To: Interested Parties  
From: Winning Jobs Narrative Project  
Re: NEW ANALYSIS: Democrats Aired More TV Spots on Pocketbook Issues

This rapid-response analysis of all U.S. House and Senate television ads aired between August–November 2022 shows that Democrats aired more spots about pocketbook issues than Republicans, including an aggressive closing week defense of Social Security. This initial memo contains ad tracking data and examples of noteworthy ads. Additional research from the Winning Jobs Narrative Project is available here.

By examining the content and frequency of broadcast ads aired, this unique analysis provides a clear view about what happened in 2022 from the perspective of American television viewers. Several pre-election reports focused on the amount of money spent on ads by issue area. The focus on ad spending mistakenly equalizes the critical difference between the lowest price for ads that candidate campaigns pay and the higher price paid by independent groups.

Some initial coverage has suggested that Democrats who won in closely contested federal races did so in spite of the economic concerns of voters. In reality, Democrats consistently communicated on pocketbook issues, frequently in ways that aligned with the Winning Jobs Narrative Project’s extensive research across more than 110,000 survey interviews and 3,000 qualitative conversations. Many Democrats effectively conveyed their working class identity in contrast with wealthy opponents tied to powerful special interests. Democrats also branded Republicans as extreme and out of touch in a number of ways, including their extreme stances on abortion and the January 6th insurrection.

Key Findings:

- **Across nine pocketbook issues, Democrats aired 200,000 more spots (defined as one airing of one ad) than Republicans.** Republicans aired more spots on taxes, economy (typically focused on inflation-related attacks on Democrats similar to this one), and energy. However, Republicans barely mentioned pocketbook issues like jobs, health care, social security and prescription drugs.

- **Democrats’ focus on protecting Social Security was part of a powerful closing argument. In the election’s final week, 15% of Democratic spots mentioned Social Security, up from 9% during August–October.** 30 percent of all Democratic spots aired since August on Social Security were on TV during the final week of the campaign.

- **Ads on issues like public safety and abortion also played a major role.** **2.2 million spots aired on nine pocketbook issues—compared to 1.4 million on eight other key issues in this analysis.**
Table 1: Pocketbook Issues TV Spots Analysis
(Data from Aug. 1–Nov. 8, 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% of All Spots</th>
<th>Dem Spots</th>
<th>GOP Spots</th>
<th>D vs. R Spot Advantage</th>
<th>D vs. R Spot Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>169,318</td>
<td>292,839</td>
<td>-123,521</td>
<td>4:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>92,591</td>
<td>323,447</td>
<td>-230,856</td>
<td>2:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy / Environment</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>106,366</td>
<td>231,551</td>
<td>-125,185</td>
<td>1:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>286,107</td>
<td>45,536</td>
<td>240,571</td>
<td>6:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription Drugs</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>207,086</td>
<td>35,444</td>
<td>171,642</td>
<td>6:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs / Unemployment</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>136,734</td>
<td>63,798</td>
<td>72,936</td>
<td>2:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>102,733</td>
<td>10,602</td>
<td>92,131</td>
<td>10:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>72,985</td>
<td>10,159</td>
<td>62,826</td>
<td>7:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing / Construction</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>79,111</td>
<td>14,306</td>
<td>64,805</td>
<td>11:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total “Pocketbook Issues”</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1,253,031</td>
<td>1,027,682</td>
<td>225,349</td>
<td>5:4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 2.2 million spots ran on these nine pocketbook issues between August and November (Table 1). Across these pocketbook issues, Democrats aired 200,000 more spots than Republicans. Although Republicans aired more spots on the topics of taxes, economy, and energy, Democrats kept the ratio close. Democrats dominated the other six topics in this category with ratios as high as 10-1.

These data debunk a few analyses in circulation prior to the election that Democrats were not communicating on economic issues. Moreover, the data suggest that Republicans’ generalized criticisms of the economy may have fallen short against Democrats’ communication advantage on key, specific pocketbook concerns.

