



# Progressive Caucus Action Fund

Findings based on a survey of 600 likely voters with an oversample of 300 infrequent voters across 88 competitive congressional districts

**June 16-24, 2020**



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# Methodology

- Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey that was conducted between June 16-24, 2020 by live telephone interview, online, and text-to-online.
- The survey reached a total of 600 likely voters across 88 competitive congressional districts, plus an oversample of 300 progressive turnout targets.
- Phone numbers and emails were drawn from the states' voter files.
- The data was weighted by gender, age, education level, and race.
- The margin for error is +/- 4.0% for the base sample and larger for subgroups.

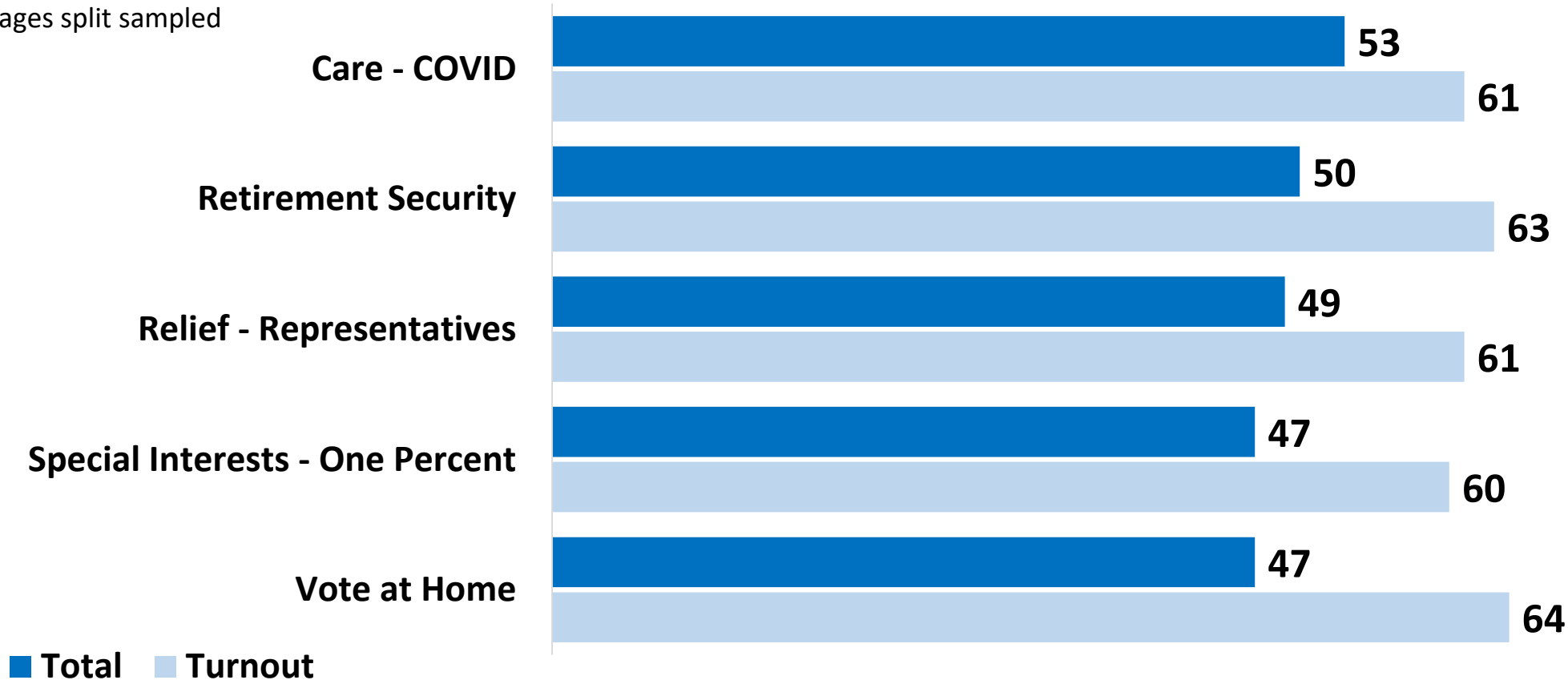
# Key Messaging Findings

- Messages that convey a **progressive frame and policy agenda** resonate strongly.
- The most successful policy messages focus on the **specifics** of a what a **progressive agenda will mean for working families**. Talking about bold, structural changes without offering specifics is not as effective. Respondents don't know what the bold changes are, and it could be the wrong type of change for them.
  - **The progressive agenda, not just rhetoric, is key to successful messaging in 2020.**
- The top tier of messages all convey a **populist economic frame** that emphasizes the **voice and needs of working families** and the need for **fundamental change in our political and economic system**.
  - These messages highlight the need for policies that better **support our paid and unpaid care workers, stable retirement security, representatives who aren't bought and paid for by lobbyists and special interests, an economic system that doesn't favor the wealthiest one percent, and the right to participate in democracy safely by voting at home.**
- The same messages are popular across audiences.
  - However, the most important policies to these infrequent voters are **women's rights, Medicare for All (in the context of COVID), voting at home, and retirement security.**
- Additional messaging on a range of other issues important to progressives – **climate change, police reform, women's rights, immigration,** and more – is also fairly successful with respondents overall in these districts.

