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To: Interested Parties

Subject: Democrats can win in 2012 by taking it to the Tea Party

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Over the last few months Democrats in Wake County, North Carolina ran against the Tea Party in a strongly Republican leaning School Board district. And on Tuesday night they won, showing that the party might be able to have success in 2012 even on unfriendly turf by relentlessly hammering GOP candidates for their ties to an increasingly unpopular movement.

In 2009 Republicans gained a majority on the Wake County School Board in an election marked by complacency from Democratic voters and just 11% turnout. The new majority quickly moved to pursue policies that would have the effect of resegregating the school district, bringing enormous amounts of negative national media attention down on the county.

The actions of the School Board reawakened Democratic activists and created a sense of urgency about winning back a majority in 2011 but there was just one problem- doing that would require defeating the Board's chairman, Ron Margiotta. His district is so heavily Republican- 42% GOP, 34% Democrats among regular voters- that he didn't even draw an opponent when he won reelection to his 2nd term in 2007. It required an incredibly strong message to win his seat- and that message proved to be the Tea Party.

PPP found in September that 53% of voters in Margiotta's R+8 district were less likely to vote for a Tea Party backed candidate, with only 24% considering that to be an asset for a candidate. It's a given that Democrats recoil at the Tea Party label, but independents





considered it a negative by a 51/20 margin and even 26% of Republican voters said they would be turned off of a candidate they knew had Tea Party ties.

A unified Democratic base wasn't going to be enough for the party to win this seat- it would require a significant advantage with independents and a lot of crossover support from Republicans as well. The Wake County Democratic Party and the candidates themselves relentlessly hammered home to voters the message about Margiotta's Tea Party ties. The result? A PPP poll the week before the election found Democratic endorsed candidate Susan Evans leading 48-43. She had a 51-34 advantage with independents and was taking 22% of the Republican vote. Those numbers held on right into election day and Evans won 52-48.

This was not a race where Democrats played nice- they took the fight to the Republican candidates and exploited their close ties to an increasingly unpopular Tea Party movement. And it worked, in a district where Democratic victory once seemed unimaginable. Democrats will more than likely take back the majority in a November 8th runoff election in a separate district where the party's candidate won by 10 points yesterday, but fell short of an outright majority. And they did it by running against the Tea Party.

It's a model Democratic candidates across the country should consider following in 2012. PPP polling in key swing states has consistently found that the Tea Party is very unpopular- its favorability is 41/49 in Florida, 40/46 in Missouri, 40/48 in North Carolina, 37/47 in Ohio, and 38/49 in Colorado, just to name a few. And even in red leaning states like Kentucky (40/46) and South Carolina (41/42) being associated with the Tea Party is not a good thing. It was a potent message for Democrats in Wake County Tuesday night. And it could be a potent message for Democrats everywhere across the country next year.





Wake County, NC, School District 8 Survey Results

Q1 The candidates for School Board in your district are Ron Margiotta and Susan Evans. If the election was today, who would you vote for?

Ron Margiotta 43%
Susan Evans..... 48%
Undecided..... 8%

Q2 Do you approve or disapprove of the job School Board member Ron Margiotta is doing?

Approve 44%
Disapprove..... 46%
Not sure 9%

Q3 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Susan Evans?

Favorable..... 48%
Unfavorable 23%
Not sure 30%

Q4 Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the job the current Wake County School Board is doing?

Strongly approve..... 30%
Somewhat approve..... 22%
Somewhat disapprove 21%
Strongly disapprove 24%
Not sure 4%

Q5 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Art Pope?

Favorable..... 16%
Unfavorable 22%
Not sure..... 62%

Q6 Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the Tea Party?

Favorable..... 39%
Unfavorable 49%
Not sure..... 12%

Q7 If you are a woman, press 1. If a man, press 2.

Woman 53%
Man..... 47%

Q8 If you are a Democrat, press 1. If a Republican, press 2. If you are an independent or identify with another party, press 3.

Democrat..... 34%
Republican..... 42%
Independent/Other..... 24%

Q9 If you are white, press 1. If African-American, press 2. If other, press 3.

White 82%
African-American 8%
Other..... 10%

Q10 If you are 18 to 29 years old, press 1. If 30 to 45, press 2. If 46 to 65, press 3. If you are older than 65, press 4.

18 to 29..... 4%
30 to 45..... 26%
46 to 65..... 50%
Older than 65..... 20%



Q11 Were you aware that Ron Margiotta put the Wake County Schools at risk of losing 80 million dollars in funding or not? If you were aware, press 1. If you were not, press 2. If you're not sure, press 3.

