

THE POLITICAL RESEARCH ENGINE OF THE OPPOSITION

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Defeating Donald Trump requires preparation and focus.

No other progressive organization has the resources and assets that American Bridge has amassed over the past several election cycles to hold Trump, his administration, and the politicians who support him accountable.

Only Bridge stands ready with staff already hired, Trump's web of business ties mapped out, and a massive video archive at our fingertips.

There will be a need for progressive policy alternatives, but our focus at Bridge will be on real time political accountability. In this media environment, content is king and that's where the focus of Bridge remains.

A look at the analogous entities on the right further reinforces the need for our work. America Rising, which was modeled after Bridge, has become the unofficial research arm of the Republican Party. The group's 501(c)(4) arm, Rising Squared, has already begun promoting Trump's Cabinet picks.

Trump's campaign allies have also made public their plans to create a new nonprofit dedicated to enacting Trump's agenda. Trump campaign digital director Brad Parscale, who was reportedly empowered by Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner to take charge, will head the entity.

The right will bolster Trump aggressively and deceptively. The campaign to stop him must be nonstop. At American Bridge, it has already begun.

OVERARCHING STRATEGY

As we move into our fourth election cycle, the vision of Bridge as permanent progressive infrastructure is coming to fruition. We are beginning to see the full value of our investment in researching and tracking candidates over multiple cycles.

With 20,000 hours of video, 289 candidate research books, and the largest available archive of Trump research in the Democratic Party, we are uniquely prepared to take on the Trump administration, defeat Republicans who enable it, and rebuild progressive power in the states.

Our new Trump War Room, launched within weeks of the election, is already scrutinizing the presidential transition and will vigilantly watchdog the personnel, policies, and practices of the administration.

Our purpose is to keep Trump unpopular and make it more difficult for candidates who support him to get elected in 2018.

"On the left, the dominant player is American Bridge." —TIME Magazine

The mid-term map appears difficult for Democrats; damaging Trump in the next two years could change that.

Republicans running in 2018 (and 2020) will be plagued by what we are best known for: opposition research, video tracking, and rapid response. We will be involved in every competitive Senate race in 2018.

But we must expand beyond federal races; Democrats must build power at the state level. We have lost ground and our once-in-a-decade chance to redraw district maps is around the corner. That's why Bridge will continue to engage in gubernatorial races. And for the first time, we will participate in state legislature races.

Nearly 80 entities already use our content. Over the next four years, party committees, candidate campaigns, and additional in-state allies will use it, too.

But to fully realize the value of our content, we must dramatically expand its reach. A new, robust digital program will bring our content directly to voters, starting with those who voted twice for Obama, but switched in 2016 to Trump. We must win these voters back in 2020.

As we expand the scope and reach of our research, we must also improve the efficiency with which we do it. We will continue to develop campaign technologies that have made us an industry leader. And we will continue to reduce duplication and improve the quality of political research as we move to the local level.

We are in a state of emergency.

Our initial response has been swift and forceful. We expect results to follow suit.

TOP OUTCOMES

In the next four years, American Bridge is focused on achieving the following outcomes:

Defeat Trump either through impeachment or at the ballot box in 2020.

Change the balance of power by measurably impacting US Senate, gubernatorial, and state legislative races.

Free ourselves from solely relying on the press. Our robust digital program will reach voters directly online.

DROVE COVERAGE THAT LED TO TRUMP ENTERING OFFICE AS THE LEAST POPULAR PRESIDENT-ELECT IN MODERN HISTORY

While the dynamics of the election were and Trump's is a high narrative, the groundwork we laid will be critical to delegitimizing Trump as president. Bridge drove 67 stories throughout the campaign exposing Trump's unstable temperament, scam-filled business record, history of sexual abuse and misogyny, and racist behavior. As he enters office, he is the most unpopular president-elect in modern history.

THE AMERICAN BRIDGE PLAN

American Bridge is the Democratic epicenter of opposition research and rapid response in presidential and Senate elections. In the Trump era, there must be no "off years." American Bridge will sustain a nonstop campaign against Trump, his administration, and Republicans who enable him.

This is how we will do it:

STATE-OF-THE-ART TRUMP WAR ROOM

With 20,000 hours of video and audio footage at our fingertips (including nearly 2,000 hours of Trump material) and massive, fully searchable databases of investigative knowledge on Trump's business dealings and lawsuits involving him, our war room is already putting these assets to work in the following ways:

VETTING NOMINEES

American Bridge has already set up a world-class vetting operation, the largest in the Democratic Party, to investigate the records of potential Trump nominees. More than 1,200 positions require confirmation by the US Senate. We will home in on the 100 most important positions, focusing on those who stand to have the greatest impact on our progressive values in areas of women's health and reproductive freedom, workers' rights, climate change, and the treatment of immigrants and people of color.

While Democrats' position in the minority makes blocking nominees difficult, we believe some of his nominees are so extreme that there will be the opportunity to do so. Where we cannot block nominees, we will use the process to highlight their most egregious past statements and professional dealings to make their confirmation process as difficult as possible and further erode Trump's credibility.

The same holds for Trump's appointees to the Supreme Court. Republicans set the tone for Supreme Court obstruction through their treatment of Merrick Garland. Bridge will expose their extreme issue positions, records, and backgrounds and equip Democrats in Congress, progressive partners, and the press with our research in real time.

EXPOSING CONFLICTS

Donald Trump enters the White House with significant conflicts of interest, unprecedented both in number and extent compared to any other president-elect in our history.

