

To: Interested Parties
From: Global Strategy Group
Date: Wednesday, February 5, 2020
Re: Congressional Oversight Survey Key Findings & Messaging Recommendations

Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey of 1,008 registered voters nationwide from December 11th to 15th, 2019 on behalf of Allied Progress to assess where Americans stand on Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and congressional oversight of Trump administration officials. DeVos receives the highest disapproval ratings of any Trump administration official tested, and a majority also support congressional inquiries into why she neglected to process hundreds of thousands of student loan forgiveness claims from potentially defrauded borrowers, as well as why she halted the process of forgiving hundreds of millions of dollars in student loans owed by veterans with severe disabilities.

This poll followed a similar online survey research project of registered voters that was conducted during the last Congress, which found that the public overwhelmingly believed it was Congress' responsibility to perform oversight of Trump administration officials, and members of Congress were not seen to be doing enough.

Our key findings and messaging recommendations from the research are outlined below.

Key Findings:

- **The public disapproves of the job Secretary DeVos is doing by a 10-point margin.** While there is broad concern about senior officials in the Trump administration, the public is especially alarmed about the job Secretary DeVos is doing. Of the administration officials tested in this survey, she receives the highest disapproval rating (39%) – far above her approval rating (28%). White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney is second worst, with 33% disapproving and 22% approving of his job performance.
- **The public supports Congress investigating whether Secretary DeVos abused taxpayer funds or misused her position to enrich herself or her family.** This survey found that Americans are particularly disturbed by three specific instances in which Secretary DeVos allegedly abused the public's trust. In particular, withholding student loan forgiveness from severely disabled veterans (58% support investigation), awarding a federal student loan debt collection contract to a company she was once tied to financially (56% support investigation), and neglecting to process over 200,000 student loan forgiveness applications from potentially defrauded borrowers (56% support investigation) rise to the top among possible avenues for congressional investigation. Persuadable voters, those who are independent or soft partisans, strongly agree with this approach as they show support for all three of these issues at elevated levels (58%, 60%, 59% support for investigation, respectively).
- **There is a steady level of frustration with how Congress is carrying out its oversight responsibilities.** Nearly nine-in-ten (86%) agreed with the sentiment that “too many members of Congress are playing politics instead of working together to do their job of conducting bipartisan oversight of the Trump administration.” Within that segment, 58% strongly agreed, and 28% say they “somewhat” agree.
- **The public believes oversight of the presidential administration is Congress' responsibility and want a stronger check on DeVos and other senior officials in the Trump administration.** Consistent with 2018, an overwhelming majority of Americans think it is Congress' responsibility to conduct oversight of senior officials in the presidential administration (80% in 2019; 82% in 2018), and even further, a narrow majority of Americans (52%) believe Congress should be conducting more oversight of senior officials in the Trump administration; less than a fifth (19%) believe Congress should be conducting less oversight of senior officials. This is unsurprising as, similar to 2018, 51% of the public feels that senior officials in the Trump administration are more corrupt than in past presidential administrations (50% in 2018).

- **Even amid a polarizing impeachment process, Americans still want Congress to make oversight a priority, including those who oppose impeachment.** While many say Congress is spending too much time on impeachment (51%), a plurality of Americans do not think Congress is paying enough attention to corruption and ethics violations in the Trump administration (38%) or spending enough time on oversight of the administration (37%, including 41% of independents). In fact, a large swath of Americans who oppose impeachment still support greater oversight of the administration (42% oppose impeachment; 46% of those opposed to impeachment support congressional oversight of the administration).
- **As corruption is seen as a serious problem in the Trump administration, the public thinks senior officials in the administration have something to hide.** There is a clear sense that members of the Trump administration should appear before congressional committees (83%) and comply with congressional subpoenas (70%). However, Americans recognize corruption as a serious problem in the Trump administration (65%), and therefore believe members of the administration are stonewalling Congress because they have something to hide (54%).

About the poll

Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey of 1,008 registered voters nationwide from December 11th to 15th, 2019. The results have a margin of error of +/- 3.1%. The margin of error among subgroups is larger. A previous survey of 1,011 registered voters nationwide was conducted in September 2018.