

Memorandum

To: Interested Parties
From: DNC Communications
Date: May 14, 2008

Re: John McCain: Failing to Connect and Losing Ground

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Despite having wrapped up the Republican nomination nearly three months ago, John McCain has failed to reap the benefit of extra time and has failed to connect with the American people. As a measure of how much of an uphill climb McCain faces this November, the GOP standard-bearer has actually lost ground against his potential Democratic opponents and Republican voters have actually come out to vote against him since he became the presumptive nominee. McCain has failed to shore up the Republican base, trails in poll numbers, has tied himself to unpopular positions and an unpopular President, and continues to post fundraising numbers nowhere near the level of the two remaining Democratic candidates. And while Democratic turnout and enthusiasm this election are reaching all-time highs, McCain is coming up against an "environment so toxic" for Republicans that Politico.com asked the question, "does McCain have even a chance of winning in November?" [Politico.com, 5/11/08]

Below are key facts showing the insurmountable challenges John McCain faces as he tries to win the White House:

Even in Republican Circles, McCain Is Still Having Trouble

- **Buyers Remorse? McCain Has Nomination Locked Up, But One Quarter Of Republican Primary Voters Still Pick Another Candidate.** Even after locking up the Republican nomination, 27 percent of Republican voters voted for another Republican candidate in North Carolina, and 23 percent of Republican voters voted for another Republican candidate in Indiana. [abcnews.com, accessed 5/7/08]
- **McCain Has Received Less Than 50 Percent of Republican Votes.** According to the Washington Times, of the 19 million people who have voted in the Republican primaries, less than 45 percent have voted for McCain. In contrast, George W. Bush received 62 of Republican votes in 2000. While McCain is failing to receive grassroots-level support, the Democratic candidates have seen a surge of enthusiasm and turnout. [Washington Times, 5/8/08]
- **Business Leaders Not Backing McCain.** A recent report in the Wall Street Journal showed that McCain's fundraising among business leaders, a key constituency for Republican candidates, has lagged. In fact, McCain had raised only \$13.1 million from seven major industries through February of this year, while both Obama and Clinton had raised over \$20 million each. Now, the WSJ said, the "Republican standard-bearer's attempt to claw back financial support from the GOP's business base could be a pivotal factor in determining the outcome of the presidential race." [Wall Street Journal, 4/2/08]



- **Evangelicals Still Not Rallying Behind McCain.** According to a recent column by Robert Novak, McCain still “has a problem of disputed dimensions with a vital component of the conservative coalition: evangelicals” and that “[s]ome U.S. Christians are not reconciled to McCain’s candidacy.” [[Washington Post](#), 5/12/08]
- **In Home State, McCain Can’t Rally Republicans.** After representing Arizona for more than two decades McCain won just 47 percent of the vote in his home state’s February 5 primary, and turned in big losses in two other potential swing states that surround Arizona. [cnn.com, accessed 5/13/08]
- **Republican Voters Looking For Alternatives.** McCain’s lack of appeal to conservative voters has brought in not one, but two alternative candidates. Bob Barr, a former Republican and Georgia Congressman, is now running for president as a Libertarian, saying that McCain is a “‘status quo’ candidate.” Barr also said that people voting for him “would not likely fall into the category of people who would be enthused about voting for John McCain—if such exists.” Similarly, Ron Paul’s continued presence in the race and support at the polls—he received 7 percent of the Republican vote in North Carolina and 8 percent of the Republican vote in Indiana last week—shows that many Republicans are looking for an alternative to McCain. [[Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#), 5/13/08; cnn.com, accessed 5/13/08]

GOP Brand Is Damaged

- **Americans Have Unfavorable View of Republicans.** A [New York Times/CBS News](#) poll out earlier this month shows Americans have a more favorable view of the Democratic Party than the Republican Party—52 percent to just 33 percent. [[New York Times/CBS News Poll](#), April 25-29, 2008] And in a recent NBC news/[Wall Street Journal](#) poll, nearly half of respondents asked—48 percent—had a negative view of the Republican Party. [[NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll](#), April 25-28, 2008]
- **Republicans Less Trusted On the Issues.** Americans trust Democrats over Republicans 53 percent to 32 percent “to do a better job in coping with the main problems the nation faces over the next few years.” In addition, “American voters now trust the Democrats on all ten key electoral issues” tracked by Rasmussen and Democrats now register the largest partisan advantage over Republicans in six years. [[Washington Post-ABC News Poll](#), May 8-May 11; Rasmussen Reports, 5/13/08]
- **Bush Most Unpopular President In History.** According to a recent Gallup poll, 69 percent of Americans now disapprove of the job President Bush is doing—the highest of any president in the history of the Gallup Poll. [[Gallup](#), 4/22/08]

