. Just mean that they're different.** - **JASMINE, INDIE VOTER**



“I talk about the **inclusion and the diversity** in terms of races, as well as every profession. No profession is too small or too big. So again, respect comes there...[We'd be] inclusive of every community. Could be race, it could be ethnicity. It could be how they identify themselves, everything. **Because nobody is bigger or smaller than anyone. You are on this planet with an equal right.**” - **NIKHILA, DEM VOTER**



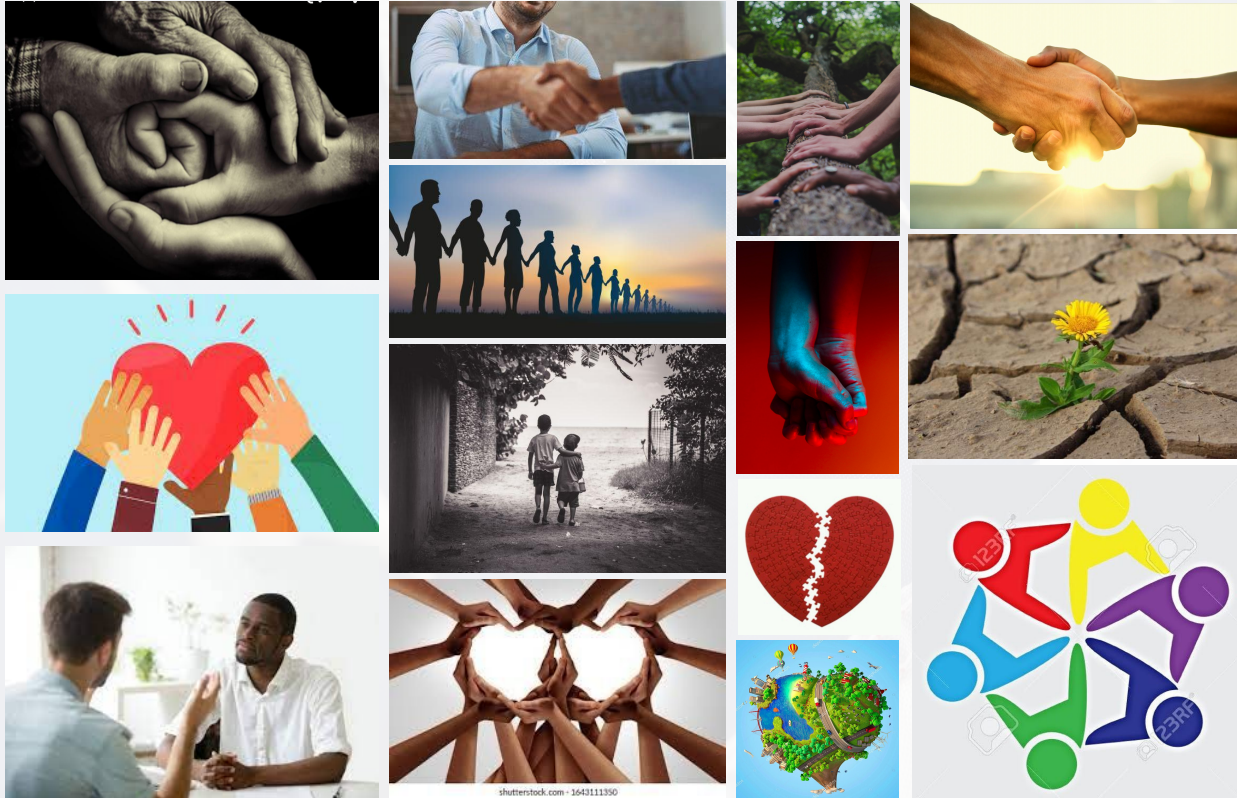
“I like the fact that there's people of all colors together, because that's what needs to happen... So **people of all ages, people of all colors, backgrounds coming together and working together**... There should be no discrimination based on anything, a person's background, lifestyle, religion, or any of that. We all need to be working together... [because] **working together, we can come up with solutions for problems**, we can get perspectives of people with different backgrounds, because **everyone has value to add** to a discussion about how to solve a problem... You can do more as a collective than as an individual. So people should realize the power of working in a group and working together to get a problem solved.” - **MARY, INDIE VOTER**





**8 YEARS IN POWER**

## RESTORING COMMUNITY AND **UNIFYING THE COUNTRY**



Feeling the depths of the current division in America, participants are **longing for a sense of community**. They want to see connections restored and ultimately, for us to unite as Americans – to realize despite our differences, **we're all on the same team and can accomplish more together than we can apart.**

