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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

7/22/83

to Biff:

Additional information to
be included in the boxes (5)
from MKDeaver's office
that we sent over to you
on Wed., July 20th.

Thanks.

Donna Blume

Prof 3



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March 29, 1982

Mr. James A. Baker III
White House Chief of Staff
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Jim:

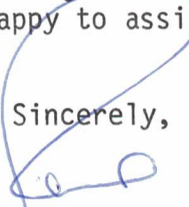
Attached is the final draft of A Political Action Plan: 1982. Your suggestions as well as Mike's and Ed's have been included.

Two additional short pieces will follow -- a six to ten page summary and a contingency plan which will be furnished separately for distribution to the three of you only.

I drew upon the suggestions of a number of individuals, but those of Richard Beal and Edie Mahe were particularly helpful.

The next steps as I see them would be to rank order the strategic objectives/action plans and start implementing them. I would be happy to assist in this regard if you believe I might be of help.

Sincerely,



Richard B. Wirthlin
President

ch

cc: Edwin Meese, III
Michael Deaver ✓

A POLITICAL ACTION PLAN

MARCH 17, 1982

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SECTION I

WHY A POLITICAL ACTION PLAN?

Against most measures the resources of the U.S. Presidency are enormous. But against most others -- the President's personal time and the number of pieces of legislation he can propose -- the Presidency functions in a most finite world.

Given these and other constraints, we offer as the major objective of this Political Action Plan: 1982 some suggested steps that might be taken between now and November to maximize the President's leverage and expand both his political and policy options in 1983 and beyond.

Four questions establish a frame of reference for the proposed action steps. These are:

- . What is at stake?
- . What is our present status?
- . What range of circumstances can we expect between May and October of 1982?
- . What attack themes will the Democrats likely mount?

After responding to these questions, the analysis then turns to the most basic query of all...

- . What should we do?

This one fundamental assumption strongly influences almost everything that follows: Ultimately the power of the President rests with the support of the people. That support can move Congresses that obstruct. Contrarily, if popular support wanes then the President's policy options will most surely narrow.

As we pointed out in the Initial Actions Project of January 29, 1981, while Americans demand a great deal from a President, they are willing to entrust him with considerable authority to lead. This stewardship grant can be kept strongly in place only if the following occur over the next few months: the inflation rate continues to moderate, fear of the spectre of unemployment softens, interest rates fall and we send a strong and specific signal that we are taking steps that will lead -- in the intermediate future -- to balanced federal budgets.

SECTION II

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR THE PRESIDENCY AND OTHERS IN 1982?

A second year typically is not a boom year for U.S. Presidents. Historically:

- . the President's party loses seats in the House of Representatives,
- . the adoption and implementation of his programs lose momentum, and
- . his leadership becomes factionalized.

Much more than this is at stake for the Reagan presidency as it enters its second year -- 1982.

In brief, what happens this year will strongly condition, if not determine, whether we lose or seize firmly the opportunity to restructure and redirect the public policy agenda in this country for the next two decades.

The results of the 1982 election are, in short, crucial to sustaining the Reagan revolution beyond his first two years in office.

The partisan debate will never again be fought along the same old lines that have conditioned presidential elections in this country for the past thirty-five years. That will be the case almost regardless of whether this president succeeds or fails. That debate will not take, as an automatic "given," the position that government spending can solve most of our social problems. The federal government will

likely be viewed by Republicans and Democrats alike as functioning in a world of limits just as the rest of us do. If the economy rebounds strongly in 1982-83, the tone of the partisan debate will be more "free-market" oriented than in the past.

On the other hand, if the economy should remain lethargic or slide further into the bowels of a recession/depression, other more draconian and radical measures await us in the wings. Some liberal writers already brood expectantly about the need to control completely corporate investment (in a fashion that would be radical in appearance for Americans, if not Europeans) should our policies fall short.

However, if Ronald Reagan succeeds, he can solidify the political consolidation that surfaced in 1980 and strengthen considerably the newly emerging demographic constituency for the Republican party.

