

August 16, 2016

An Open Letter to Reince Priebus, Chairman, Republican National Committee

In every election cycle, the Republican National Committee (RNC) must make difficult decisions in the closing months about where to allocate its limited resources – money, time, staff, and ads – to ensure the best possible opportunities for the Party's success.

Given the catastrophic impact that Donald Trump's losing presidential campaign will have on down-ballot Senate and House races, we urge you to immediately suspend all discretionary RNC support for Trump and focus the entirety of the RNC's available resources on preserving the GOP's congressional majorities.

The signatories to this letter have been involved with Republican politics at the local, state, and national levels for more than three decades. We have served as past and current elected officials and as staffers for the RNC; appointees in every Republican administration since President Reagan; advisors on the last nine GOP presidential campaigns; aides on leadership, personal, and committee staff in both the House and Senate; grassroots workers; and delegates to multiple GOP conventions.

We believe that Donald Trump's divisiveness, recklessness, incompetence, and record-breaking unpopularity risk turning this election into a Democratic landslide, and only the immediate shift of all available RNC resources to vulnerable Senate and House races will prevent the GOP from drowning with a Trump-emblazoned anchor around its neck.

This should not be a difficult decision, as Donald Trump's chances of being elected president are evaporating by the day. Since the GOP convention, less than a month ago, he has alienated millions of voters of all parties by:

- Attacking Gold Star families of soldiers who died serving their country;
- Urging a hostile foreign government to intervene in a U.S. election;
- Suggesting that gun owners take action against his opponent if she is elected;
- Repudiating our NATO treaty obligations to protect our allies;
- Reportedly expressing interest in the preemptive use of nuclear weapons;
- Exposing his total ignorance of basic foreign policy matters;
- Stating his admiration for violent foreign autocrats;
- Refusing to disclose any of his past taxes, including those not under audit; and
- Deliberately and repeatedly lying about scores of issues, large and small.

Those recent outrages have built on his campaign of anger and exclusion, during which he has mocked and offended millions of voters, including the disabled, women, Muslims, immigrants, and minorities. He also has shown dangerous authoritarian tendencies, including threats to ban an entire religion from entering the country, order the military to break the law by torturing prisoners, kill the families of suspected terrorists, track law-abiding Muslim citizens

in databases, and use executive orders to implement other illegal and unconstitutional measures.

Those disqualifying elements of Trump's personality and positions are reflected in his plummeting support. As respected polling analyst Nate Silver recently wrote, "recent Fox News, Marist College and NBC News/Wall Street Journal national polls show Trump trailing Clinton by 9 to 14 percentage points, margins that would make for the largest general election blowout since 1984 if they held."

Commenting on the Marist poll, *The Washington Post* said, "Those numbers are, to put it bluntly, shocking. Mitt Romney was never down by that much to President Obama in 2012; his worst poll was a survey in June from Bloomberg that had him down 13, with 40 percent of the vote." On Clinton's seven-point lead in the overall polling average, the article continued, "Relative to Election Day in 2004, 2008 and 2012, Clinton's lead is more than twice that of the eventual victor at this point. "

According to Silver, whose analysis correctly picked 49 of the 50 states in the 2008 presidential election and all 50 states in 2012, current polling gives Trump barely a 11 percent chance of being elected president in November. That polling projects a potential 365 electoral vote blowout for Hillary Clinton, including a sweep of every battleground state from Florida to Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado, Virginia, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, and North Carolina. Trump's across-the-board collapse has put even Republican bastions like Georgia and Arizona in play.

As you know, there are very rarely large shifts in support at this late stage in a presidential election cycle, particularly with two candidates as well known to the public as the current nominees.

Beyond Trump's likely electoral failure, his actions toward his fellow Republicans should disqualify him from receiving any further support. Since winning the primaries, Trump has claimed he wants to unify the party but instead has doubled down on vicious and vengeful attacks on fellow Republicans, including:

- Threatening to set up a super PAC with tens of millions of dollars of his own money to go after Republicans who did not support him;
- Dismissing a GOP Senator who spent more than five years being tortured as a prisoner-of-war as "not a hero;"
- Warning another GOP Senator that he might work against his reelection;
- Calling yet another incumbent Republican Senator a "loser" to his Senate peers;
- Repeating his false and outlandish claims that yet another Senator's father played some role in the Kennedy assassination;
- Falsely accusing the nation's first Hispanic woman Governor of "not doing her job;" and
- Refusing to initially endorse the Speaker of the House and at least two Republican Senators, despite their support for his presidential bid.

In summary, every dollar spent by the RNC on Donald Trump's campaign is a dollar of donor money wasted on the losing effort of a candidate who has actively undermined the GOP at every turn. Rather than throwing good money after bad, the RNC should shift its strategy and its resources to convince voters not to give Hillary Clinton the "blank check" of a Democrat-controlled Congress to advance her big government agenda.

Signing an appeal such as this is not easy for any of us. But in our view, Trump's divisive and dangerous actions are not only a threat to our other candidates, but to our Party and the nation. Only swift and decisive action can save the Republican Party and protect the hundreds of other GOP candidates running for office. We urge the RNC to immediately halt all support for Donald Trump and invest its resources in a real and winnable campaign to save the Republican Senate and House.

Sincerely,

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Congressman Reid Ribble (R-WI)

Congressman Scott Rigell (R-VA)

Former Congressman Tom Campbell (R-CA)

Former Congressman Tom Coleman (R-MO)

Former Congressman Mickey Edwards (R-OK)

Former Congressman Bob Inglis (R-SC)

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