

To: Interested Parties

From: GBA Strategies

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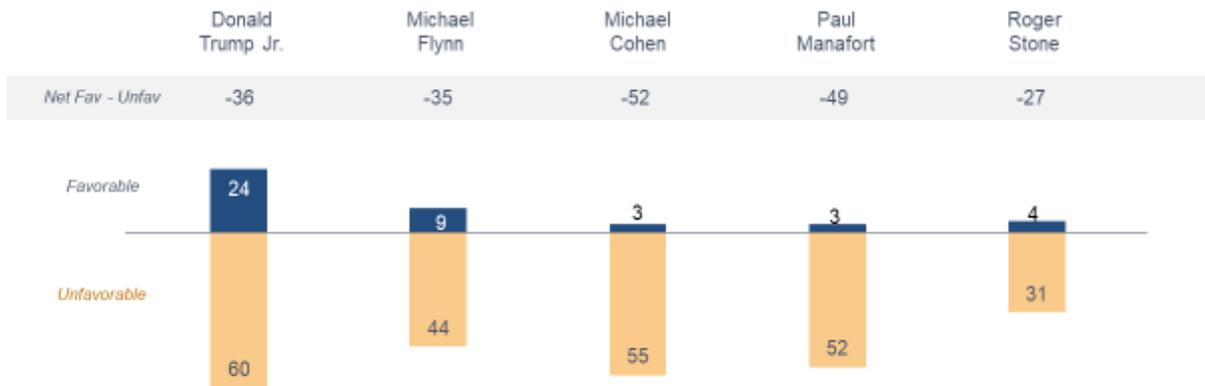
*GBA Strategies conducted a survey on behalf of Protect the Investigation of 1,500 registered voters nationwide. The survey was conducted January 18-21, 2019 via an online panel matched to the Catalist voter file. The margin of error for the full sample is +/- 2.6 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.*

Our recent national survey shows President Trump weak in the current political climate, while support for the Special Counsel investigation continuing is strong. Even before longtime Trump confidant Roger Stone's indictment last Friday, Trump's inner circle has a badly damaged image with single-digit favorability ratings. The investigation, on the other hand, is positively described as "following the facts" and charges of a "political witch hunt" fall flat. Similarly, messages supporting the investigation work better than those opposed. The only potential watchout is an investigation that has "gone on too long," but even here a fact-driven message is persuasive. While views on the investigation break along partisan lines, there is nonetheless some openness among Republicans, and clear support among independents.

- **Trump is weak in the current climate.** Much like recent public polls, this survey—conducted in the final days of the shutdown—show Trump's numbers quite negative (41% approve, 59% disapprove). Intensity reveals further weakness, as about half "strongly" disapprove of Trump (48%) compared to just a fifth who "strongly" approve (20%).
- **Support for the Special Counsel investigation is strong.** The FBI, the "Special Counsel investigation," and Robert Mueller have the strongest favorable ratings of any other person or group tested, so it's no surprise to see clear support by almost 2-to-1 for the investigation to continue (64% total support). Over four in ten (43%) say they "support it and want it continue" and an additional fifth have "mixed feelings" about it yet want it to continue. Meanwhile, only about a third of voters overall want the investigation shut down. While this question naturally breaks down along party lines, even a third (34%) of Republicans want to see the investigation continue.

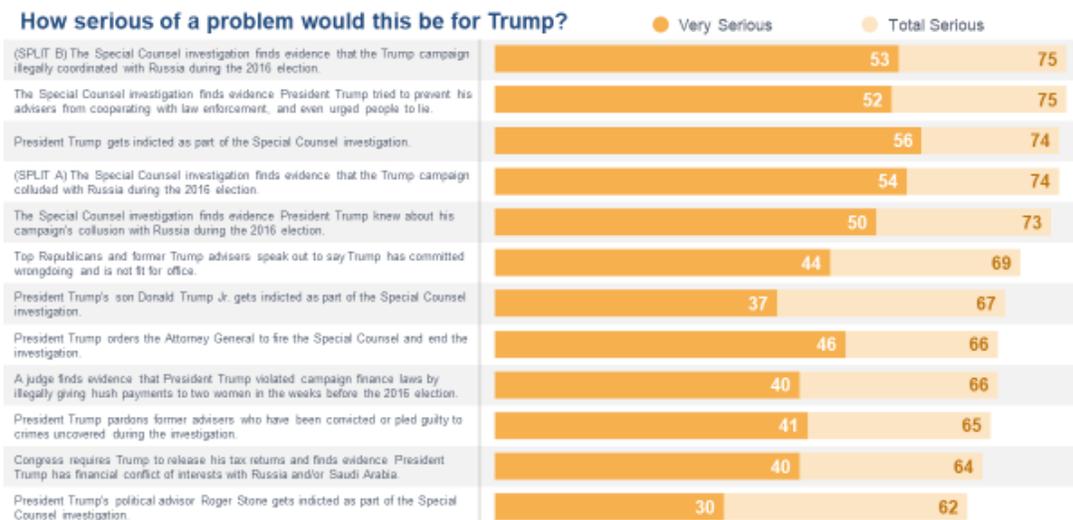
Over four in ten say they're hearing "a lot" about the investigation, and gender, education, and party seem to drive this awareness. Democratic men are more aware (59% "a lot") than are Republican and independent men (51%, 48%) and men are more aware than women across all party lines (Democratic women: 38%, Republican women: 32%, independent women: 33%). College-educated voters are more aware than non-college voters across all party and gender groups.