Whether we succeed or fail still hinges on the economy. And, perhaps even more narrowly, our political success depends on what happens to the federal budget deficit, interest rates, and unemployment.

Success will be partially contingent upon our ability to persuade the Congress to pass an acceptable budget and enact legislation. But even more important our success hinges on the question "Will the hope Americans now hold for economic recovery be confirmed in 1982?" In sum, many Americans who are now suffering economically must have their own personal lives touched for the better economically some time during the next six months if we are to realize political victories in the fall.

Franklin D. Roosevelt stitched together his new coalition almost entirely with the thread of hope for the future. He kept it together

for almost a decade without much economic improvement; unemployment really was not brought under control until World War II.

But what Roosevelt accomplished over two terms -- building on Americans' patience that garnered and extended political support -- we probably cannot sustain more than two years.

Our shorter string reflects neither on the personality nor the leadership of Roosevelt's versus Reagan's, but rather on a different press, a different technology, and different party and institutional allies.

A president today faces not only an aggressive and frequently unfriendly press who scrutinize every action, but the electronic press plays to the "important" news breaks which need to tell a story in a two-minute bite and generally focuses on failures rather than successes -- on hope lost rather than hope gained. This dries up the reservoir of patience that might otherwise have endured.

The medium of television as a communication vehicle is more powerful, more intimate, and more uncontrolled than Roosevelt's prime medium -- the radio. While the President knows and uses television extremely well, we have not maximized the potential of television and other media as effectively as Roosevelt used radio. We have lost a year relying almost solely on set "major event speeches" and "press conferences" to communicate with the American people. We must paint with a much broader communications brush in 1982.

The supporting political institutions -- the party and its allies -- were much more firmly ensconced behind Roosevelt in his first year than they have been for us. It was the "first time" voters who came into, and stayed with, the New Deal fold. Our landslide generated from switchers who were earlier more aligned with the Democrats and much less prone to stay in the Republican fold. The promise of

realignment came with the 1980 victory -- but it is still to be realized among voters who were not politicized solely by the forces of the 1980 election.

During the first six months of 1981, allegiance to the Republican party increased sharply, by June virtually closing the gap between Democrats and Republicans. However, the visage of Jimmy Carter's failed presidency has faded, and this, plus the rise in unemployment and the fairness issue, have widened the partisan gap once again. But it should be kept clearly in mind that the gap between Republicans and Democrats is still only half as large as it was in June of 1980 when the major elements of the presidential election took shape. Many Democrats and Independents cast ballots for a Republican president for the first time. Large blocs of those same groups must cast a second Republican ballot for a senator or a congressman in 1982 before those voters will be imprinted as Republicans in the same fashion as Roosevelt's Democrats were in the first year of his administration.

Furthermore, the time remaining to impact the process itself over the next three years now runs extremely short. Remember, when the 1983 budget year expires -- the budget we just presented to the Congress and the first we have shaped from beginning to end -- the 1984 presidential vote will be but three months away.

Given the consequences of what happens in fact and in perception over the next eight months, we can conclude not only that this Presidency is at stake, but also that both his program of a new beginning and the viability of his party are on the line.

We outline below, more specifically, four possible election outcomes in 1982 and the resulting consequences for the President, his program, and the Republican party.

Democratic Landslide

A Democratic landslide would occur if we lost three to five seats in the Senate, 30 to 50 in the House, eight to ten governors, and 12 to 15 state legislature majorities. (All gains or losses are expressed in "net" terms.) The consequence: a repudiation of the President and his agenda.

The President. Due to the repudiation, the President would become a lame duck. The Reagan revolution would be terminated. The stature of the presidency itself would be diminished. The media would conduct sustained and debilitating attacks. The public's confidence would fall. Political and policy options would be lost. A leadership crisis would probably occur.

The Program. The programs and policies of the President would be paralyzed. Confusion and division would exist over carrying out elements of the program that had already been passed. There would be a resurgence of government by bureaucrats, and a reassertion of the need to reduce the "private" sector and expand the "public" sector by extracting investment funds from the private sector through much heavier taxes on the income and property of affluent Americans.