Methodology: Winning Jobs Narrative researchers conducted this analysis on Nov. 9, 2022, comparing broadcast television spending by issue topic as categorized by Kantar Media Intelligence in U.S. House and U.S. Senate general election races from Aug. 1–Nov. 8, 2022. This analysis includes both campaign spending as well as independent political committees. Out of 140 issue categories, this analysis focused on 17 of the most commonly aired topics. A “spot” refers to one airing of one advertisement. Advertisements are not limited to a single issue, so some advertisements are counted in more than one category based on their content. (Data Copyright 2022 by KANTAR MEDIA INTELLIGENCE and CATALIST. All rights reserved.)

Since one ad can have multiple issue tags, this data doesn’t allow for multiple issue comparison of total ads.
### Table 2: Pocketbook Issues as Part of the Closing Argument  
(Data from Nov. 1-8 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>% of All Spots</th>
<th>Democratic Spots</th>
<th>Republican Spots</th>
<th>Dem - GOP Spot Advantage</th>
<th>D vs. R ~ Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>23,043</td>
<td>67,784</td>
<td>-44,741</td>
<td>1:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32,784</td>
<td>54,222</td>
<td>-21,438</td>
<td>3:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy / Environment</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20,731</td>
<td>48,458</td>
<td>-27,727</td>
<td>2:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>55,403</td>
<td>6,434</td>
<td>48,969</td>
<td>10:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription Drugs</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>41,071</td>
<td>5,331</td>
<td>35,740</td>
<td>8:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs / Unemployment</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>22,038</td>
<td>14,344</td>
<td>7,694</td>
<td>3:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>30,177</td>
<td>4,212</td>
<td>25,965</td>
<td>7:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing / Construction</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10,720</td>
<td>1,886</td>
<td>8,834</td>
<td>5:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10,569</td>
<td>1,382</td>
<td>9,187</td>
<td>7:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final Week Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>n/a³</strong></td>
<td><strong>246,536</strong></td>
<td><strong>204,053</strong></td>
<td><strong>42,483</strong></td>
<td><strong>5:4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the closing week, Republicans continued to buy significantly more spots about taxes, energy and the economy; however Democrats competed on those topics with tens of thousands of their own (Table 2). Republicans continued to mostly ignore health care, prescription drugs, jobs, trade, and manufacturing/construction.

Democrats aggressively increased communications on the issue of Social Security in the final week. **Between August and October, Social Security was mentioned in 9% of Democratic spots, but in the final week, Social Security was cited in 15% of those spots.** 30 percent of all Democratic spots on Social Security aired since August came during November when the topic jumped to 11% of all spots (up from 6% over the entire period analyzed here). In the final week, Americans saw seven Democratic spots about Social Security for every one Republican spot. Democrats likely increased ad traffic on Social Security in response to House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy’s (R-Calif.) mid-October public promises to force spending cuts that could include Medicare and Social Security.

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³ Since one ad can have multiple issue tags, this data doesn't allow for multiple issue comparison of total ads.
Table 3: Other Key Issues TV Spots Analysis  
(Data from Aug. 1–Nov. 8, 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of All Spots</th>
<th>Dem Spots</th>
<th>GOP Spots</th>
<th>D vs. R Spot Advantage</th>
<th>D vs. R ~ Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>185,754</td>
<td>259,232</td>
<td>-73,478</td>
<td>4:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>369,382</td>
<td>98,318</td>
<td>271,064</td>
<td>4:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>27,376</td>
<td>129,210</td>
<td>-101,834</td>
<td>1:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>71,461</td>
<td>37,292</td>
<td>40,995</td>
<td>2:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>27,522</td>
<td>66,145</td>
<td>-38,623</td>
<td>2:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>60,834</td>
<td>3,929</td>
<td>56,905</td>
<td>15:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Affairs</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>30,422</td>
<td>28,280</td>
<td>2,142</td>
<td>1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun Control</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>26,008</td>
<td>7,271</td>
<td>18,737</td>
<td>4:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>n/a³</td>
<td>798,759</td>
<td>629,677</td>
<td>175,908</td>
<td>5:4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This analysis also reviewed spot totals for other key issues (Table 3). Taken together, TV spots on these eight issues aired 1.4 million times between August and November 2022, compared to 2.2 million spots that aired during the same period on pocketbook issues.