<i>Aware</i>	63%
<i>Not Aware</i>	21%
<i>Not Sure</i>	17%



Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Margiotta/Evans			
Ron Margiotta	43%	39%	48%
Susan Evans	48%	51%	45%
Undecided	8%	10%	7%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Margiotta Approval			
Approve	44%	41%	48%
Disapprove	46%	48%	44%
Not sure	9%	11%	8%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Evans Favorability			
Favorable	48%	53%	42%
Unfavorable	23%	19%	27%
Not sure	30%	28%	31%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
School Board Approval			
Strongly approve	30%	26%	33%
Somewhat approve	22%	24%	20%
Somewhat disapprove	21%	20%	21%
Strongly disapprove	24%	25%	23%
Not sure	4%	5%	2%





Crosstabs

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Pope Favorability			
Favorable	16%	13%	19%
Unfavorable	22%	21%	23%
Not sure	62%	65%	58%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
Tea Party Favorability			
Favorable	39%	34%	44%
Unfavorable	49%	51%	47%
Not sure	12%	15%	9%

	Base	Gender	
		Woman	Man
80 Million Dollar Question			
Aware	63%	63%	62%
Not Aware	21%	23%	18%
Not Sure	17%	14%	20%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Margiotta/Evans				
Ron Margiotta	43%	15%	72%	34%
Susan Evans	48%	79%	22%	51%
Undecided	8%	7%	6%	15%





Crosstabs

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Margiotta Approval				
Approve	44%	16%	71%	37%
Disapprove	46%	74%	21%	52%
Not sure	9%	10%	8%	12%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Evans Favorability				
Favorable	48%	76%	25%	47%
Unfavorable	23%	9%	35%	21%
Not sure	30%	15%	40%	33%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
School Board Approval				
Strongly approve	30%	11%	49%	22%
Somewhat approve	22%	15%	27%	24%
Somewhat disapprove	21%	29%	12%	22%
Strongly disapprove	24%	41%	8%	27%
Not sure	4%	3%	3%	4%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Pope Favorability				
Favorable	16%	8%	27%	8%
Unfavorable	22%	34%	10%	27%
Not sure	62%	58%	64%	64%





Crosstabs

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
Tea Party Favorability				
Favorable	39%	10%	69%	26%
Unfavorable	49%	82%	19%	55%
Not sure	12%	8%	12%	19%

	Base	Party		
		Democrat	Republican	Independent/Other
80 Million Dollar Question				
Aware	63%	70%	57%	61%
Not Aware	21%	21%	25%	14%
Not Sure	17%	10%	18%	25%

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
Margiotta/Evans				
Ron Margiotta	43%	45%	21%	44%
Susan Evans	48%	48%	66%	39%
Undecided	8%	7%	13%	17%

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
Margiotta Approval				
Approve	44%	46%	23%	45%
Disapprove	46%	46%	61%	40%
Not sure	9%	8%	16%	15%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
Evans Favorability				
Favorable	48%	48%	55%	43%
Unfavorable	23%	23%	21%	24%
Not sure	30%	30%	23%	33%

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
School Board Approval				
Strongly approve	30%	30%	21%	30%
Somewhat approve	22%	22%	17%	28%
Somewhat disapprove	21%	20%	23%	19%
Strongly disapprove	24%	24%	33%	18%
Not sure	4%	3%	5%	6%

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
Pope Favorability				
Favorable	16%	17%	12%	11%
Unfavorable	22%	23%	20%	17%
Not sure	62%	60%	67%	72%

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
Tea Party Favorability				
Favorable	39%	41%	18%	38%
Unfavorable	49%	48%	71%	39%
Not sure	12%	11%	11%	23%





Crosstabs

	Base	Race		
		White	African-American	Other
80 Million Dollar Question				
Aware	63%	63%	58%	64%
Not Aware	21%	21%	31%	13%
Not Sure	17%	16%	11%	23%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Margiotta/Evans					
Ron Margiotta	43%	40%	43%	42%	46%
Susan Evans	48%	41%	45%	52%	45%
Undecided	8%	19%	12%	6%	8%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Margiotta Approval					
Approve	44%	47%	46%	42%	46%
Disapprove	46%	41%	41%	51%	42%
Not sure	9%	12%	13%	7%	12%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Evans Favorability					
Favorable	48%	41%	44%	49%	50%
Unfavorable	23%	25%	19%	23%	25%
Not sure	30%	34%	36%	28%	25%





Crosstabs

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
School Board Approval					
Strongly approve	30%	27%	28%	28%	37%
Somewhat approve	22%	24%	27%	20%	23%
Somewhat disapprove	21%	25%	20%	20%	20%
Strongly disapprove	24%	24%	19%	30%	15%
Not sure	4%	-	5%	3%	5%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Pope Favorability					
Favorable	16%	17%	10%	16%	23%
Unfavorable	22%	26%	17%	22%	27%
Not sure	62%	57%	73%	62%	51%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
Tea Party Favorability					
Favorable	39%	40%	37%	39%	42%
Unfavorable	49%	47%	49%	48%	51%
Not sure	12%	13%	14%	13%	8%

	Base	Age			
		18 to 29	30 to 45	46 to 65	Older than 65
80 Million Dollar Question					
Aware	63%	84%	57%	66%	56%
Not Aware	21%	7%	24%	18%	26%
Not Sure	17%	9%	19%	16%	18%

