

Richard Nixon Presidential Library
Contested Materials Collection
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10	16	4/18/1973	<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic Policy	Memo	From W. Richard Howard and Higby to Haldeman RE: a comprehensive voter database created during the election of 1972 and potential non-election uses for it. 4 pgs.
10	16	4/17/1973	<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal	Memo	From Higby to Patty RE: a reminder to call Mrs. Burgess. 1 pg.

April 18, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR:

H. R. HALDEMAN

FROM:

W. RICHARD HOWARD

L. HIGBY

SUBJECT:

Future of the Data Base

DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA BASE:

During the 1972 Campaign as a result of our Direct Mail program and canvassing efforts, a very substantial data base was established. It is presently housed in a data center in Dallas. It has more than \$1,000,000 invested in its development, socio-economic characteristics, algorithms, software and technical know-how. It consists of a computerized listing of nearly 22 million households (almost 30 million registered voters) in the nine large states and now has the capacity for the following:

- Produce computerized lists of registered voters for canvassing and get-out-the-vote, by precinct, and in alphabetical or street address sequence.
- Record voter responses from canvassing on the master file (i.e., those voters who are for, against or undecided toward the candidate).
- For specialized mailings:
 - . Select surnames indicating ethnic origin: Spanish, Polish, Jewish, Irish, Italian.
 - . Estimate the age and income level of each household listed.

- . Identify the Census tract, and therefore, the general demographic characteristics of each household.

It is currently the property of the Committee for the Re-election of the President. George, Bush, the RNC, individual candidates, Congressmen, State Committeemen and various private concerns would all like to obtain a copy of it for use during the 1974 and 1976 campaigns as well as other commercial purposes.

Below are listed some alteraative routes that the President might want to consider for use of the data base:

ALTERNATIVE #1

- Establish separate entity (corporation or trust) to house the Data Base.
- The manager of the Data Base could also be part of the RNC staff in their Data Processing operation.
- Decisions on which requests for use of the Data Base would be made by someone outside of the RNC, acting in the President's interest.

DISCUSSION

This alternative retains Presidential control for 1976. By keeping the Data Base independent of the RNC, the Chairman is not placed in a position where he has to honor all requests and make the total system (computer tapes and programming) available to anyone who requests it. At the same time, by the presence of the manager in the RNC, the Data Base can be readily used in conjunction with Republican campaigns whenever the President so desires. For example, the decision might be made to allow the Chairman of the RNC to make copies of the voter lists and mailing labels available to selected candidates in 1974. Up to a point, the information could even be made available in computer tape form, although the distribution of the system software (programming) is not recommended. Then after 1974, the President could once again assume control for 1976. Any lists would only be marginally useful on 1976 unless substantial investment were made to keep it up. An obvious disadvantage of Alternative #1 is that it may, to some degree, alienate party leaders.

ALTERNATIVE # 2

- Turn the Data Base over to the RNC.
- Assure that a manager capable of using the system is placed on the RNC staff.

DISCUSSION:

The President would be donating the Data Base to the Republican Party. He could assure that adequate resources are applied to maintaining it for 1974 and 1976. The RNC Chairman would have complete discretion to make it available to all candidates and all state parties. Undoubtedly, the systems and software would also soon be disseminated. Most of the 1976 candidates for the Presidential nomination would be sure to obtain it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Magruder, Marik, Kehrl, Higby and I agree that the ownership of the Data Base should be in the name of some separate legal entity and not be in the name of the RNC. This is necessary in order to preserve the control of the Data Base. If the Data Base were legally a part of the RNC, Chairman Bush could conceivably be sued in the future by dissident or opposing Republican candidates for the use of the Data Base. Putting the ownership in a separate legal entity will forestall any problems of this kind before they exist. We believe Chairman Bush would agree with this arrangement. Bob Marik has met with him.

APPROVE: _____

DONATE TO RNC: _____

2. Magruder, Marik and Howard have agreed that the control over the Data Base should be maintained by an individual on the White House staff, either by Howard or anyone you wish to designate. In all activities involving the Data Base,

the manager would be responsible to this White House staffer, but for all other activities, he would operate under the direction of George Bush.

APPROVE: _____

DISAPPROVE: _____

COMMENTS: _____

3. Funds will be required to maintain the Data Base. All estimates range near the million dollar mark over the next four years. This money should not come from the RNC because if it did, it would cloud the legal ownership issue. Therefore, Magruder, Marik and Howard recommend the establishment of a fund for the continuation of the Data Base as a part of the new legal entity. This fund should be established out of the surplus of the Finance Committee for the Re-Election of the President.

APPROVE: _____

DISAPPROVE: _____

COMMENTS: _____

DH/LH/pp

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April 17, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR:

PATY

FR:

L.

MAKE SURE I CALL MRS. BURGESS ABOUT TENNIS.