



Memorandum

To: Interested Parties
Fr: Chris Russell
Dt: November 23, 2021
Re: National Public Affairs (NPA) Memo

As I've said quite publicly, and everyone on Team Ciattarelli is keenly aware, there are no moral victories in political campaigns. Conversely, there is apparently never a shortage of unsolicited cheap shots from Monday morning quarterbacks with an axe to grind and business to seek.

NPA's dishonest and self-serving memo merits a direct response based on facts and reality. Moreover, it should be noted that the memo's author decided to launch this criticism despite having 1) steered a credible candidate for governor into such an untenable strategic position that the campaign was forced to fold within a month, after years of careful planning by others; 2) repeatedly failed to flip (or even try to flip) legislative seats from blue-to-red despite a leading role in the party for years and countless opportunities; and 3) is keenly aware that all of the actual data required to do a credible, well-intentioned deep-dive on 2021 – one that could help the NJGOP build on our historic success this year – doesn't even publicly exist yet. That fact alone renders this critique as an opinion piece masquerading as analysis – and about as instructive as the public polling was in New Jersey this cycle.

As to the specific points that the NPA memo tries (and fails) to make, consider the following:

- First, the memo's central implication – that the Ciattarelli campaign didn't do enough to attract or motivate conservative voters – is demonstrably false and easily disproven. Our campaign rolled up some of its biggest margins in the reddest parts of the state.
 - In fact, Ciattarelli won a larger % of the vote than both President Trump and Governor Christie (2009) in Ocean, Sussex, and Cape May – the most Republican counties by registration in the state – and Ciattarelli's dominance in South Jersey blew away the performance of any recent statewide Republican candidates.
- Second, the memo's assertion that "Ciattarelli voters would have more enthusiastically supported" him if he had done x, y and z is absurd on its face. By the author's own admission, these people *already* supported Ciattarelli's candidacy *and voted for him*. Were extra credit points available if these people supported Ciattarelli "more" than with their vote, and oftentimes, their money? Last we checked that's not how this works.

- The reality is that the Ciattarelli campaign fell short due to a severe disparity in outside spending and a softening of support among moderates (Republicans, Independents, and Democrats) in areas such as Morris and Somerset counties, as well as affluent, suburban areas in Union, Camden, and Burlington counties. That said, it is clear that for Republicans to win again statewide, the Ciattarelli campaign's strategic model is the right one to build on in the future. The proof is evident:
 - With Ciattarelli leading the ticket, Republicans won more than 100 local seats statewide in 2021, including defeating two incumbent Democratic Senators, winning another open Senate seat, defeating five incumbent Democratic Assemblymembers, winning three open Assembly seats, and picking up county seats in Gloucester and Passaic. (As an aside, my firm, Checkmate Strategies, was proud to play an integral role in LD2, LD8, LD11, and Passaic County, this year, in addition to helping to flip Senate seats from blue-to-red in both 2017 and 2019, as well)
 - According to research by the *NJ Globe*, Ciattarelli won all six of the congressional seats Republicans held as recently as 2016. He also won 51 of the 53 municipalities that flipped from supporting Trump in 2016 to Biden in 2020, plus all 36 towns where Trump beat Hillary Clinton in 2016, but then backed Governor Murphy over Lt. Gov. Guadagno in 2017. Finally, Ciattarelli won all 18 towns that voted for Trump in 2016 and 2020 but backed Murphy in 2017.
- Third, while we commend Governor-elect Youngkin and his team in Virginia for their terrific win, when one compares 2020 presidential results to 2021 gubernatorial results, Jack Ciattarelli swung New Jersey (+12.6%) to the Republican column **more** than Youngkin (+12.1%) swung Virginia, despite precious little national GOP spending in support of Ciattarelli as compared to Youngkin, and a staggering deficit in voter registration that leaves Republicans outnumbered by registered Democrats by nearly 1.1 million voters (compared to 704,000 in 2009). Note: Party affiliation as we know it does not exist in VA, but the gap between behavioral Republicans and Democrats is believed to be much smaller than in NJ.
 - That dramatic shift towards Republicans in NJ this year – and the coattail effect down ballot – was due to the excellent candidates, County GOP leaders, organizations, volunteers, and activists all across the state who enthusiastically rallied around Jack Ciattarelli's embrace of common sense, kitchen table issues like lower taxes, smaller government, support for police, more personal freedom and parental involvement in education, and a return to mainstream over extreme politics, while pushing back on the tone-deaf attitude of Phil Murphy and complicit legislative Democrats, and their increasingly radical, far-left policies.