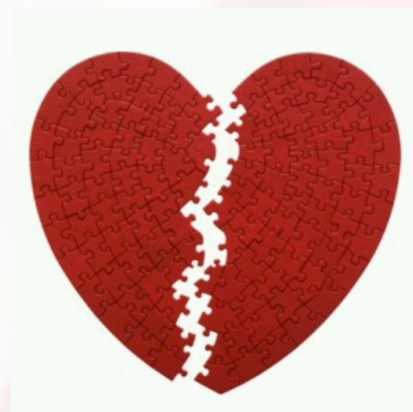
## 8 YEARS IN POWER

# RESTORING COMMUNITY AND UNIFYING THE COUNTRY

“People would just be united in the idea that **we're all on the same team. We're all Americans.** Not I'm a Democrat, you're a Republican, or I'm a Republican, you're a Democrat. Just we're we're Americans, so there'd be that **unity** there.” **RANDY, REPUBLICAN VOTER**

“**We need to focus on a regrowth, a rebuilding.** There's so many cracks and divisions... I would like to see a future where we can overcome that and **grow from that division to be more united, to be more on the same team...** Having **an America that is for Americans,** not for red or for blue, it would mean that we would be able to get more done. We would be able to maybe listen to each other more. If there was less cracks and division, we would be able to step back and hear what the others have to say.” **MACY, INDIE VOTER**

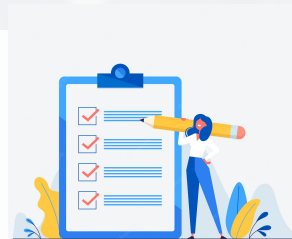
“The heart was meant to reunite. So the idea was that we were able to **piece things together instead of being broken apart.** Bridge the gap that we have on a lot of our different viewpoints... Have it to where society is a bit more, not as disconnected from each other, more accepting of each other's other values.... even though we may disagree... **We need to come together.** A lot of people have radicalized each other. On both sides, each side hates each other. I think that's a problem. **We represent one country. We should live in harmony** and just enjoy each other's presence, whether or not we disagree.” **JASON, DEM VOTER**





**8 YEARS IN POWER**

## CREATING WINS AND **DELIVERING FOR THE PEOPLE**



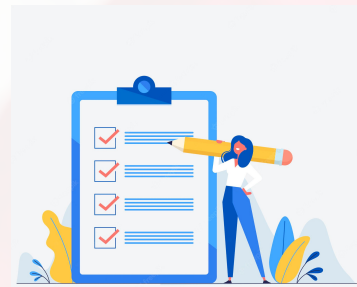
Our participants **want to see action being taken** – and results delivered. With the ideal leader in power for 8 years, **they want the bureaucratic mess to get untangled** and to see increased bi-partisanship to find middle ground, delivering a win for the American people despite our differences.

# CREATING WINS AND DELIVERING FOR THE PEOPLE

“A leader needs to have a plan and whether it's written out or you have it in your head, and **they need to have the capability and the know-how to follow through with it and to conquer the problem.** You need to be able to sit down with yourself and follow those ideas, incorporate the people that you need to have to be able to be successful to **implement the plan.**” **AMY, INDIE VOTER**

“We need our leader for the next eight years to be a person who's able to work with others to figure out solutions. **Putting those two puzzle pieces together, figuring out solutions to problems, working with any and everyone to make that happen, and completing the puzzle piece means finding the solution to the problem.** And another thing, on this image, there's two people that are on two different platforms. That symbolizes people with different opinions meeting in the middle to come together and connect. *Who, in your mind, or what do those two platforms and people represent?* The **two political parties**, like Democrat, Republican, and them **compromising on different bills to make the best decision for the American people**, and the interlocking puzzle piece coming together is that compromise or that flexibility between two parties, where they can weed out what's the best solution to the problem... **The outcome is a solution**, rather than just one side being so torn on, "It has to be XYZ." And this side saying, "It has to be ABC." Coming to that solution where both sides can say... “**Let's compromise so we can get stuff done.**” ” **LINDSAY, REPUBLICAN VOTER**

“This resembles **getting things done**... Somebody who's like, "Okay, this is what I'm going to promise and I'm going to get this done." And maybe this is where **we need more bipartisanship**... It seems like it's Democrats trying to be bipartisan and I'd like to see more Republicans [be bipartisan]... It's **passing what the majority of people want**... *What would it say about us as a country if we were able to pass legislation that the majority of people want?* **We're listening to the people** and that this is truly a representation – **that Congress and the president are the representation of people.**” **MAURICE, INDIE VOTER**





**8 YEARS IN POWER**

## **ACHIEVING** (WHAT WE'RE CAPABLE OF) AND MORE



It's no surprise our participants are concerned about the economy and the impact its having on their finances. With this top of mind, they envision a future where the ideal leader is in power for 8 years as one that's **bountiful** – where people can achieve financial freedom, and where we invest in education and other necessary social programs to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to succeed.

