



# Vice Presidential Concept Survey

Research Results • March 2019

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## PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

We conducted an online probability-based survey of 1,204 registered voters. Potential survey participants were recruited via telephone to join an online research panel. This approach allows us to randomly invite people to participate in research – and we can reliably estimate survey bias as we can in a telephone survey. The approach is also more rigorous than the more prevalent opt-in online panels.

Interviews were conducted October 10-31, 2018

The sample was designed to be representative of the population of registered voters nationally by geography, age, education and race.

Each participant answered 60 discrete questions and completed a conjoint exercise.

## FOCUS GROUPS

We conducted two focus groups with 18 total participants in Denver, CO on August 16, 2018.

One group comprised a diverse set of nine registered voters. The second group comprised a set of nine opinion leaders, also voters, but screened for community involvement. Opinion leaders tend to be better informed on average and be an early indicator of public opinion in a community.

Both group were diverse in terms of age, education, race, profession and political partisanship, but excluded strong partisans in an effort to facilitate productive discussion of the concept.

# Key Takeaways



- **It's time for a big idea.** We are in an extended cycle of pessimism about the country's future, with satisfaction with the way things are going below 40% since 2005. It's fertile ground for a big idea like this.
- **The door is open for persuasion on the concept.** The public prefers a new approach to choosing the vice president by a 53% to 47% margin. That's a remarkable finding when you consider people are more comfortable with the status quo.
- **Emphasize "unity" and "bipartisanship."** There's great appeal in these words and concepts, especially unity. The same cannot be said of "non-partisanship" or "centrism," which elicit negative reactions among potential supporters. Our research implies voters view partisanship negatively because bipartisanship has such appeal.



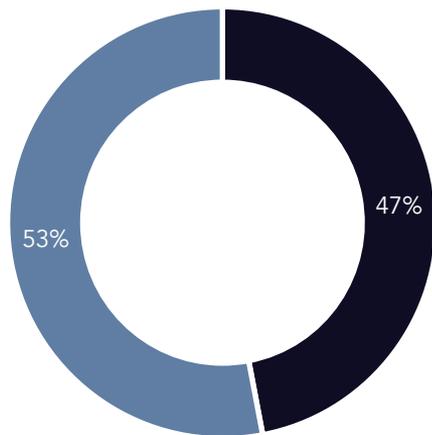
# PUBLIC ATTITUDES

# Encouraging response to the VP concept



Result ties back to the hunger for change – and the current political environment makes it very clear who is looking for something different

While it may not be common knowledge, the Constitution allows for someone to run for the vice presidency of the United States. Only tradition dictates that the vice president be hand-picked by a presidential candidate. Taking this into account, which is the better way to choose a vice president?



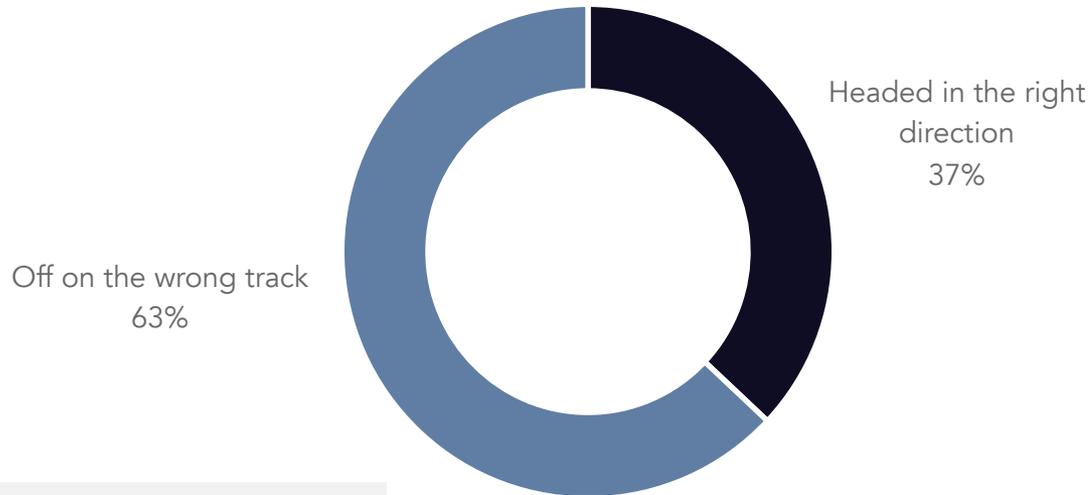
- We should continue to let the presidential nominees of each of the parties choose their vice presidential running mates
- We should consider a process which allows the public to elect a vice presidential candidate separate from a presidential candidate