Both Republicans and Democrats spent heavily on the topic of public safety, which was mentioned in 24% of all spots. Republicans had a nearly two to one ad advantage on that topic. Abortion was mentioned in 18% of all spots—with TV viewers seeing nearly five Democratic ads on the topic for every GOP ad.

Spots for several other key issues—immigration, corruption, drugs, voting, international affairs, and gun control—each represented less than 10% of spots aired during the same period.

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The Winning Jobs Narrative is a working people-centered narrative for talking about jobs, work, and the economy that resonates across race, geography, and issues. For more information, contact us at connect@winningjobsnarrative.org.

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³ Since one ad can have multiple issue tags, this data doesn’t allow for multiple issue comparison of total ads.
Appendix: Examples of 2022 Ads That Aligned With the Winning Jobs Narrative, Led with Pocketbook Concerns and Related Messages

After the largest and most ambitious progressive economic narrative project to date—including 3,000 open-ended conversations with voters and more than 110,000 completed survey responses (and counting)—the Winning Jobs Narrative project team identified a five-part economic narrative framework that resonates strongly across race and geography:

1. **Center working people, small businesses, and family farmers—the heroes—and their concerns and aspirations.** As this analysis demonstrates, Democrats were largely effective in connecting with the concerns of working people—like lowering costs, fixing supply chains, bringing manufacturing jobs back, and protecting the freedom to decide when and how to have a family. Most importantly, Democrats offered an explanation for rising costs that more voters recognize to be true—price gouging and supply chain disruptions—and showed that they are focused on addressing those problems.

2. **Create a greater sense of connection and shared identity with working people by demonstrating that we value work and contributions.** Key Democrats acknowledged how hard Americans work and consistently identified themselves as working class in contrast to opponents who were "not like us."

3. **Contrast a progressive vision of the economy, which recognizes working people as its engine, the conservative vision of the economy that is focused on failed “trickle down” theories like tax cuts for the rich and eliminating government programs like Social Security and Medicare.** Key Democrats conveyed an effective message that they were focused on working people, while Republicans promised more tax cuts for the rich and cuts to Medicare and Social Security.

4. **Keep agency with working people—and position government and politicians in a supportive, not starring role.** Democrats avoided messages that they "saved" or "rescued" our economy.

5. **Show how the economy—and all of us—benefit from our policies.** Democrats kept the focus on broad, shared prosperity.

In key race after key race, Democrats consistently identified themselves as normal working people who were focused on the immediate material concerns of most voters. They identified their opponents as being not like voters—not "one of us"—in a number of ways: being rich and elitist, extremist, and corrupt and self-interested. Here are just a few examples from key Congressional races across the country:

**Steven Horsford - NV-04 - How Important**
- "I know how important work is. I was raised by a hardworking single mom. . . . And I’ll never forget where I came from."
- "In Congress, I’ll never stop fighting to lower costs and reduce crime, giving all our families the opportunity to work and succeed."

**Angie Craig - MN-02 - Hands**
- "To tackle inflation and fix the supply chain, we’ve got to get tough on China, invest in technical training and apprenticeship programs, and bring more manufacturing jobs here."
Mary Peltola - AK-At-Large - Represent Us
● “Mary Peltola is running for Congress to represent us. From a small Yup’ik fishing village on the Kuskokwim River.”
● “Eight years as chair of the bipartisan Bush Caucus, delivering on development in Alaska.”
● “Fishing boat captain at age 14.”
● “And the only candidate who will protect our rights, and the freedom to choose.”

Hillary Scholten - MI-03 - Made In West MI
● “When it’s made in West Michigan, it’s built to last. I think it’s time that Congress got back to valuing that kind of hard work.”
● “Bringing supply chains home will lower costs and create long term opportunities for all our families.”
● “Together, we’re building a West Michigan where our best days are still ahead.”

Ann Kuster - NH-02 - Fixed Income
● “It’s not easy being on a fixed income. So it’s disturbing that Bob Burns pledged to join the most extreme members of Congress who want to cut the Social Security and Medicare we’ve earned.”
● “Annie Kuster is looking out for us. She’ll take on anyone, in either party, who wants to cut the Social Security and Medicare we earned. Annie really cares about people.”