- **Trump's inner circle is badly damaged.** All of the most notorious members of Trump's inner circle are well-known and disliked. Michael Flynn, Roger Stone, Paul Manafort, and Michael Cohen all have single-digit favorable ratings (9%, 4%, 3%, and 3%, respectively), and all are unpopular with Republicans. Only Donald Trump, Jr. is slightly more popular than this group, but he is far more well-known and is far more negatively viewed (24% favorable, 60% unfavorable).



- About half see evidence of crimes now or on the horizon.** No matter how it's asked, about half report they see a likelihood of crimes. Half feel the investigation has uncovered crimes (50%), over half expect to see crimes by President Trump uncovered (52%), and almost half say the investigation "seems to be finding evidence of wrongdoing" (47%).

Educational attainment and awareness of the investigation are linked to thinking crimes *have already been* uncovered. Seventy-one percent of those who have heard a lot about the investigation think it has already uncovered crimes. And a clear majority (58%) of those with at least a four-year degree think the investigation has uncovered crimes, while 46% of non-college voters say the same. College-educated men (64%) and college-educated independents (61%) are even more likely to perceive crimes. Yet gender is linked to thinking crimes by Trump *will be* uncovered. Majorities of women (56%), including independent women (55%) share this position.



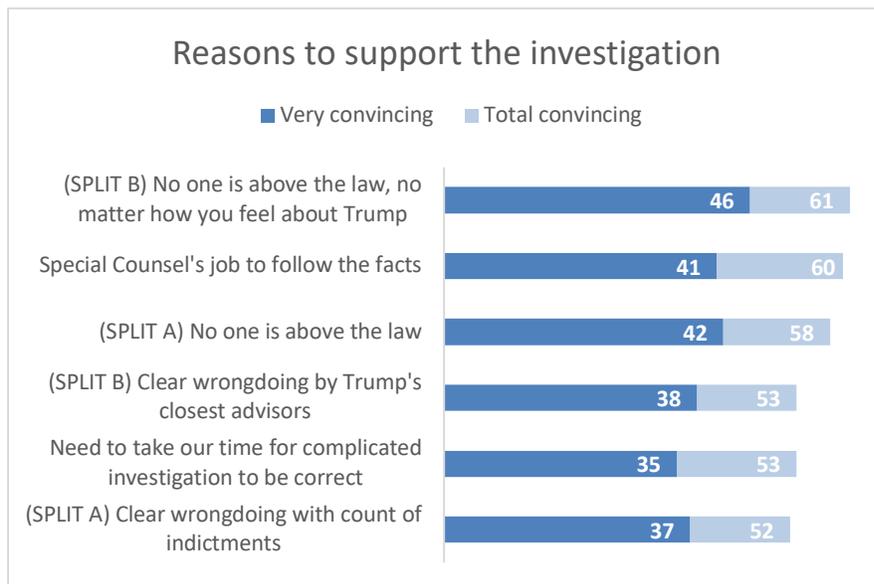
- Potential turning points—such as wrongdoing and lying—are seen as quite serious.** Every potential turning point—from an indictment of Donald Trump, Jr. to finding evidence of collusion by Trump himself—is seen as serious by a majority, and majorities find many “very serious.” Collusion and coordination are considered particularly serious, yet so is obstruction, described as: “[tried to]

prevent his advisers from cooperating with law enforcement, and even urged people to lie.” Majorities of independent women in particular would find Trump’s indictment, evidence of collusion, and obstruction “very serious.”

- **Messages supporting the investigation are more potent than those opposed.** All ten messages we tested in support of the investigation were more persuasive than all seven messages opposed. In particular, voters responded more strongly to arguments describing the big-picture threat to our government than those focused on specific crimes or alleged criminals.

Messages opposing the investigation—drawn from language from Trump and his allies—have little variation in response; they are all similarly lackluster and more unconvincing than convincing. Similarly, more say “a witch hunt meant to stop Trump from succeeding” is *not* descriptive of the investigation (41% describes, 48% does not describe).

- **Voters see the investigation as “following the facts,” “holding people accountable,” and “showing no one is above the law.”** Phrases seen most descriptive of the investigation include “is working to hold people accountable” (50% total well) and “is following the facts” (49% total well). And the strongest message—across party lines—explains “no one should be above the law” (61% total convincing). Demonstrating neutrality works best, even with Democrats.
- **One watchout is the sense the investigation “has gone on too long,” but there is a persuasive counterpoint.** A majority (51%) say the investigation “has gone on too long,” and for both Republicans and independents is the best descriptor. Yet explaining the length of the Watergate and Whitewater investigations, while noting these things “take time in order to be thorough, correct and complete” is an effective counterpoint (53% convincing, 36% not convincing). While it may have lower “very convincing” ratings than other messages, it also has quite low “not at all convincing” ratings, and over a quarter (28%) of Republicans find it convincing.



	Dems	Inds	Reps
(SPLIT B) No one is above the law, no matter how you feel about Trump	79	59	39
Special Counsel's job to follow the facts	79	57	36
(SPLIT A) No one is above the law	79	53	35
(SPLIT B) Clear wrongdoing by Trump's closest advisors	78	47	26
Need to take our time for complicated investigation to be correct	74	51	28
(SPLIT A) Clear wrongdoing with count of indictments	78	40	29

- **Investigators' backgrounds are neither a weakness nor a top-tier strength.** More agree the investigation is led by “non-partisan law enforcement officials” than feel it is a “partisan witch hunt” (51% to 36%). And few are moved by a message on the alleged partisanship of investigators (recall the FBI is the only net favorable person or group we tested). Yet at the same time, messaging around Mueller’s credentials is not top-tier either.

These results show a weakened Trump, a reviled Trump inner circle, and a Special Counsel investigation with support. Voters want to see the investigation continue to follow the facts in order to hold people accountable and protect our government from abuses of power.