The Party. Serious conflicts would erupt between moderates and conservatives. The emerging demographic constituency would be lost. A convention fight would be assured. Congressional leaders would begin scrambling for power. Republicans would be locked into minority status for the decade. The results could cause the future leadership generation to shy away from the party.

Democratic Advantage

A Democratic advantage would occur with a crippling Democratic victory marked by one gain to two Republican losses in the Senate, 15 to 30 losses in the House, six or seven gubernatorial losses, and eight to eleven state house losses.

The President. The President would be forced into an extensive use of the veto and into frequent compromises. Media attacks would occur regularly, public confidence would be shaken, the President's maneuverability would be limited, and he would have to operate in a reactive mode.

The Program. A "maintenance" mentality would emerge regarding the President's program. New initiatives would be retarded and the bureaucracy would bide its time, selectively snarling programs with red tape. There would be much internal division and confusion over the programs and policies.

The Party. Ideological splits would resurface. Elected Republicans would separate themselves from the White House. The constituency would be seriously shaken. Jockeying for position at the next national convention would begin.

A Standoff

A standoff would occur if the Republicans won two or three seats in the Senate, held losses in the House to 5 to 15, suffered only three to five gubernatorial losses, and lost three to seven state houses.

The President. The President could claim a victory, using history as the standard. He could continue to advance his agenda, but he

would be required to go to the mat on many issues. He would operate in an uncertain, but not necessarily dangerous, political atmosphere.

The Program. While the public would still require some evidence that the programs will work, initiative would be possible. A sense of direction would be maintained and the bureaucrats kept at bay. Congressional Republicans would generally become more supportive of the programs.

The Party. A sense of accomplishment would permeate. The demographic constituency would be solidified, but not expanded, unless in 1983 we experienced a booming economy. New Republican leaders at the state and local levels would emerge.

Republican Advantage

Should the GOP win four to six Senate seats, achieve House results somewhere between five wins and five losses, win two or not lose more than two gubernatorial races, and do the same with state houses (net two wins to two losses), this would signal a significant victory and the Republicans would garner the advantage.

The President. The President would achieve great credibility and be able to take the initiative to advance his agenda more quickly than before. The agenda could be expanded into new areas.

The Program. Initiative and innovation would be highly possible. There would be a sense of direction and togetherness among policy advisors and the bureaucracy would be brought under control.

The Party. The problems of victory would emerge. There would be some sense of independence from the White House on specific issues. The 1984 election would be the focus of power struggles. New

personnel would come into the party organizations. The demographic constituency would have been solidified and expanded.

The more likely scenarios at this juncture appear to be "Democratic Advantage" and "Standoff." It should be noted that from an historical perspective, even the "Standoff" scenario runs substantially better than the historical odds. Since the early twenties, there have been two elections -- 1952 and 1968 -- that followed a Republican takeover of the White House. A perusal of those elections shows that on the average we have neither gained nor lost any Senate seats, but we did lose fifteen House seats and nine governors. Granted two cases mark pretty thin ground for historical precedent -- it should not be ignored.

Of course, it is very possible that the November election results will not fall neatly into any single outcome example. The resulting electoral consequences will likely shade between those described. But there is one conclusion we can draw with certainty: at stake in the 1982 elections is the direction in which the country will move politically in the decades of the eighties and nineties.

SECTION III

WHERE WE STAND TODAY

The Issues

To target politically its resources -- time, personnel and political effort -- the Administration must address satisfactorily the issues that the public itself considers to be pressing as well as other issues that strengthen our Republican core and swing political coalitions. Since certain specific public attitudes do shift in response to current events, these target issues cannot be set in cement. However, the public in general has been very consistent over the last year and a half in its rank ordering of what it deems the salient issues of the day.

Although there have been some shifts in recent weeks -- most notably, unemployment has risen dramatically as a public concern -- the salient issues chosen by the public and their relative order has been quite stable. Each of these items and our current status with them will be discussed below in more detail.