In Latest Polls McCain Is Losing To Both Democratic Candidates

- **Since Clinching the Nomination, McCain Has Actually *Lost* Ground To Both Democratic Candidates.** In a new [LA Times/Bloomberg](#) poll, both Obama and Clinton



are beating John McCain, a shift from February when McCain was beating both candidates. McCain is in fact going in the wrong direction—instead of rising in the polls after clinching the nomination, he has actually *lost* ground to both candidates. [[LA Times/Bloomberg Poll](#), May 1-May 8, 2008] The new NBC News/[Wall Street Journal](#) poll conducted last month also showed both Democratic candidates beating John McCain as did a [Washington Post-ABC News](#) poll out this week. [[NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll](#), April 25-28, 2008; [Washington Post-ABC News Poll](#), May 8-11, 2008]

- **McCain Losing In Purple States Against Democrats.** A recent Gallup poll shows McCain trailing Democrats with "purple" state voters—voters in states that were competitive in 2004. Both Democratic candidates beat John McCain 47 percent to 43 percent among voters in states where either John Kerry or George W. Bush won by five points or less in 2004. Voters in these states made up 31 percent of the electorate in 2004 and include New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Florida, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Oregon—key pick-ups for any candidate in November. [[Gallup](#), 4/17/08]

McCain On the Wrong Side of the Issues

- **Economy and Iraq Top Issues This Election.** 56 percent of voters see the economy as the top issue this election, and 34 percent see the war in Iraq as the top issue, according to a recent [LA Times/Bloomberg](#) poll. [[LA Times/Bloomberg Poll](#), May 1-8, 2008]
 - **McCain Is the Candidate Least Trusted to Handle the Economy.** Two new polls show that on the economy—the most important issue this election—McCain is the least trusted of the three candidates. In fact, in the NBC/[Wall Street Journal](#) Poll only 11 percent of respondents are “very confident” in McCain’s “ability to deal with economic issues.” [[LA Times/Bloomberg Poll](#), May 1-8, 2008; [NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll](#), April 25-28, 2008]
 - **Americans Think McCain Is Wrong On Iraq.** In a new NBC News/[Wall Street Journal](#) poll, more than a third—36 percent—of respondents believe McCain has the “wrong approach” on “dealing with the situation in Iraq.” [[NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll](#), April 25-28, 2008] In a [New York Times/CBS](#) poll, 62 percent of respondents want the next President to “try to end the Iraq war within the next year or two, no matter what,” something McCain has not promoted. [[New York Times/CBS News Poll](#), April 25-29, 2008]
- **Voters Are Not Happy With the Direction of Our Country.** In a new [Washington Post-ABC News](#) poll, 82 percent of voters think the country “have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track”—the same track McCain would keep us on. [[Washington Post-ABC News Poll](#), May 8-May 11]
 - **Americans Think McCain Offers A Third Bush Term.** When asked what McCain will do if he is elected president, nearly half—48 percent—of respondents said he would “generally continue George W. Bush’s policies.” [[New York Times/CBS News Poll](#), April 25-29]



McCain's Ties to Bush Pose Huge Liability With Voters

- **McCain's Offer A Third Bush Term Set To Be Biggest Issue Of the Campaign.** In a recent NBC News/[Wall Street Journal](#) poll the issue of greatest concern for voters was that “John McCain will be too closely aligned with the Bush agenda. He has voted eighty-nine percent of the time for the Bush administration’s programs.” In fact, 43 percent of respondents ranked this as a “major concern.” [[NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll](#), April 25-28, 2008]

McCain's Fundraising Anemic

- **Democrats Have Raised \$200 Million More Than Republicans.** “Since the beginning of last year, Obama, Hillary Rodham Clinton and the DNC have raised \$460 million total—about \$200 million more than what McCain, Mitt Romney and the RNC raised together in the same time span.” [Politico.com, 5/11/08]
- **McCain Not Keeping Pace With Either Democratic Candidate.** “The differences between GOP and Democratic fundraising were evident in the end-of-February report. McCain reported raising \$64.7 million so far this cycle, compared with \$173.8 million for Clinton and \$197.3 million for Obama.” [[Foxnews.com](#), 4/19/08]
- **After Clinching Nomination McCain Still Has Had Trouble Raising Money.** Even in March, his first full month as Republican presumptive nominee, McCain was not able to raise more than \$15.4 million. As the [Los Angeles Times](#) reported, “By comparison, Sen. John F. Kerry of Massachusetts raised almost three times that much in the month after he locked up the Democratic nomination four years ago.” [[LA Times](#), 4/21/08]