## 8 YEARS IN POWER

# ACHIEVING (WHAT WE'RE CAPABLE OF) AND MORE

“I would imagine that this kind of leader would affect the change that would **allow our economy to continue thriving**, whether that's taking care of government spending and making sure we're in a better place, the economy in general doing better... *What would be the impact of that on people?* A lot of people at this point, we're not really in the age where pensions are a thing. **The idea of a particular company taking care of you for the rest of your retired years is for most people not an option, so a bull market or good economy is going to be important for everyone.** Because **we're all going to want to save for retirement** and we're going to need the economy to be doing well for that to happen.”

**RANDY, REPUBLICAN VOTER**

“The girl with the dog... [She's] a child, she's the future, right? We need to think of her. **Good leadership will have her and others of her generation thriving**, being happy, hugging their dogs, not living in fear. And there's hope for her... That's what all children deserve in their future, is just security, happiness, and comfort...*What is it about the leader, this kind of leader that allows that to happen?* It's somebody that thinks of the future and the bigger picture and **thinks of the most vulnerable of our population. It's somebody that is willing to allocate time, funds, energy, people, whatever it takes to the things that directly impact these children: education, health care, social programs, and going back to reproductive health even.** We need leaders that support these things that directly positively impact the children of the future generations.”

**ALLISON, DEM VOTER**



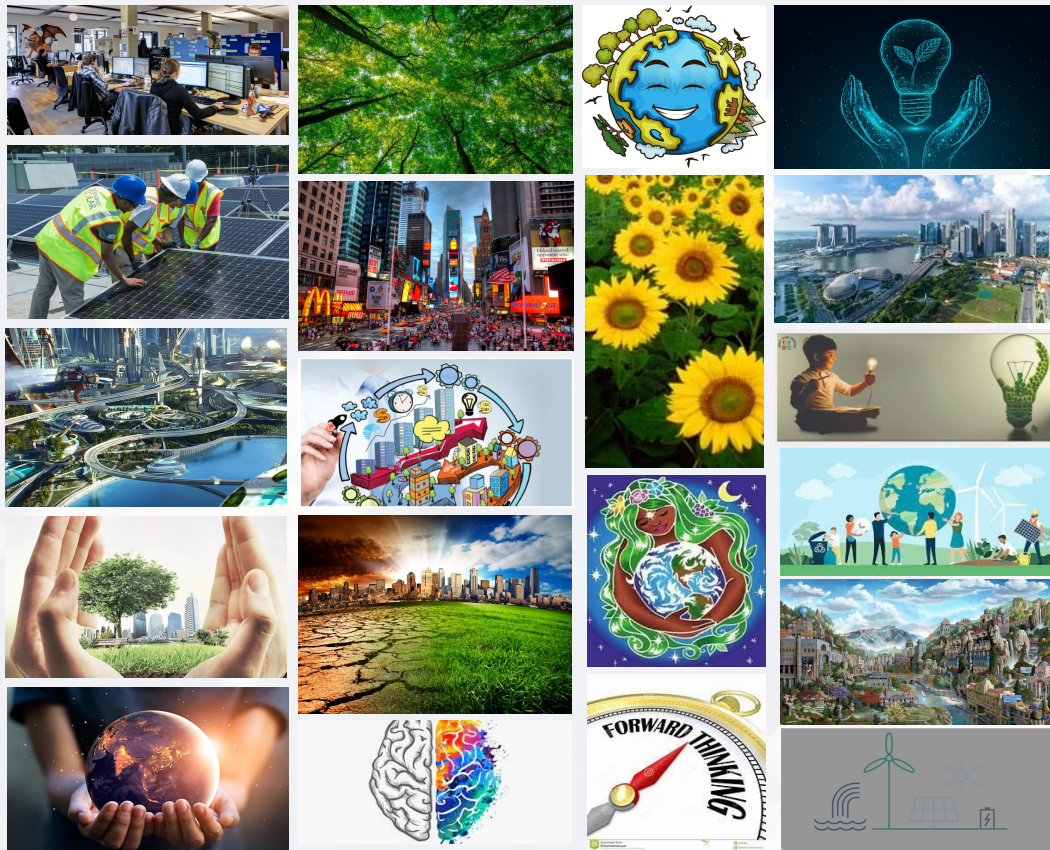


“We need someone who can kind of... **lift us all up, so that we as a country can achieve everything that we can.** I mean, I worked in education, so I'm a big proponent of education. We need that **support for students**, whether that's trade school, whether that's college... We have all different needs in this country, but we're falling behind, so **we need some sort of supports in place so we can raise individuals in our country up to have better jobs and to be able to increase the GDP**, because that's good for the country. It's good for everyone.”