Economic issues dominate the list. Unemployment ranks first, eclipsing inflation over the past month as the problem of greatest concern. Other economic issues such as a balanced federal budget, concurrent concern over the size of the federal debt, taxation and interest rates round out the list.

A variety of social issues comprise the second largest category of concern. The issues here range from education to Social Security to race relations, but crime dominates. Worries related to international relations, war, and peace are the third most frequently mentioned cluster, followed by a general category that includes leadership and the state of American morality.

Number One National Problem
February 25 to March 6, 1982

=====

	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Economic Issues</u>	66
Unemployment	23
Inflation	17
Economy/General	12
Government spending/ Balanced budget	7
High interest rates	6
Taxation	1
<u>Social/Domestic Issues</u>	11
Crime	3
Social Security	3
Poverty	1
Racial problems	1
Drugs	1
Education	2
<u>International Issues</u>	9
War and peace	5
Foreign policy	2
Defense	1
SALT II	1
<u>Morality and Leadership</u>	7
Declining moral values	5
Government leadership	1
Government control	1
<u>Other Issues and Problems</u>	7
Energy	2
Farm	1
Reagan	2
No opinion	2
 TOTAL	 100

Source: February Tracking (#5541)
February 25 to March 6, 1982, N=1500.

The Economy

Americans expect the next twelve months to be difficult ones for the economy, but many anticipate things will be better next year than they are now or have been in the past. Eight out of every ten Americans expect 1982 to be a year of economic difficulty rather than prosperity. Similarly, 58% of the people say the national economy has gotten worse over the past year, while 28% say it has stayed the same. Only 13% of the public thinks the economy has gotten better.

Despite the awareness that certain aspects of the economy have not recovered during the past year, Americans, while becoming a bit apprehensive, are not giving up hope on the economy in general or on the Reagan economic program in particular. However, if the economic news worsens that hope could disappear rapidly.

Looking ahead to next year, half of the people predict that the national economy will get better, while almost one-fourth expect it will get worse. The remaining quarter anticipate that things will stay the same as they are now. Even a third of those who feel that the economy has worsened during the first year of the Reagan Administration say that things will get better during the next twelve months. Note in particular that, among those who say the economy held steady during 1981, nearly two-thirds expect things to get better in 1982.

Reagan's Economic Program

It is encouraging that the public presently does not blame Reagan's economic program for the current status of the nation's economy. Over eight out of every ten Americans agree with the statement "Our current economic problems are not the product of Reagan's economic plan that is only just now getting underway; they

are the inheritance of decades of tax and tax, and spend and spend." Nevertheless, Americans expect the administration to put together a program that will rejuvenate the economy.

Furthermore, half of all Americans feel that Reagan's economic package will help rather than hurt the economy. Concurrently, the public margin of patience accorded the economic program continues to be wide: two-thirds of the public still say it will be a year or more before the nation sees either the helpful or harmful effects of the President's economic program. Although Congress may be shortening its time allotted for judging the economic program, their constituents are not.

Even so, support for Reaganomics over the past few months has slipped, and it would only be prudent to assume that the margin of patience will close rather quickly if high unemployment and interest rates persist into the summer.

Even now, not all aspects of the economic package are approved; time can run out on our economic program. Although a modest majority of people feel the program is fair and will reduce inflation, attitudes split on the questions of its effect on unemployment and its helpfulness specifically to "people like you." Note: nearly six out of every ten Americans now say the economic program best meets the needs of upper-income people, rather than the middle class (10%), all people equally (22%), or the poor (2%).

Inflation

Despite the gains that have been made in reducing inflation, the public remains largely unaware of these results.

Half of all Americans think that inflation has gotten worse over the last year, while 28% think it has stayed the same. Only 24% say

it has gotten better when compared to a year ago. This issue continues to be the first-mentioned response to the number one national problem question, even though the rate of inflation has slowed very considerably over the last year.

In addition, there is guarded optimism about the future course of inflation. Over one-quarter of the public think inflation will get worse, one-third think it will stay the same, and the remaining 35% think it will get better.

