It’s Not About Him
It’s about people

All too often in politics, people forget that voters care more about themselves than they do about any politician. In this latest Compass survey, we’re reminded that voters’ concerns about Donald Trump center on how his problems — from conflicts of interests to reckless foreign policy — could impact them and their lives. In Democrats’ messaging against Trump, we can easily become solely focused on what he’s doing wrong — because it leaves us all rightly outraged. In the end, that alone isn’t enough. It’s about what he’s done wrong that will hurt American families.
Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts may enrich Trump, but what matters is how they will influence his decisions

Donald Trump’s secretive and sprawling business interests are unprecedented, and many decisions Trump makes as President are likely to benefit him and enrich his family. But voters want to know how these decisions relate to them. Democrats’ messaging against Trump should focus on how Trump’s conflicts of interest will influence his decisions and, in turn, have dangerous consequences for the country and American foreign policy. While this may change over time when more revelations come out about Trump’s conflicts, both base and swing voters are significantly concerned that Trump’s domestic business interests could influence his decision-making — leading to favoritism that puts the interests of his domestic businesses ahead of everyday Americans and his foreign businesses ahead of our national security.

It concerns me more that...

Foreign businesses will have too much influence over Trump’s decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base</th>
<th>64</th>
<th>Swing</th>
<th>36</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Trump will provide special favors and treatment to his business partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base</th>
<th>61</th>
<th>Swing</th>
<th>39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Trump will use the Presidency to make money for himself and his family.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Base</th>
<th>61</th>
<th>Swing</th>
<th>29</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Trump will use the Presidency to make money for himself and his family.

It concerns me more that...

Without tax returns, voters are concerned they won’t know how Trump’s decisions are being influenced. The questions about tax returns raise doubts about his conflicts while also raising questions about transparency and honesty. But again, tax returns should be talked about as hiding conflicts that could lead to negative influence and bad decisions, not just about how they allow Trump to enrich himself.

Trump is not being honest about his conflicts because he refuses to share his tax returns.

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<tr>
<th>Base</th>
<th>80</th>
<th>Swing</th>
<th>30</th>
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</table>

Trump will make millions of dollars off the decisions he makes as President.

| Base | 20 | Swing | 30 |

It concerns me more that...
Base and swing voters view corruption through different lenses

When discussing Trump’s conflicts, more charged language, including words such as “dangerous” and phrases such as “corruption unlike anything we have ever seen before,” plays better with base Democratic voters. Meanwhile, language that speaks to Trump exacerbating an already corrupt system works better with swing voters.

It concerns me more that...

That Trump’s conflicts of interest could lead to major corruption unlike anything we have ever seen before.

Consistent with other data in the survey, voters are clear on what words describe Trump’s conflicts — ones that speak to the influence the conflicts have and the decisions that they will lead him to make, more so than ones that speak to the money he’s making.

Words that best describe voters’ concerns about Trump’s business interests while he is President...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflicts of interest</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Swing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign influence</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selfish</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconstitutional</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay-to-play</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selling access</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scam</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreign Policy

The core concern is over the consequences of Trump’s reckless decisions

The Trump administration relies heavily on their “America First” framing of all foreign policy issues. As is true with his conflicts of interest, the most compelling message antidote to Trump’s claims are the ones that focus on how his agenda could impact American families. In fact, the only message frame that is more compelling — or even as compelling — to voters than Trump’s, is one that focuses on how his lack of preparation, his reckless approach, and his worrisome temperament could lead us into fights with enemies and potentially war.

I agree more with those who say...

Reckless Approach
Could Lead to War

Donald Trump is unprepared and doesn’t have the temperament to be Commander-in-Chief — Trump is refusing to take his daily intelligence briefings and his reckless approach of picking fights with his enemies could lead us into a war.

Dangerous Alliance
with Russia

Donald Trump has already put America at risk by making a dangerous foreign alliance with Vladimir Putin while rejecting our traditional allies.

Making Money from
Foreign Policy

Donald Trump’s foreign policy would just put his bank account first — using the office of the President to make money off his foreign business dealings in Taiwan, Argentina, and across the globe.

A note on Russia

Our latest Compass survey was conducted before Michael Flynn’s resignation and recent news stories on the connection between the Trump administration and Russia. That said, our advice for speaking to voters about Russia is to frame it in a way that puts the issue closer to the average voter’s life. Similar to the advice about conflicts of interest, we would focus less on the particulars of the connections and more on the consequences: how the Russian ties could influence Trump’s decisions as President and lead to a more dangerous world.

Trump Will Put America First

Donald Trump’s foreign policy is going to put America first. He’s going to make America tough and strong by rebuilding our military and showing strength to our enemies.

Dangerous Alliance
with Russia

Donald Trump’s foreign policy is going to put America first. He’s going to make America tough and strong by rebuilding our military and showing strength to our enemies.

Making Money from
Foreign Policy

Donald Trump’s foreign policy is going to put America first. He’s going to make America tough and strong by rebuilding our military and showing strength to our enemies.
The conflict that concerns voters is war, more than business

**Trump’s business conflicts matter** most to voters because of the decisions they may lead him to make as President.

**It concerns me more that...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Swing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trump is unprepared and his <strong>reckless</strong> approach could lead to <strong>war</strong>.</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trump’s foreign policy will be driven by his business and financial interests.</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Swing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trump lacks the temperament to be Commander-in-Chief and his <strong>reckless</strong> approach of picking fights with his enemies could lead to <strong>war</strong>.</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trump is unprepared, doesn’t know basic facts about foreign policy, and is refusing to take his daily intelligence briefings.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**War is a top of mind concern**

We asked: What is the biggest concern you have about what Donald Trump may do as President of the United States?
Domestic Policy

The fight over tax reform will be a pivotal time to show how Trump is not looking out for regular Americans

The upcoming fight over taxes will be an opportunity to build on the concern that Trump is making decisions that hurt regular Americans. For voters, particularly swing voters, the most concerning reasons to oppose Republican tax proposals are all about how the taxes impact them. The top testing consequences with swing voters focus on outcomes that impact average people – cutting important services, shifting the burden onto the middle class, and giving handouts to those who don’t need it instead of creating jobs for those who do.

It concerns me more that the Republican Party’s tax policy...

- Will force cuts to important programs like education, Medicare, and Social Security.  
- Will shift the tax burden to the middle class.  
- Should be focused on creating jobs, not a big tax handout.  
- Will give a massive tax cut to millionaires and big corporations.  
- Is fiscally irresponsible and will explode the deficit.

Frame tax policy by how it impacts voters

Voters are more concerned about having the tax burden shifted onto them than they are about wealthy Americans getting a tax break. However, “tax breaks for millionaires” language can be quite effective when you show a clear trade-off — for example, that Republicans should be focused on job creation, not big tax cuts for the rich.

It concerns me more that...

- The Republican Party’s tax policy will shift the tax burden to the middle class.
- The Republican Party’s tax policy will cut taxes for millionaires and billionaires.
- Instead of creating jobs, these tax cuts are just a big handout to millionaires and billionaires.
- These tax cuts are fiscally irresponsible and will explode the deficit.
Methodology: This edition of GSGCompass references the results of a nationwide online survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted by Global Strategy Group from January 26-28, 2017. Special care has been taken to ensure that partisan, geographic, and demographic divisions are properly represented by the survey’s respondents.

Our base group includes Democrats who did not vote for Trump and are not enthusiastic about his presidency. Our swing group refers to voters who are not very enthusiastic about his presidency or did not strongly support him in the election.