**JENNIFER, REPUBLICAN  
VOTER**



## GROWING AND INNOVATING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE



By and large, participants envisioned a future in which we made **technological advancements** and **prioritized renewable and green climate actions**, resulting in a **forward-thinking, sustainable future** that **delivers better for everyone**, and leaves us better equipped to handle whatever comes next.



# GROWING AND INNOVATING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

“We need someone to think about systems in place, such as environmental systems in place, what our social security is going to look like. Will social security be around for the long haul? What relationships we're having with different countries and things like that. What systems are going to be in place for healthcare? **What do we need? Do we need just to demolish that?** Are we going to do universal healthcare? Those kind of issues. What our relationships are going to be like or what our military presence is going to look like and what systems in place we are going to implement for future pandemics, for environmental chaos... We need also someone that's thinking about agriculture and the farming industry, the meat processing industry as well.” **AMY, INDIE VOTER**

“The one of the futuristic city, I think that projects the optimism tempered with risk that we need to look forward to in the future. I mean, **if you look at the picture closely, obviously the technology's there, but look at the environment, the water's blue, the clouds are white**, the weather is sunny... that's what we want... **I don't see a lot of crime. I don't see a lot of poverty.** I don't see any slums. Or maybe in the future, those situations no longer exist. That would be great... I think that picture, in particular, projects the finest qualities or the things that we need to focus on for the future: **A clean environment, technology that works for us...an environment that we can all be successful in.**” **RICHARD, DEM VOTER**

“I would say **advancement**. Kind of like technology, looking into the future, **improving the things that we have to make things better, and progressing, not just leaving things as they are.**” **BAILEY, DEM VOTER**

“I think that the world, hopefully, would have **better climate control**. There'd be **less smog pollution**, that type of thing. The world would look beautiful and healthy, **the air quality would be wonderful**. We would have a lot of flowers growing... I think in order to continue to have life on Earth, it needs to exist... The climate thing is going to get us. There's not going to be a planet really. **We have to start doing something immediately.**” **ELAINE, INDIE VOTER**



## GETTING TO PHYSICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY **SAFE**



Feeling the weight of the acts of violence occurring in the country, participants expressed **longing for a future where they're both physically and psychologically safe** – where they aren't worried about being the victim of a mass shooting or an unprovoked act of violence because of their race or gender, and where they're free to live their lives comfortably, without fear.

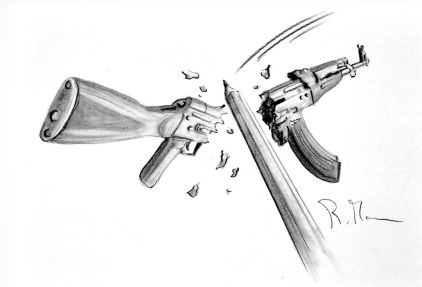


# GETTING TO PHYSICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE

“It's a play on the pen is mightier than the sword, but in this case, **the pencils mightier than the gun.** The reason I chose that is just because everything that's happened in America. Unfortunately young people are getting killed and there's no easy way to say that or dance around the topic. And I think **more laws need to be put into place** where, in this instance a pencil is crushing a gun. So **having laws can crush having weapons be easily carried or easily accessible to those in the population...** There aren't strong laws in place for this sort of thing. This is something that I feel like should be happening, but isn't happening... If I were to think of it as society where this would actually work, **you sign a law that gets put into place where we limit people's access to assault rifles or different weapons while also fostering the care of mental health issues** and being responsible with using them.” **KURT, DEM VOTER**

“That represents positivity. Being carefree, having a free world. Freedom... That **you can dance on the streets, you can go to the beach, you can go wherever you want and not be in fear of somebody attacking you or judging you or making fun of you.** No bullying. *How is that different than what we have today?* We are supposed to have it, but **at the back of a mind, there is that fear that when you go into crowded places...** when we are walking crowded places, we always got our wits about us and our purse strung tightly over us. We are looking around. **If somebody looks dangerous, we'll walk away.** *What would be the impact of being able to be carefree in this way?* Then we can achieve so much more as a country... Have fun. Live your life.” **NIKHILA, DEM VOTER**