The US intelligence community has confirmed that Russia intervened in the election to help Trump win and the president-elect has already appointed individuals with strong ties to Russia and Putin to some of the most powerful positions in the US government. Meanwhile, Putin-tied Trump campaign staffers Carter Page and Paul Manafort appear poised to continue to leverage their connections to Trump as he takes power. American Bridge has, and will continue to, help uncover details of Trump's affection for Russia and Putin (which appears to be driven at least in part by Trump's business interests), including video of his Secretary of State pick Rex Tillerson receiving the "Russian Order of Friendship" medal from Putin in 2013.

**20,000+ hours of
video and audio
footage at our fingertips**



We are tracking Trump's foreign and domestic business partners, existing construction projects in foreign countries, and potential negotiations on future projects that he could use to put personal profit ahead of our national security.

Trump's massive corporate and personal debts take on new meaning when he's in charge of regulating financial markets. He owes debt to banks he will regulate, including Deutsche Bank, Ladder Capital Finance, Amboy Bank, and nearly a dozen others. There is also strong evidence that he broke the Cuban embargo at a time when it was a serious federal crime.

With so many opportunities for foreign governments and corporations to gain influence over Trump, American Bridge will use every means at its disposal to hold Trump and his administration accountable—including FOIA requests, lawsuits, and regulatory complaints. As the progressive movement's political research clearinghouse, we will arm our allies to join us in taking on the administration through paid advertising, earned media, grassroots efforts, and legal recourse.

WATCHDOGGING THE AGENCIES

Often the most problematic scandals for any administration begin within the agencies. Trump's early nomination picks demonstrate that he will appoint people to run these agencies who are grossly unqualified. That, paired with the fact that he is considering gutting the bureaucratic staff, will make agency watchdogging even more important for this administration. American Bridge will have a dedicated team to monitor the activities of the executive branch for conflicts of interest, malfeasance, and incompetence. We will assign individual researchers to specific executive branch agencies, including the IRS, Justice Department, HUD (given its interactions with Trump's real estate empire), Defense, State, and others. Specific interest will be given to the various federal incentives and grant programs and the dissemination of government contracts.

FIGHTING THE TRUMP AGENDA

American Bridge's Trump War Room will also have a team dedicated to monitoring Trump's issue agenda and its potential negative impacts, especially on working families, women, the environment, immigrants, and people of color. As the Trump administration attempts to privatize Medicaid, revoke protections for immigrant families, give massive tax breaks to the very wealthy, eliminate Obamacare, defund Planned Parenthood, and let oil companies wreak havoc on our environment, American Bridge will be there to shine a light on the real-world impacts on regular people. We will curate information from policy think tanks, news reports, and our own original research and disseminate easily accessible fact sheets to progressive partners, the press, and voters themselves.

TIME CAPSULING TRUMP TESTIMONIALS

Much of the paid communication this cycle centered on criticism of Trump and his temperament. But one underutilized tactic was sharing testimonials of people who have experienced Trump first-hand. Trump and his ilk successfully intimidated and silenced many of these critics. American Bridge will give them a place to turn. We film those who want to tell their stories on camera, and provide a space for those who fear going public to tell their stories in a confidential manner. We will use some of these stories in real time—and catalogue all for use in paid communication for 2020.

“American Bridge has a mission for 2017: Hold Donald Trump accountable.”

—McClatchy, December 6, 2016

311,685,233 value
of TV airtime for Bridge-placed
research and video since 2011

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EVALUATION

American Bridge will constantly monitor the following indicators to know if we're on track toward our top outcomes.

Defeat Trump either through impeachment or at the ballot box in 2020. The number of stories and the value of TV time for anti-Trump media coverage we generate will break all internal records. Multiple Trump nominations will become a drag on his administration due to the research we unearth. Trump's approval ratings will remain historically low.

Change the balance of power by measurably impacting US Senate, gubernatorial, and state legislative races. Republicans will spend precious resources defending stories generated by Bridge in competitive races. Republicans will be forced to spend money in races that wouldn't otherwise be competitive due to Bridge's work putting them in play.

Free ourselves from relying solely on the press. Our robust digital program will reach voters directly online. Millions of people will see our content through someone they know (a friend or contact) online. Our own public opinion research will allow us to measure change in opinion among targeted voters who consume our content.

BUDGET AND TEAM

American Bridge's core budget is \$14.7 million in 2017. This budget represents both the work of American Bridge's 501(c)(4) and its Super PAC and covers a total of 146 staff.

The 501(c)(4) is creating a 47-person war room to take on Donald Trump with a staff of 25 researchers, a communications team of 16 which is feeding our work to the press and doing rapid-response, and a team of six media monitors. Bridge will also build out a robust digital program to deliver our content directly to voters. The total cost of the Bridge war room will be \$7.8 million in 2017.

The Super PAC will do research in 16-20 of the most competitive Senate races in the 2018 cycle with two Senate research teams of five people each. We will also do research in the seven most competitive gubernatorial races with two research teams comprising of nine people total. We will also hire 33 video trackers to be out in the states providing constant video tracking in all 20 Senate races, along with 16 total gubernatorial races. To enhance this tracking effort further and bring the information to voters and the press in real time, we also plan to invest to expand our use of live stream technology, and we plan to make new technological advances in our work, including radio and podcast monitoring. Lastly, we will also launch pilot programs to leverage our research and tracking infrastructure and expertise into selective state legislature races. The total cost of the work in the SuperPAC will be \$6.9 million for 2017.