The top tier of messages tests very strongly, with close to half or more of all respondents rating them very convincing. They all feature a strong, progressive, populist frame of what is really going on in the economy – how the wealthy, big corporations, and the one percent are taking all the benefits of economic prosperity and hurting working people – and alternatively bring in the pandemic, a gender lens, and threats to our democracy, along with tangible policies to improve people’s lives. Infrequent voters have a slightly different rank order of messages than voters in these swing districts overall, though all top tier messages perform very well with them, rating in the low to mid 60s.

**Top Tier Messages\***

\*all messages split sampled



# Text of Top Tier Messages

**[CARE – COVID]** From nurses to home care workers to teachers, COVID-19 is showing us how the people who care for our loved ones are doing essential, yet often undervalued work. And many of us, especially women, are juggling care responsibilities and work. To build stronger families and a stronger economy going forward, we need to value care work - paid and unpaid - by ensuring all families can afford care, and everyone has fair wages, paid family and sick leave, and safe working conditions.

**[RETIREMENT SECURITY]** Most of us believe that an honest day's work merits an honest day's pay, including enough set aside to retire with dignity. But while this virus has wiped out our savings, corporations are collecting kickbacks from the stimulus and record profits, and certain politicians want to take trillions from Medicare, Social Security and Medicaid to hand even more to the wealthiest one-percent through tax giveaways. We need to elect real leaders who work for all of us, not just the wealthy few.

**[RELIEF – REPRESENTATIVES]** Big corporations are using their influence in Washington to profit off the pandemic while forcing millions of Americans out of their jobs, denying basic protections for the people stocking our grocery stores and caring for our sick, and shutting people who run small businesses out of critical relief. We need to elect representatives who aren't bought and paid for by lobbyists and political special interests, so we can count on our taxpayer dollars to go towards helping working people and our families.

**[SPECIAL INTERESTS – ONE PERCENT]** This virus has shown that we pull through by pulling together, no matter what we look like or where we live. But the richest one-percent are profiting while they take from the people we depend on most: health providers, educators, first responders, and working people who drive trucks, stock shelves, and clean buildings. 60 of the top corporations including GM, Delta, and Amazon, paid zero in federal taxes last year. We need to join together, to make the wealthiest few pay their fair share.

**[VOTE AT HOME]** Americans know that the only way for democracy to work for all of us is if democracy includes us all. But today, a handful of politicians want to block us from having our voices heard and our rights respected by denying us a way to vote safely as we confront COVID. By implementing universal vote at home by mail, a proven approach many states have relied on for years, we can ensure that every American has an equal say in our own future.

The best message overall is one that discusses how the pandemic has revealed that *Care* work is undervalued and should be rewarded with better wages, leave policies, and working conditions (53% very convincing), followed by one focused on how corporations are in bed with certain politicians to take away voters' *Retirement Security* (50%). Also strong are messages highlighting how big corporations are hijacking the *COVID Relief* money meant for small businesses by buying our *Representatives in Washington* (49%), wealthy *Special Interests* and the *One Percent* are profiting at the expense of working people in our economic system under the status quo (47%), and certain politicians are trying to deny Americans a safe way to exercise their rights by blocking *Vote At Home* policies during the pandemic (47%).