The Reagan Administration's policies to reduce inflation continue to receive strong public approval. Nearly two-thirds of the public agree with the idea that "only by reducing both the federal budget and tax rates will we be able to reduce inflation and increase productivity." They, however, express great worry about federal deficits. (See the section on the budget and deficits that follows.)

Unemployment

Unemployment has, for a long time, been cited as the number one problem on a statewide level. Over the last five or six months, it has increased in importance every month. The rise in national concern can be attributed in part to a wide-spread awareness of the issue. Over eight out of every ten Americans say that unemployment has gotten worse during the last year, with only 3% saying the employment situation has improved. The remainder say it has stayed the same.

Looking to the future, four out of every ten people do expect employment to improve during the next year; a third expect it to get worse.

Increasing concern over this issue has triggered more willingness to devote federal monies to alleviate the effects of unemployment. Currently, 41% of the public think the federal government should spend

more on unemployment compensation, with 26% of those people are willing to have their own taxes increased to fund this activity. A year ago, only 28% wanted to spend more than currently dedicated to this program.

Federal Budget and Deficits

While public discussion and concern over the size of the federal debt, government spending, and attempts to balance the budget have been considerable, the public remains largely unaware of the size of the debt. Half of all Americans cannot provide an answer when asked, "From what you've heard and read, how large is the present federal debt?" Of those who do answer, three out of ten say the debt is under \$500 billion; one out of five say it is \$800 billion or larger.

Despite this, in the eyes of most Americans, balancing the budget should be a premier goal of government. Nine out of every ten Americans consider it extremely or at least somewhat important that Congress and the President adjust spending and taxes so the federal budget will be balanced by 1985.

This attitude reflects in a number of ways, including projected ballot box decisions. Over half of all Americans say they would be likely to vote against a candidate running for Congress who supported "almost all the issues that (they) did, except he did not think it was important to try to limit the federal debt." This attitude must be considered a landmine for this administration.

In order to achieve a balanced budget, Americans would support cuts in government spending -- first and foremost in defense, second by eliminating waste and fraud in government, and a few would support a raise in personal taxes. There is strong support for increasing corporate taxes.

Lastly, one of the most popular proposals of the State of the Union address was the plan to reduce the number of federal employees and cut waste and fraud in government rather than increase taxes in order to balance the budget. Nearly eight out of every ten people approve this plan. The most favored proposal from the address also dealt with taxes -- 80% favor strengthening a law which requires all large corporations to pay a minimum tax.

Interest Rates

Another element of the economic issues mentioned by the public -- interest rates -- receives 6% of the mentions as the number one problem in the country. Last fall, 1,500 people were asked who or what they thought was primarily responsible for high interest rates. Only 6% blamed the President specifically, 2% blamed Congress and another 25% blamed other agencies or actions of the government. Financial institutions received 19% of the credited fault, the Federal Reserve system got 9% and the economy in general was tagged by 20%.

The relatively small saliency of the issue greatly understates its political importance. High rates of interest cut directly and deeply into our core support groups; interest rates have become a "surrogate measure" of inflation and, according to some of our best economists, have the potential of stifling and postponing the recovery. Among the 20 or 30 reasons a cross section of Americans give when asked, "What causes inflation and unemployment?", high interest rates rank near the top of the list.

While the President is not blamed now for high interest rates, Americans may well expect him to do something about them soon.

International Relations

The emergence of "world peace" and defense-related issues on the number one problem list is very sensitive to current news events. Consequently, following declaration of martial law in Poland, or the downing of jets over Libya, the number of Americans worried about peace rises significantly. But even at these crisis points, the economic concerns predominate.

Although most Americans agree with the need for a strong national defense, many question whether the defense budget should be treated as inviolate. Despite the fact that nearly three-quarters of all Americans agree that the "only way to insure peace is with a strong national defense," cutting defense spending is the most favored option when it comes to looking for ways to balance the federal budget.

Should the economy get rougher, fewer people would likely be willing to support a burgeoning military budget at the expense of other -- primarily domestic -- programs or the overall goal of a balanced federal budget. For instance, a year ago 76% of Americans said the government should spend more on defense than it did then. Now, that figure has dropped to 50%, with only 37% saying they would be willing to have their taxes increased as a consequence of greater military expenditures. By comparison, 30% presently want to spend less, while only 13% felt this way a year ago.