“[It's] showing that **we need to get a handle on [gun violence] because the situation in the world right now with guns is totally out control.** It just seems that it's way too easy for people to get ahold of them, including young people. And that's obviously been proven with the situations that have occurred lately... It's just unnecessary and **the chaos and the violence and the hurt that it's causing is just disgusting...** People that want the laws to change and **tighten up as far as age, background checks, things like that, that definitely needs to be done.**” **CHERYL, INDIE VOTER**



**8 YEARS IN POWER**

## **CULTIVATING A PEACEFUL FUTURE WITH LESS WORRIES**



Ultimately, what our participants want, and even what they see the outcome of the ideal leader being in power for 8 years is, is **peace and calm**. A future without the worries they experience today – one that is undoubtedly and immeasurably better, not only for them, but their families, communities, and the country.



## 8 YEARS IN POWER

# CULTIVATING A PEACEFUL FUTURE WITH LESS WORRIES

“It is peace... I think **so many of us, right now, are just longing for peace.** Longing for the harmony of not having all the garbage on the news, every single day, of what's going on. The hearings, just all the fighting politically as well as the people calling for hearings on this side or hearings on that side. And it's been a lot. I mean we've all been through hell with COVID. **We've all just gone through so much. I think we're all just looking to take a breath and have some peace.**” **ROBERT, REPUBLICAN VOTER**

“I like the idea of **peace and just some inner zen.** Right now, living in America today, I feel nervous. I feel like, like I said, like I'm walking on eggshells. There's disasters left and right. There's just so much... Every day there's something new that's going on that's causing a collapse. And if **we had a leader that was able to bring people together and solve these big issues and we were able to listen to each other and really find out what we have in common so we can work on the things that we don't, then I would feel a lot more peaceful** where I don't feel like it's this constant attack between two parties. I would feel like all right, there's some peace here. We're all on the same page on at least something.” **MACY, INDIE VOTER**

“A mild, sunny day. It would be just **relaxing. I don't want to say no worries, because there will always be something that you'll worry about, but maybe it's not as big or something as detrimental as we are currently worrying about.** Because it's so many things all at once. You have to think about finances, job security, housing if you're looking for homes, whether you're renting or trying to purchase, the rates and you have to think about your body... *What would it be like if we didn't have to worry about it?* I think about that, and **would it be too perfect? Would it be too easy?** But I think that it **would have a positive effect on your mental [health]** to not worry about walking outside or going to the grocery store or what your finances will look like, or if you can get a home for your family.” **PARIS, DEM VOTER**



## SUMMARY THOUGHTS

1 With looming uncertainty and anxiety about the future, **Americans are looking for a Coach to inspire and bring out the best in them so that they can win again and be the hero of the story.**

2 This Coach will have a **vision** and be able to **inspire Americans out of the jam they feel they're in**, will be both **tough and empathetic**, be both a **stable and confident problem solver**, a **transparent and forthright communicator**, and in many ways, be an **outsider and a rule bender**.

3 With this leader in place, **Americans see a brighter, hopeful future that directly contrasts to the despondency we see today.** In this future, everyone will have a role, the country will come together, and will move forward, into a brighter, stronger, more peaceful future.





# THE RESEARCH TEAM



**GRETCHEN BARTON** is the Research Director for Future Majority and Principal at Worthy Strategy Group, LLC. With a special interest in the psychology underpinning behavior change, Gretchen has designed and delivered a number of initiatives in the policy space, including hazing behavior and how to stop it, and most recently, poverty in America for the Gates Foundation.

She has led research and served as a behavioral science strategist for major organizations and campaigns (e.g. the NFL, NextGen, New Moral Majority, Ideas 42, Way to Win and others), uncovering key messaging insights to turn out the youth vote, revealing voters' deepest hopes and dreams for presidential campaigns, and unearthing deep insights for key organizers in the build up to the 2020 election. She recently researched and released "Winning the Future: A Deep Dive into the Unconscious Minds of Voters" in partnership with Wide Angle Research to help understand this strategic moment in American history for the Democratic Party.

Gretchen holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications and Planning Campaigns with distinction in research from Cornell University. She has written for the Journal of College Student Development and the American Journal of Health Behavior, and co-authored, "Prevalence and Profiling: Hazing Among College Students and Points of Intervention." She recently co-authored "The Science of Winning with Stories: Using Agency, Urgency, and Community," a reflection on the most effective messaging to engage and move a populace.

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