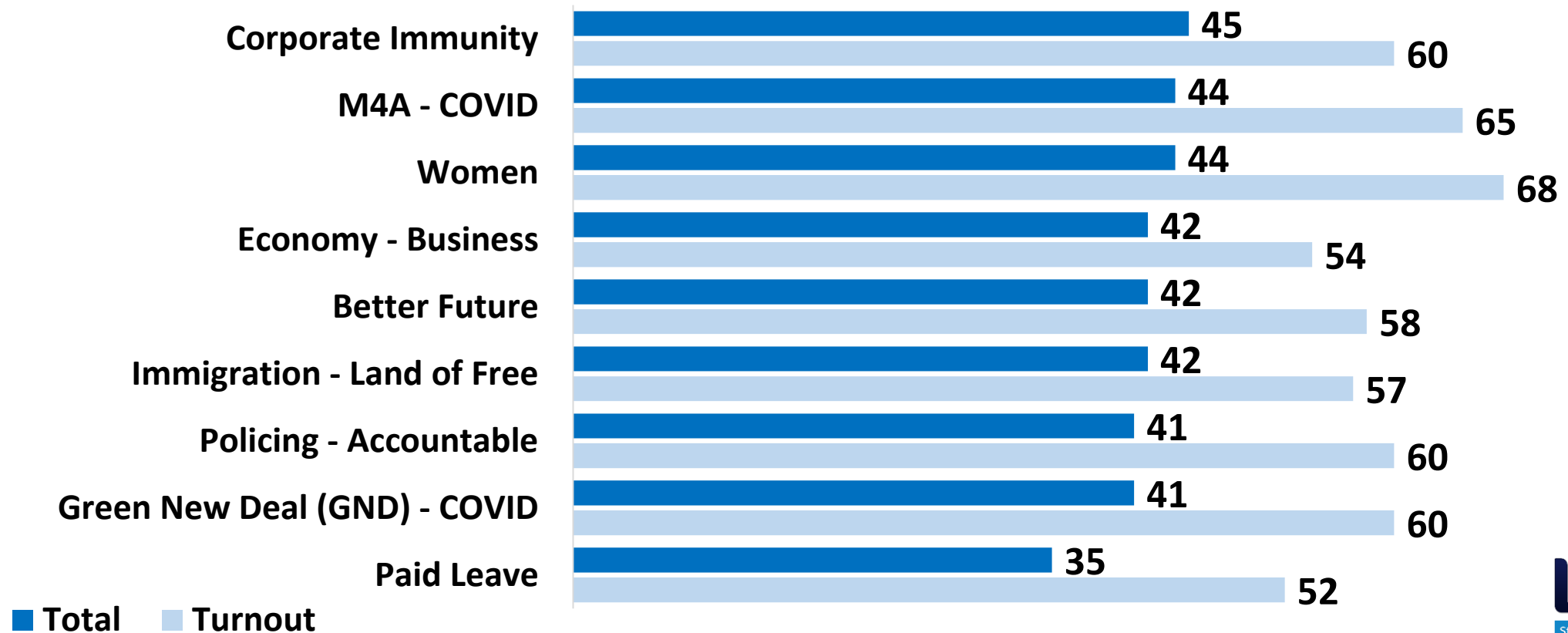
Message* (Ranked by % Very Convincing)	Total	Turn out	Gender		Age		Gender/Age				PID			Race		Region			
			M %	W %	<50 %	50+ %	M/<50 %	W/<50 %	M/50+ %	W/50+ %	Dem %	Ind %	Rep %	W %	POC %	NE %	MW %	S %	W %
Care - COVID	53	61	46	59	64	44	55	74	37	49	81	59	21	49	68	54	49	51	60
Retirement Security	50	63	48	53	60	42	57	64	38	44	80	55	15	49	64	53	50	50	48
Relief - Representatives	49	61	48	49	62	38	65	58	33	42	78	46	14	47	63	56	48	43	51
Special Interests - One Percent	47	60	42	51	52	43	44	58	39	46	79	49	6	44	60	40	54	47	45
Vote at Home	47	64	40	53	51	43	39	61	40	46	78	45	10	46	54	47	51	42	48

\*all messages split sampled

The second tier of messages, covering a range of specific policies including *Corporate Immunity* (45%), *Medicare for All* (44%), and the *Green New Deal* (41%) – the latter two of which are stronger in the context of COVID – to broad issues including *Women* (44%), the *Economy* and small *Businesses* (42%), building a *Better Future* after COVID (42%), *Immigration* and keeping America the *Land of the Free* (42%), and making *Policing* more *Accountable* (41%) all perform fairly well, testing in the low to mid-40s. Two standout messages with turnout targets are ones about ensuring equal treatment for *Women* (68%) – their number one message – and a second advocating for *Medicare for All* in the context of COVID (65%).

### Middle Tier Messages

\*all messages split sampled



# Text of Middle Tier Messages 1

**[CORPORATE IMMUNITY]** Protecting the health and safety of all Americans should be a top priority for our leaders and representatives, but certain politicians want to make it so corporations can't be held responsible in court when their recklessness kills. Right now, big corporations are using their influence in Washington to profit off the pandemic while gambling with the lives of the working people we depend on most. By joining together, we can elect representatives who stand up for us, not their corporate donors.

**[M4A – COVID]** Everyone should have high-quality, health care. This pandemic has shown we all have a stake in everyone getting the care they need. That's why we need representatives in Congress who will fight for Medicare for All, which will cut prescription drug prices, eliminate premiums, deductibles, and copays, protect people with pre-existing conditions, and guarantee all families access to the doctors of their choice and quality care, including mental health care, that can't be taken away.

