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February 3, 1977

MEMORANDUM

To: Jim Florio

From: Paul Lutzker, Vice President

Re: Preliminary Conclusions from the Recent Survey
of New Jersey Democrats

Our analysis of the data is progressing; in the interim, this memo will serve as an overview of the results and implications for the Democratic Gubernatorial Primary.

Governor Byrne is in trouble. There is very little hope that he would be able to win the General Election as the Democratic nominee, although he presently has a lead which is probably not expandable over lesser known primary opponents.

In our survey of Democratic primary voters, the Governor does quite poorly. His job rating is 37%-58% negative, figures that demonstrate widespread dissatisfaction with his performance in office and lower than H&S has seen for other Governors considered to be in trouble.

Voters' opinions of him personally are no more promising. Asked to rate him among a list of other political figures, 98% recognize him, but only 27% rate him favorably; 41% unfavorable. This demonstrates that his low job rating is not merely an artifact of the difficulties inherent in the job of the Governor, but reflects the dissatisfaction of the voters with his style as well as the recent actions taken by the state government.

The most striking figure that cements our view that Byrne is in trouble is that 31% of these Democratic voters say that they would not support him under any circumstances. This figure rises to 44% among those who oppose the state income tax, and 47% among those who feel that the state is generally moving in the wrong direction. This figure is remarkably high for an incumbent Governor of the same party, and makes virtually certain the dissolution of the Democratic coalition in the November election with Byrne at the head of the ticket.

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Joe Hoffman has made very little impression on New Jersey voters. More than three out of four Democrats cannot recognize his name and in a four person match-up, he gets only six percent of the vote.

Paul Jordan is recognized by slightly less than two out of five Democratic primary voters. Even in areas where his recognition is higher, the image that emerges shows some potential weakness. In Jersey City and the adjoining cities, he is rated 20% positive and 14% negative. Voters in this area are also mixed on the question of whether Jordan is his own man. By only 17%-20% do they disagree with the idea that he is too close to party leaders.

These ratings give pause to anyone who might assume that Jordan can solidify this geographic area, his home area, behind him. The data suggest instead that the North Jersey urban area is more likely to split its vote, giving Jordan only a slight lead.

The figures on Jim Florio are encouraging. In the cities and suburbs bordering Pennsylvania, Florio has a fairly high recognition level and strong popularity -- his 40%-1% favorable rating is strong. Also, in the coastal and southern portions of the state, his 26%-3% favorable rating is fairly strong for a Congressman from another area who is just beginning his second term.

At the present time, Florio and Jordan have about equal strength, regardless of who else is in the match-up. What gives Florio more potential is the fact that (a) he has already begun to solidify his own base; and (b) there are no incipient negatives emerging about him as there appear to be on Jordan.

The issues uppermost in the minds of these Democratic voters suggest in another way the difficulty confronting a Democrat who must embrace the record of the last four years.

- By a 60%-26% margin, these Democratic voters favor repeal of a state income tax;
- By a 60%-20% margin, the voters feel that the state government is inefficient, and that waste and nonessential programs could be cut;
- By an 86%-14% margin, they believe that utility rates are too high. Eighty-four percent believe further that some part of the blame

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belongs with the state government, particularly the Public Utility Commission. And almost half the voters say that utility rates will be a major issue in the upcoming election.

Taken together, these data suggest that the Democratic party must look beyond Governor Byrne if they are to hold the Governorship in 1977. With 41% of the Democrats having no present preference for Governor, it is clear that the race is wide open. Byrne might be able to squeak through a multiple candidate primary race, but he would have virtually insurmountable problems against any reasonable GOP candidate in November. If Byrne is not a candidate, the race is still wide open, but this poll shows that Florio has the best, unfettered base of support from which to launch a campaign.

PL/bab