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“MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties
From: Frank Luntz
Re: Attitudes toward Prescription Drugs
Date: April 29, 2002

OVERVIEW

I have been known for my bluntness before and there is no reason to stop now. Republicans maintained the House in 2000 because they voted in favor of prescription medication legislation. Republicans lost four seats (and eventual control) in the Senate because they failed to vote for any prescription medication legislation whatsoever.

I fear Senate Republicans are about to repeat history. I fear they are about to make the same mistake yet again. **NO** is NOT an answer to the prescription drug issue.

We went out and polled **1,500** registered voters aged 55 and older in five key states including Missouri – the single most politically and ideologically representative state in the nation. Why people aged 55 and older? Because they are almost half the electorate in almost half the states in an off-year election. So we went and listened to the people who will decide who controls Congress on January 1, 2003. What they told us was explicit and profound...

Nothing matters more to this segment of the population than the creation of a prescription drug benefit. Nothing.

We gave these 1,500 registered voters – one of the largest samples of older Americans this year – a chance to support “investing more money in education,” “insuring those who do not have health insurance,” the traditional Republican policy “providing tax relief for all,” and the ever popular “paying down the federal debt.” Which priority mattered most?

Nothing came close to creating a prescription drug benefit.

In all of the five key target states (Missouri, Minnesota, Arkansas, New Hampshire and South Dakota), creating a prescription drug benefit came in first. Among men and women, among all age cohorts 55 and older, and among all income cohorts \$50,000 and below, prescription drugs is more important than all those other important issues.

This is a winning issue for Republicans if you communicate your plan and put it up for a vote. But you can't do what the Senate did in 2000. You can't depend on voters seeing and understanding Daschle's obstructionism. To delay is to deny and to deny is political death. Voters don't want some massive prescription drug Washington bureaucracy. They want exactly what you have to offer: a reasonable deductible, catastrophic protection, extra help for the poor, and the right to choose the plan that's best for them. It really is just that simple.