

# TULCHIN RESEARCH

February 11, 2019

To: Interested Parties

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## Details Released of 2017 Statewide West Virginia Poll That Helped Galvanize Independent Efforts to Elect Progressive State Legislators

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Following a relatively strong showing by progressive West Virginia candidates in state legislative elections, Tulchin Research has been authorized to release the results of a study from October 2017 demonstrating that a majority of voters in West Virginia support candidates focused on creating economic opportunity and healthy communities for working families, even if they have progressive positions on social issues. The survey was commissioned by an effort to evaluate the potential for rural and small-town communities to vote for progressive candidates supporting policies to help working families.

In the November 2018 elections, West Virginia was in the top quartile of states as measured by success flipping state House seats from red to blue. Of the 35 states where Democrats gained seats, the average percentage vote for Clinton in 2016 was 46% compared to only 26% for Clinton in West Virginia districts. Yet, in 2018, Democrats beat Republican House and Senate majority leaders, and Democrat Joe Manchin won his US Senate race by 5% despite Trump's repeated visits to West Virginia urging Manchin's defeat.

The October 2017 survey helped shape independent efforts to reverse Republican gains by supporting candidates focused on bringing immediate tangible benefits to working West Virginians rather than national political agendas driven by both political parties.

The study revealed the following key insights, which helped galvanize grassroots efforts across the state to pick up and protect Democratic seats in the heart of what is commonly thought of as conservative Trump country:

- West Virginia voters would support Democratic candidates who spoke respectfully and directly about improving their economic situation. And it didn't matter whether such candidates were considered "moderate" or "progressive".
- The best example of this is that more West Virginia voters said they would support Bernie Sanders (48%) over Donald Trump (46%) in a hypothetical 2020 match-up for president.

In addition, West Virginia voters viewed Sanders at least as favorably (53%) as Trump (52%) and Manchin (51%), suggesting that an uncompromising progressive on issues like abortion and immigration does not disqualify candidates in the eyes of a majority of WV voters.

- The survey found that voters trust Democrats by a 10-point margin (38% to 28%) when it comes to "making health care more affordable", one of the most important issues for voters.

Attached is a polling memo describing the survey results in more detail along with the survey's methodology.