# The public's overall mood is very pessimistic



This mood continues to drive a perpetual "change" climate that may bode well for a fresh face with new ideas

Overall, do you think things in the United States are:



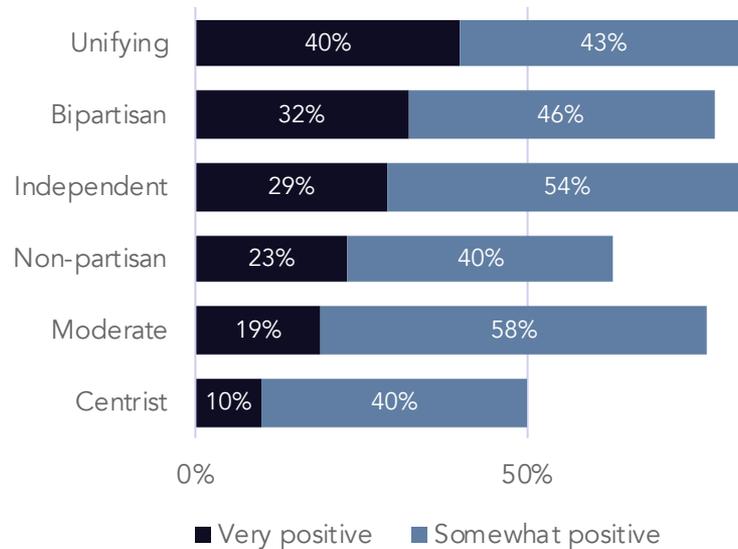
"Wrong track" rises to 79% among VP concept supporters



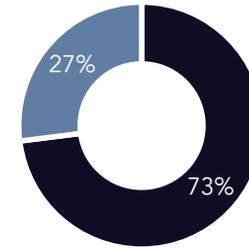
# Unification and a “unifier in chief” are well-received concepts, especially among potential supporters

Note that “centrist” and “non-partisan” elicited substantial negative responses among potential supporters

Please indicate whether you have positive or negative associations with each of the following:



Which of the following statements do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right?

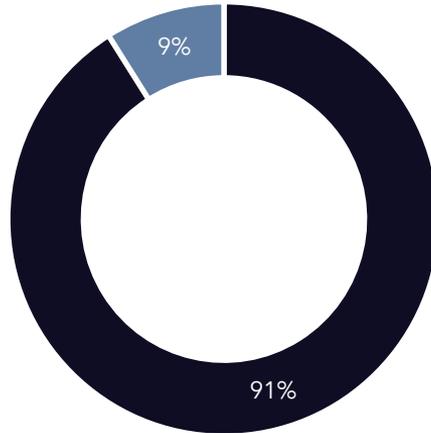


- The nation has become dangerously politically divided and a divided United States is a weaker United States. The vice president has a unique role and an opportunity to make serving as the 'unifier in chief' his or her top priority rather than playing a traditionally partisan role.
- The nation's current political division is a phase, not a permanent condition. The vice president's role in support of the president and the relationship between the two is too important to be potentially compromised by the president disagreeing with a non-partisan vice president.

# Bipartisanship is also popular, likely because people see it as a necessary part of effective government



When it comes to the laws passed & policies made in Congress, which of the following statements do you agree with more?