On the specific issue of the crisis in Poland, people tend to support the President and the actions he has taken so far. When asked about the economic and diplomatic sanctions imposed against the Soviet Union as a response to their activities in Poland, 43% of all Americans felt the President's actions were "about right" while 14% said they were too strong and 33% said they were not strong enough.

Regarding El Salvador, the biggest fear expressed by the American people is that involvement with that Central American country would lead to another Viet Nam. Over two-thirds of the public feel that giving aid in particular would precipitate involvement similar to that experienced by the U.S. in Southeast Asia. This attitude surfaces despite the fact that more people recognize the presence of the Communists to be at fault in El Salvador than attribute the current problems to the rightists in the country.

The issue in the general arena of foreign relations that could swamp us, if we do not handle it with great care, is the proposed freeze on the production and deployment of nuclear weapons. Even when apprised of the difficulties of verification of this plan, 75% of all Americans favor the freeze.

Domestic Issues

A variety of other domestic issues have also been assessed during the past year. While support or opposition to these issues often varies from subgroup to subgroup -- much more so than on international or economic issues -- certain patterns have developed. Items tested this year and the aggregate attitudes indicate:

- . A majority of Americans support extension of the Voting Rights Act, despite the fact that a significantly large percentage of the population (37%) does not understand the issue well enough to be able to express an opinion.
- . Seven out of every ten Americans approve of the concept of returning voluntary prayer to the schools.

-
- . By a 54% majority, Americans approve of giving tuition tax credits to parents paying tuition to private elementary and secondary schools. By an even larger majority (71%), people approve of giving similar tax breaks to parents who are supporting children in college.

 - . Regarding other educational issues, two-thirds of the people would like to see federal spending on education increased, and they also oppose abolition of the federal Department of Education. School lunches, on the other hand, receive less total support: 50% would like to see spending increased, while 29% want to spend less and 18% want to spend the same as now.

 - . Part of the blame for the present crime rate is placed on the American judicial system. Over 80% of the people agree with the statement that our legal system "overly protects the rights of criminals while it leaves society and the innocent victims of crime without justice." In addition, an overwhelming 75% of all Americans want to see federal spending on crime prevention increased, and 58% are willing to have their taxes increased to support these programs.

 - . Support for entitlement programs varies greatly from program to program, particularly when the question is phrased in economic terms. For instance, 54% of Americans would like to see funding for Medicaid increased. AFDC and food stamps, on the other hand, are not as widely supported. In fact, 60% would like to see food stamp funding reduced. For AFDC, approximately one-third would like to cut funding, 36% increase it, and 21% maintain the current funding levels.

 - . Energy concerns do not generate the same interest they commanded during the 1970's. However, there is no consensus to abandon working on these problems; only a third of all

Americans approve of a proposal to dismantle the federal Department of Energy. Also, nearly six out of ten people would like to see spending on energy conservation programs increased while only 23% want to see these expenditures decreased.

New Federalism

The public generally approves of the Reagan policy of "New Federalism," inaugurated publicly during the 1982 State of the Union address. Six out of every ten Americans approve of shifting the authority for over 40 federal programs to state and local governments with the revenue sources to fund them. The only qualification to the statement was that this process would be phased in over ten years.

Nearly the same proportion approve of the Medicaid/AFDC swap; 57% responded favorably to the statement of "having the federal government take over the Medicaid program while states, in return, will take control of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children and food stamps programs."

The specific item from our New Federalism program that we did not implement that receives the highest approval, however, is the plan to establish a "trust fund" of money collected from certain federal excise taxes that states can use to fund programs formerly administered by the federal government. Two-thirds of the public approve of this provision.

Although the public supports certain aspects of the plan, the term itself remains largely unfamiliar to most of the voting age population. Consequently, the President will be required to educate the public on the principles and reasoning which underlie his federalism proposal, if it is to succeed.