**[WOMEN]** Most of us believe in treating everyone equally no matter their race, background or gender. But right now in America, certain politicians deny women healthcare and look away as corporations pay women only 80 cents on the dollar. We need representatives who will fight to ensure that all women receive equal pay for equal work and access to health care, including prenatal care, paid family leave, and safe abortion care, because health care decisions should be between a woman and her doctor alone.

**[ECONOMY – BUSINESS]** No matter where we come from or what our color, most of us work hard for our families. But COVID-19 has made clear how much a greedy few have rigged the system by keeping us divided and struggling. While we work multiple jobs, with no chance to save for an emergency, they're collecting kickbacks from the stimulus and laying off millions. We need to elect leaders who put us first by building our infrastructure and supporting small businesses rooted in our communities.

**[BETTER FUTURE]** This virus has shown that we are dependent on each other. Black or white, Latino or Asian, native or newcomer, we pull through by pulling together. For too long, we've let a powerful few divide us to profit by making life and health into products that are for sale. To build a better future beyond this crisis, we must unite across our differences and rewrite the rules to help everyday people gain higher wages, safe working conditions, paid sick leave, and health care for all.



## Text of Middle Tier Messages 2

**[IMMIGRATION – LAND OF FREE]** People with the courage and tenacity to move for a better life help make America “land of the free, home of the brave.” But this administration tries to deflect blame from their failures by pointing the finger at new immigrants, while they hand kickbacks to corporations and tear children from parents and hold them in dangerous conditions. We need to create a fair immigration process that upholds our values and respects people’s rights.

**[POLICING - ACCOUNTABLE]** No matter what we look like or where we live, we all want to move through our communities without fearing for our lives or our loved ones. But today, as we mourn the brutal killings of Black Americans, certain politicians blame the victims of police violence to distract from their failure to ensure we are all safe and have opportunities to thrive. We must hold police accountable and fund the things we all need like schools, housing, and healthcare.

**[GND – COVID]** This pandemic has made it clear how unprepared our society is to respond to a global threat. With the threat of climate change already causing bigger wildfires and floods than we have ever seen before, we need to be prepared for worse consequences down the road. We need to elect representatives who support a Green New Deal, so we can create good jobs replacing lead pipes, preparing for extreme weather and expanding clean energy, to protect our communities and start preparing now.

**[PAID LEAVE]** No matter what we look like or where we live, we all want to be able to provide and care for our families. But the COVID-19 crisis shows how a handful of politicians and corporations force us to choose between coming into work or caring for a child, keeping our jobs or recovering from illness – while they line their pockets. By coming together, we can demand universal childcare and the paid time we need to care for our loved ones and recover ourselves.

Two different policy frames were tested in the survey against standard conservative talking points. The first presented a *Forward*-looking vision for how, with the right policies, our society can recover from COVID-19 stronger, with investment in our working families, higher wages, skills training and affordable college, support for small businesses, paid family leave and sick leave, and guaranteed affordable health care for all. The second featured a *Populist* frame, with emphasis on taking on greedy corporations and investing in Main Street, not Wall Street. While both progressive profiles are strong, the *Forward*-facing one performs a few points better, likely due to the inclusion of specific policy priorities.

### Progressive Framing

**DEMOCRATS [*Forward*]\*:** Democrats believe that when we are facing a serious crisis, like tens of millions unemployed and a broken health care system that bankrupts people to pay for necessary treatments and needed prescription drugs, we can't settle for small tweaks to the system we already have. To restore America's middle class and build a better, more secure future for all of us beyond this crisis, we need to invest in our working families, with higher wages, skills training and affordable college, support for small businesses, paid family leave and sick leave, and guaranteed affordable health care for all.

**DEMOCRATS [*Populist*]\*:** Before the pandemic we already had an economy that was only working for the very wealthy, with big corporations and CEOs making millions and paying zero taxes while working people struggled to make ends meet. Now we are losing jobs and health coverage, and big corporations are hoarding the recovery money, leaving nothing for the small businesses and working families who need it most. Democrats believe that we need to take on greedy corporations and invest in Main Street, not Wall Street, to restore our middle class and build back from this crisis better for all of us.

**REPUBLICANS:** Republicans believe that before the coronavirus hit, we had the best economy of our lifetimes, thanks to President Trump's America-first policies – protecting American jobs and making tough trade deals. Republicans believe that in order to ensure a strong recovery, we need payroll tax cuts and incentives to get businesses back on their feet creating jobs again, law and order, and strong border security to keep out foreign infections and illegal immigrants and stand up to China. Republicans will focus our relief efforts on working Americans and businesses, not more taxes to pay for health care for illegal immigrants and socialism.

\*all messages split sampled

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Strategy · Precision · Impact



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