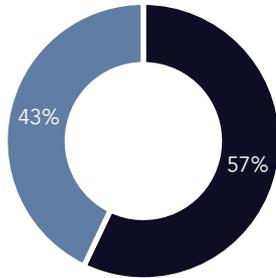


- Laws and policies are generally more effective when parties compromise and arrive at a bipartisan solution
- Laws and policies are generally more effective when one party has a complete control to develop a solution without compromise

# There is potential to re-frame the vice-presidency in terms of “making government more effective”

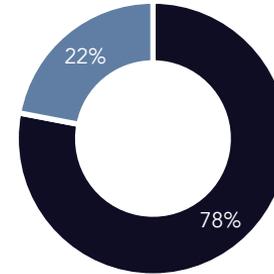


Which of the following statements do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right?



Support rises to 72% among VP concept supporters

Which of the following scenarios would you prefer?



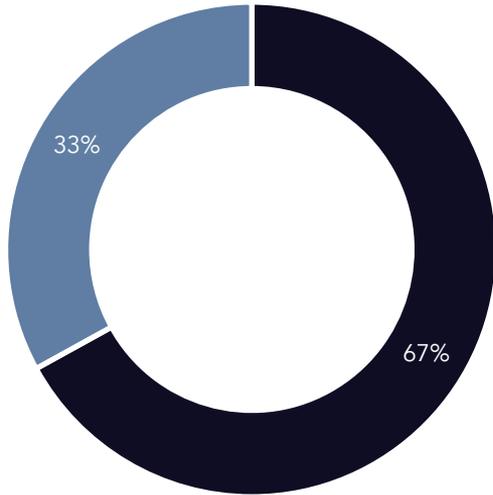
Support rises to 89% among VP concept supporters

- The vice presidency is the most underutilized office in the United States government. We would be better served by a vice president who works to develop policy and get things done in Washington by working with a bipartisan group of effective members of the House and Senate.
- The vice president plays an important behind-the-scenes role as an effective counselor to the president and voice on public policy, which has the added benefit of on-the-job training should something happen to the president.
- A partnership where the president as national leader with a vice president focused on making government effective and getting things done.
- A dominant president who leads on all issues and a vice president who works behind the scenes.

# There is strong support for the idea of a VP who gives voice to independents



Which of the following statements do you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right?



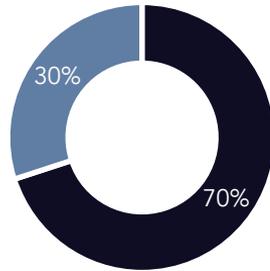
- Over 40 percent of the American public now considers themselves independent from the two major political parties, yet they lack representation by independent voices in either the White House or Congress. If the presidential nominee of either party were to choose an independent, centrist running mate, rather than a party loyalist, that running mate could earn the support of moderate and independent voters and represent their interests in Washington.
- A party's presidential nominee typically selects a running mate in order to capture the votes from his or her home state, or because he or she has the support of an important segment of the political party's base. This plays an important role in building a governing coalition and there is no reason to stray from that now.

Support rises to 79% among VP concept supporters

# Political independence also receives strong support



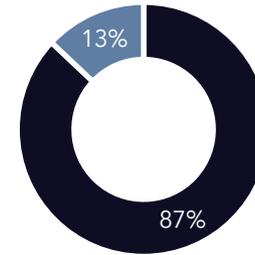
With which of the following statements do you agree more, even if neither is perfect?



Support rises to 81% among VP concept supporters

- Some say that having a vice presidential candidate who is politically moderate and willing to run on either the Democratic or Republican ticket would be a good thing because that level of flexibility indicates an ability to compromise
- Others say that having a vice presidential candidate who is a politically moderate and willing to run on either the Democrat or Republican ticket would be a bad thing because that level of flexibility indicates a lack of firmly held beliefs

When it comes to political candidates running for president, which of the following statements do you agree with more?



- The best presidential candidates listen to the public, chart their own course, and push back against their party's platform if need be
- The best presidential candidates stick with the platform put forth by their party, which reflects its member's preferences

THANK  
YOU

Please contact us with  
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