Support for the President

As an analytic measure the presidential job rating generates almost as much heat as light. It points to only the most vague outlines of presidential support and falls far short in assessing the true breadth and width of how Americans feel about the President.

Nevertheless, the job rating is particularly useful when identifying relative coalitional strength and changes in coalitional support. Because a major portion of this section focuses on such change we will use the job rating as well as thermometer scaling as our two broad measures to assess in general terms where the President stands with the people.

President Reagan's job rating has suffered some erosion recently because of the wrangling over the 1983 budget and the rather intense and unfavorable press that the budget message generated.

Between September of 1981 and February of 1982 the President's approval rating fell 10% and the disapproval rating increased 11%.

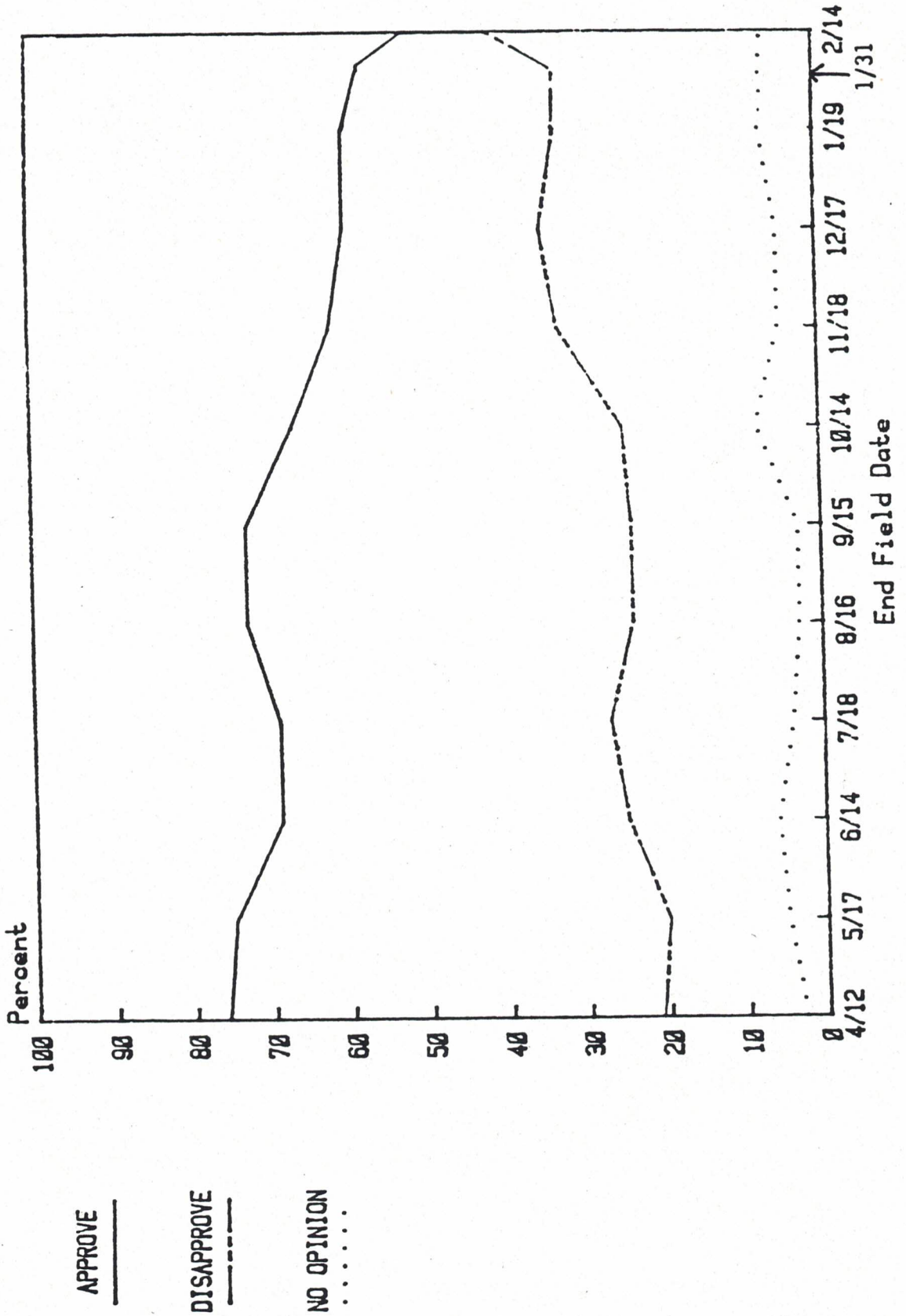
Change in Presidential Job Rating September 1981 to February 1982

