

June 24, 2024

To: Interested Parties

Fr: Impact Research

Re: **Holding the Supreme Court Accountable is a Winning Issue for Democrats**

With the U.S. Supreme Court continuing to issue right-wing, anti-democratic rulings and overturning decades of precedent – and following revelations of numerous scandals involving its justices – the public strongly supports oversight and accountability for the Court. Beyond this, they are more willing to support a congressional candidate who pushes for oversight of the court in the upcoming election than one who will uphold the status quo.

Over three-in-four voters in the congressional battleground say that the next president getting to select Justices is an extremely or very important factor in who they'll vote for this fall. And upon learning more about ethics scandals involving the Justices and messages by Democrats to stop corruption in the Court, voters move towards supporting a generic Democrat for Congress and critical constituencies (including younger women and Black voters) say they are more likely to vote in the November election.

The following are some key findings followed by messaging recommendations on this topic.

- **Nearly 80% of voters say that knowing the next President is going to choose Supreme Court justices is an important factor in their vote.** This includes 85% of Democrats versus just 76% of Republicans.
- **Voters reject the idea that the Court is fair, independent, and impartial.** Recent decisions and scandals have affected perceptions of the Court, and battleground voters reject the idea that the Court is *impartial* by 18 points, *independent* by 10 points, and *fair* by 8.
- **Nearly two-thirds of voters (63%) support Supreme Court justices being subject to more oversight and accountability.** This includes a 31-point margin of support among Independent voters (60% / 29%).
- **Voters are willing to reward congressional candidates who pursue oversight.** By a 38-point margin, voters would rather support a candidate for congress who *will pursue oversight, investigations, and reform to address U.S. Supreme Court corruption.*
- **Examples that tie gifts and favors from self-interested billionaires *with business before the Court* to the Justices are powerful and raise major concerns.** Specifically, the trips Justices Thomas and Alito have taken, the tuition payments for Justice Thomas's nephew, and funding salaries for family members of Justices raise deep concerns to a majority of battleground voters.

Findings are based on the results of a combined text-to-web and online survey conducted by Impact Research from June 4-June 10, 2024, in the congressional battleground among N=1,000 likely voters. The results are subject to a margin of error of +/-3.1%.

- **Connecting the influence of these billionaires to the conservative rulings is effective and taps into what voters already know – that the Court has become more conservative in recent years.** A majority (56%) of voters believe that the Court has become more conservative over the past five years, while just 28% believe it has stayed the same. Additionally, voters understand that these conservative rulings have a real impact on their lives, but that corruption and justices accepting expensive gifts is more concerning to them. This gives us the opportunity to connect how the corruption on the Court is fueling the conservative rulings and impacting people's lives.

The following are messaging recommendations:

- **Increase the urgency of the issue.** Supreme Court justices have received hundreds of thousands of dollars in gifts, trips, and tuition from self-interested billionaires who have business before the Supreme Court.
- **Connect the dots on why this matters.** Supreme Court justices have allowed their personal political views and the preferences of their benefactors, rather than the law, to determine how they rule on cases. Billionaires who have their own agenda are buying their influence that has led to rulings that help them and hurt the rest of us.
- **Show that Democrats have a plan to hold the Supreme Court accountable.**
Democrats say:

Democrats in Congress say that there are no rules preventing corporations or billionaires from giving Supreme Court Justices gifts, money, and favors - even if they have business before the Court. This creates a massive conflict of interest and can cause Justices to rule in favor of their wealthy friends and donors, with zero accountability. We need to pass enforceable ethics standards that will ensure that the Court's decisions are based on the law, not what donors want.