

Talking Points: Messaging the Transition of Power in the Face of GOP Contestation¹

Introduction

This document offers tested messaging approaches for conveying our strongest arguments on a democratic transfer of power. These suggestions are in alignment with and updated from our [previous memos](#), based on up-to-date explorations with voters across the political spectrum. As ever, our core recommendation remains unwavering: we must project confidence and speak with absolute assurance that Biden will be sworn in. Wavering in this risks lending credence to the notion that there is merit to Trump's claims.

Yet, of course, we recognize that many of you must respond to media or other high stakes queries about actions taken and claims made by Trump or his Republican allies. As ever, we **are best served leading with, amplifying, and relentlessly repeating our story**. And thus we must spend as little of our precious airtime as possible engaging with our opposition's spurious claims. Nevertheless, we are aware that these are live - and unrelenting - questions. And so we're providing the following talking points. Please also refer to our [social media toolkit](#), updated regularly, for sample posts and visual content to spread these effective messages.

Best Practices

- **DO NOT REPEAT** accusations, even to refute. (e.g. do not say "there is no evidence of fraud")
- **EMPHASIZE** that the voters decided
- **ANCHOR** our remarks in our shared values: democracy, freedom, fairness
- **REMIND** audiences about history and legacy of the democratic transfer of power
- **PIVOT** to the clear, decisive will of the people
- **FRAME** as posturing by Trump and allies because he lost and in order to raise money
- **SHIFT** attention to the desirable future and our governing agenda

Full Narrative

The basis of our democracy is that **we pick our leaders** - our leaders do not pick their voters. The United States has always held elections and conducted a **democratic transfer of power**. We have upheld the will of the people in presidential elections through the Civil War, Great Depression, previous pandemics and both World Wars. Whatever the outcome, we have always accepted the results and passed the baton from one leader to another. Americans across race and background, gender and zip code, **turned out in record numbers**, and **our election officials have counted and**

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verified these votes applying the laws, customs and safeguards used in every election. **Now that it's clear that we the people have elected Joe Biden, Trump and his Republican allies have been trying to sow doubts about the outcome of the election through baseless claims and investigations.** In America, the **voters alone decide** who will represent us and govern in our name. It's time we ensure the will of the people prevails, acknowledge Joe Biden as our President-elect and transition to new leadership so we can **move forward together** to ensure we can make ends meet, tackle this pandemic, and care for our families.

15-Second Hit

In America, we pick our leaders, our leaders do not pick their voters. Voters across race and place turned out in record numbers and elected Biden by wide margins. Trump's/GOP attempts to *[FILL IN EXAMPLE YOU'RE ASKED ABOUT - e.g. sow doubts, make claims without evidence, fire key personnel, obstruct the transition process, threaten public officials]* show his/their desperation to hold onto power. We're ready to move forward together to deliver a better future for our families.

30-Second Hit

The basis of our democracy is that we pick our leaders, our leaders do not pick their voters. Trump's/GOP attempts to *[FILL IN EXAMPLE YOU'RE ASKED ABOUT - e.g. sow doubts, make claims without evidence, fire key personnel, obstruct the transition process, threaten public officials]* show his/their desperation to hold onto power for his/their own gain. Voters across race and place turned out in record numbers and the will of the people and the electoral college are with Joe Biden. In America, we believe in upholding the democratic transfer of power and we're ready to move forward together to tackle our shared challenges and ensure a better future for every American, no exceptions.