	<u>September 1981</u>	<u>February 1982</u>	<u>Change In Job Rating</u>
Approve	61%	51%	-10%
Disapprove	32	43	+11

The chart that follows shows the President's job rating since he took office. As that chart reflects, there have been some substantial changes in the level of presidential support just in the last 30 days.

PRESIDENT REAGAN'S JOB RATING

April 1981 - February 1982



Not only has there been fluctuation in total support of the President through time, there are also marked differences in support between various constituents in America. Using thermometer scaling (100 indicates very positive feelings towards the President and zero indicates very negative feelings), the President averaged a rather strong 67 for the entire year 1981.

The most positive Reagan support group, not unsurprisingly, were those who were "Very Conservative Republicans" (thermometer rating 85). At the bottom of 73 coalitional groups were the Blacks (41). Using this technique our support groups can be identified as:

- . very conservative GOP (85),
- . somewhat conservative GOP (83),
- . liberal GOP (82),
- . those who feel the country is going in the right direction (80),
- . moderate GOP (80),
- . those who switched party allegiance last year (77),
- . Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska (74),
- . Florida and Texas (73),
- . farmers (73),
- . German (73),
- . Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut (72),
- . Montana, Idaho, Utah, Arizona (72),
- . English (72),
- . Irish (71),
- . French (70),
- . Italian (69),
- . Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma (69),
- . Indiana, Wisconsin (69), and
- . Iowa, Missouri, Kansas (69).

The groups which were least supportive of Ronald Reagan last year were:

- . Blacks (41),
- . those who felt the country had seriously gotten off on the wrong track (56),
- . Jewish (59), and
- . Hispanics (64).

While the above may give some indication as to where the President might be most favorably received as he travels in 1982, the more cogent reason to study the strengths of relative constituencies lies in coalition building. If the President can move some of our swing constituencies toward the Republican banner by two or three percentage points between now and the fall, this will greatly enhance the win probabilities of many marginal Republicans seeking election or reelection. But we must, as a first priority, give thought and effort to reinforce and strengthen our base coalition.

Coalitional Change

In the Initial Actions Project of January 1981 we identified, on the basis of the election outcome, five major groups that appeared then to offer us the best targets to build and strengthen our coalition by attracting and holding key swing voters. These groups are union members, blue-collar workers, Hispanics, the middle-aged, and voters in the South. Over the last year we have not fared very well with four of these five groups.

Between March of 1981 and January of 1982 we lost 30 points on the presidential thermometer rating with Hispanics, 15 points with union members, 13 points among blue-collar members, and 10 points with adults in the South.

But over the last year our strength also ebbed substantially with one critical group in our 1980 base -- older citizens. The Reagan thermometer rating fell 13 points with senior citizens.

Because we did not ask the thermometers in our most recent brushfire survey, we will judge current changes in our base and swing coalitions on the basis of job rating. As the table below reflects, we have lost considerable support since September with important elements of our base coalitions. The loss was greatest in the West and among Republican identifiers, less among conservatives.

Changes in Base Support
September 1981 to February 1982

	<u>September 1981</u>	<u>February 1982</u>	<u>Change</u>
<u>West</u>			
Approve	65%	54%	-11%
Disapprove	27	39	+12
<u>Republicans (Including Independent Leaners)</u>			
Approve	88	77	-11
Disapprove	8	18	+10
<u>Conservatives</u>			
Approve	70	62	- 8
Disapprove	24	32	+ 8