Matt Cartwright - PA-08 - The Supply Chain
● “The supply chain... We can’t get the stuff we need, so prices go up.”
● “That’s one reason I fought for a bill to modernize our ports, roads, and rail.”
● “But that’s not enough. We need to manufacture here, in Pennsylvania, and put supply chain problems in the past.”
● “More jobs. A stronger America.”

Marcy Kaptur - OH-09 - Save Our Auto Industry
● “I’m Marcy Kaptur. I worked with both parties to save our auto industry and parts suppliers.”
● “Now I’m funding job and vocational training at our schools and community colleges because good jobs, with benefits, are how we support our families.”
● “I’ve worked with Republicans to help make America energy independent.”

Chris Deluzio - PA-17 - Western PA
● “I’m Chris Deluzio. Western PA taught me when to step up, and when to call bull.”
● “That’s why, after 9/11, I joined the Navy to keep us safe. And why I’m in this fight against rising prices, lousy trade deals, and corporate price gouging.”
● “Here’s the deal: Jeremy Shaffer made his fortune from a corporation creating jobs in China, ripping off Western PA families and lying about it.”
● “I approved this message because corporate jagoffs don’t need another champion in Congress. You do.”

Marie Glusenkamp Perez - WA-03 - Auto Repair Shop and Gravel Road
● “I own an auto repair shop. I’ll throw a wrench into the extreme partisanship in Washington, DC, work across the aisle, and be an independent voice for us.”
● “Expand job training and apprenticeships to rev up our local economy.”
● “I’ll always protect our democracy.”
● “I’ll slam the breaks on anyone who tries to take away our reproductive freedom.”
● “I approved this message because Congress could use someone who actually knows how to fix things.”
“I come from a long line of loggers. I’ll rebuild jobs in the woods.”
“I’ll invest in technical education to help rebuild American manufacturing.”
“I’ll protect our freedoms - the 2nd Amendment and our right to make our own healthcare decisions.”

In contrast, the majority of the Republican economic ads stuck to a message about high gas and grocery prices, asserting they were caused by government spending and taxes, and focusing on blame— not solutions (the closing spot from the Republican Congressional Leadership Fund in NC-13 is typical of this approach). Our research showed this approach was at least somewhat effective, but less so than the best-testing Democratic messages, because Democrats offered a more compelling explanation of higher costs—supply chain breakdowns and price-gouging—and offered solutions.

More About the Winning Jobs Narrative Project

Democrats’ messaging on pocketbook concerns dovetailed with recommendations of the Winning Jobs Narrative—a working people-centered narrative for talking about jobs, work, and the economy that resonates across race, geography, and issues. WJN launched in 2021 with a review of available research from the last two decades, followed by a six-month qualitative research phase of nearly 3,000 conversations with voters in 17 states, and large-scale quantitative research that has included over 110,000 survey interviews over the past year, including a dozen rounds of implementation message testing and a national Spanish-language message test.

As part of its ongoing implementation research, WJN developed an economy-focused closing argument that prioritized working people and their most immediate concerns across race and geography. The component elements of the closing argument below tested in the 90th percentile of over 5,000 messages tested this cycle by Blue Rose Research:

Democrats are putting working families, small businesses, and family farmers first. They’re working to lower costs, fight outsourcing, bring our supply chains home, and ensure hardworking people have the opportunities and tools they need to build a good life.

Large corporations are making record profits and still raising prices, while many working Americans struggle to pay their bills and feed their families. By making billionaires and giant corporations pay the taxes they owe, Democrats are bringing down costs for healthcare, medicine, and energy bills— without raising taxes on anyone making less than $400,000 a year.

Democrats are working for a growing, healthy economy that benefits us all. Republicans have no plan to lower costs. Instead, they plan to give more tax cuts to the wealthy and pay for that by gutting the Social Security and Medicare we’ve earned.

In addition, Somos—one of WJN’s lead advisors— independently developed, tested and deployed ads in Nevada (English | Spanish) and Arizona (English | Spanish) using the Winning Jobs Narrative framework. The ads also showed how the Democrats didn’t need to choose between economic issues and abortion— even in the same ad. Both were central to the concerns of most voters, including working class voters.

For additional information on the Winning Jobs Narrative, including the WJN research archive, visit https://www.winningjobsnarrative.org.