Additional Tested Key Phrases

- **[More progressive audiences]** Biden ran and won a campaign to earn our votes. Trump ran and lost a campaign to keep us from voting.
- **[More conservative audiences]** For America to be land of the free requires that the voters alone decide who will govern in our name. This means that the will of the people alone - not any judge, state legislature, or candidate - must determine our next president.
- **[More conservative audiences]** As Americans, we believe in playing hard, leaving it all on the field, and accepting the outcome. Sometimes one side gets more votes and sometimes the other; but what makes this country exceptional is that whatever the outcome, we come together as fellow Americans to make a brighter future for our children.
- As Americans, most of us believe in the most fundamental promise of an America of, by and for the people.
- Most of us believe that for democracy to work for all of us, it must include us all, no matter what we look like or where we live.
- Americans know that the players in the game can't choose the referees or try to change the rules while we're adding up the scores. But the more clear it became Donald Trump failed to

win our votes, the more he and his allies tried to keep us from voting, stop us from counting and, now that all that failed, sow doubts by *[FILL IN LATEST EXAMPLE]*. As Americans, we believe in playing hard, leaving it all on the field and accepting the outcome. Even in the midst of a pandemic that has left more than 200,000 of our loved ones dead and created the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression and deliberate barriers from day-long lines to attempts to eliminate drop off locations, voters have done our job and turned out in record numbers. And now our election officials are doing theirs, as they have in every previous election.

- The United States has always held elections and upheld a peaceful transfer of power, even in times of great crisis. We held successful presidential elections amid the Civil War, the Great Depression, and both World Wars. Now it's our turn to prove that nothing will stand in the way of counting every vote and delivering our democracy.
- By uniting across our differences, we can uphold our democracy by ensuring every vote is counted and demanding that the person who we have chosen is sworn in as our president.

Effective Proof Points to Include Within Broader Narrative

- **[Legal/court challenges]** Every legal challenge Trump has attempted has failed, 12 losses in a row. Trump has sued and lost a case about 53 votes. These lawsuits are being dismissed because there are no facts to back up his political claims. He has absolutely no way to overturn the will of the people and alter the fact that Joe Biden will be our next president.
- **[Pivot to COVID]** We have real problems to face across the country, alarming numbers of new COVID cases and casualties, and our families are struggling to make ends meet with no support in sight. It's time to acknowledge Joe Biden as our President-elect and move forward together with new leadership to tackle this pandemic and provide relief to everyday Americans.
- **[Ascribe motivation]** Republican leaders are openly declaring that undermining the will of the people and sowing discord is part of a plan to raise money. President Trump is putting his ego and personal gain before the good of our nation.
- **[Impossible task]** The total vote and electoral college margins are simply too great to enable Trump to overturn the will of the people in at least three states, which is what would be required for him to claim victory.
- **[Biden lead overwhelming]** Voters chose Joe Biden overwhelmingly to be their next President, giving him over 5 million more votes and well over the 270 electoral college votes needed to win. His victory is decisive.
- **[Cement inevitability]** Biden and Harris have already begun the critical work of transition, despite every barrier Trump attempts to construct, so they can be ready - day one - to provide long overdue economic support to Americans, tackle the pandemic and ensure we get the care we need. Indeed, the irony here may be that all of Trump's tantrums only serve to increase Biden's popularity just as he's poised to enter the White House.
- **[Biden favorability]** Public opinion is resoundingly on the side of Biden as our next president. People approve in large margins how he is handling Trump's baseless claims.

- **[Validators]** Several Republican Senators and President George W. Bush have acknowledged and congratulated President-elect Biden.
- **[AG Barr/DOJ Memo]** When asked by state and federal courts, the Trump campaign could not produce any evidence for the claims in their memo demonstrating what we already know from the trusted election officials: the record numbers of votes for Biden have been counted and verified according to every rule and process we've used in every election.
- **[AG Barr]** Now that the game is over and it's clear that we the people have turned out in record numbers, Trump's Attorney General is doing his bidding, following orders, and making unproven claims to try to change the outcome. But even inside his agency, Barr cannot get his people to take the bait; the person charged with looking into election issues, Richard Pilger, quit.
- **[State legislature maneuvers]** Now that the game is over and it's clear that we the people have elected Biden, Trump and his Republican allies in state legislatures have been trying to sow doubts about the outcome of the election through baseless claims and investigations. But these investigations are just a PR stunt to appease Trump.