**CAC Message Guidance: Scott Pruitt**

**CONTEXT FOR THE MESSAGE GUIDANCE**

An early January national poll by Hart Research found that we have ample opportunity to define Scott Pruitt in a way that makes it unacceptable for him to remain as EPA administrator.

* Seven in ten survey respondents initially know little or nothing about him.
* At the beginning of the survey, 34% disapprove of his job performance and 36% say he should not continue to serve as administrator. By the survey’s end, after an in-depth message battery, 82% disapprove of his performance and 80% say he should not be at EPA.

A host of messages were tested—both related to Pruitt’s lack of ethics and the threat he poses to public health—and nearly all were found to make a compelling case against Pruitt. But for purposes of promoting his removal from office the results illustrate that it is more important to make the ethics case than the public health case:

* Pruitt’s positions on climate change and desire to dismantle the EPA are, to some degree, already known, particularly to his biggest critics within the public. Awareness of his ethical transgressions is much lower.
* When these two ideas—public health threat and ethics/corruption—are tested head to head in the poll, those voters whom we are able to effectively turn against Pruitt find the ethics/corruption points more egregious by a double-digit margin.

From the standpoint of attacking Pruitt’s policies, and/or for organizations that focus solely on public health or science, the poll shows that public health threat messages are, in fact, compelling. But for a goal of driving Pruitt from office, in an administration where virtually *all* of the cabinet secretaries are unacceptable on a policy level, we need to make sure the case is about him personally and why he is unfit to serve in public office.

**KEY HITS AGAINST PRUITT**

Points in the poll that are found to be especially damning:

*Ethics and Corruption Points*

* Under investigation for actions taken in office
* Violated the law
* Misuse of taxpayers’ money for his own convenience
* Specific dollar amounts of wasted taxpayer money ($2 million for personal security detail; $25,000 for secret phone booth; $125,000 for PR firm)
* Has given top jobs to his friends
* Gave a no-bid contract to a PR firm to dig up dirt on EPA employees

*Public Health Points*

* Letting corporations break the law and get away with it
* Chlorpyrifos and its harmful effects on children
* Disputes the Clean Air Act
* Loosening standards on pesticides

Core Message: Scott Pruitt is a corrupt politician who is under three separate investigations for unethical actions taken while in office. His dirty dealings are putting us in danger. He is unfit for office/He must go.

**ETHICS/CORRUPTION FRAMEWORK**

Scott Pruitt is unfit to hold this or any other job in government. Since leading EPA, he has misused taxpayers’ money, been under investigation for breaking the law and proven himself to be an unethical, paranoid politician who cares more about himself than the American people.

* Scott Pruitt is under numerous investigations for actions taken while in office and misusing taxpayer funds.
* Scott Pruitt is a paranoid and misusing taxpayer money to silence his enemies.
* Scott Pruitt used taxpayer money for a no-bid contract with a partisan public relations firm that was working to dig up dirt on EPA employees.
* Scott Pruitt is working for his own self-interest at the expense of our health and the environment.
* Scott Pruitt used taxpayer money for a no-bid contract with a partisan public relations firm that was working to dig up dirt on EPA employees.
* Scott Pruitt raised political donations from the companies and industries he now oversees at EPA.

**PUBLIC HEALTH FRAMEWORK**

Scott Pruitt is not protecting the health and safety of the American people, which is his number one job. Instead, he has left criminal polluters unprosecuted and let corporate polluters off the hook. He has put us in danger.

* Scott Pruitt’s dirty dealings have real and damaging consequences for children, seniors and families.
* Scott Pruitt’s actions at EPA threaten our health and let polluters break the law and get away with it.

*Top Lines of Attack.*

**Scott Pruitt is under numerous investigations for actions taken while in office and misusing taxpayer funds**

* Scott Pruitt is facing three separate investigations for misusing taxpayer money and illegally lobbying.
  1. He is under investigation for illegally lobbying on behalf of the mining industry while employed as a public servant.
  2. He is under investigation for misusing taxpayer dollars to install a $25,000 secure phone booth in his office. (Pruitt has also misused taxpayer money for private flights.)
  3. He is under investigation for misusing taxpayers’ money for private flights taken for personal convenience; and
* The investigations into Pruitt’s potential violation of the law and misuse of taxpayer money demonstrate that he is unfit to serve as EPA Administrator.

**Scott Pruitt is paranoid and is misusing taxpayer money to silence his enemies.**

* Scott Pruitt does not act like someone in charge of a major government agency; instead, he acts like a paranoid conspiracy theorist.
* He spent $25,000 of taxpayer money to build a soundproof phone booth in his office. He has regularly swept his office for listening devices.
* He’s diverted agents from enforcing the law to providing unprecedented 24-hour security, costing the taxpayers at least $2 million.
* And it was Pruitt’s staff who asked the EPA inspector general to investigate a young woman who asked him tough questions during a speech, calling it a personal threat.
* Pruitt spent $120,000 to hire a Republican political consulting firm to identify, monitor, and dig up dirt on EPA employees who are critical of Pruitt or Donald Trump.
* These are the kinds of actions you would expect from a paranoid foreign dictator, not from the head of the EPA.

**Scott Pruitt misused taxpayer money for a no-bid contract with a partisan public relations firm that was working to dig up dirt on EPA employees.**

* Pruitt hired a political consulting firm to do work for the EPA and be paid with taxpayer dollars using a no-bid contract–meaning the firm was automatically hired to do the work without having to compete with other firms who might do the work for less money.
* At the same time, this same firm was working for a Republican political opposition research group to identify, monitor, and dig up dirt on employees of the EPA who have criticized Pruitt or Donald Trump.
* These are the kinds of actions you would expect from a foreign dictator, not from the head of a U.S. government agency.
* Pruitt’s abuse of taxpayer funds in hiring a firm that was digging up dirt on EPA employees makes him unfit for office.

**Scott Pruitt is working for his own self-interest at the expense of our health and the environment.**

* Scott Pruitt’s first priority is himself. He’s not working to protect the health or safety of the American people. Instead, Pruitt is working to advance his own personal political career.
* He primarily meets with big corporations – who he is supposed to oversee. He seldom meets with groups who advocate for Americans on health protection issues.
* As EPA chief, Pruitt’s been maintaining his Oklahoma connections – spending 43 days over a 3 month time period in his home state – a travel pattern associated with state-wide political aspirations and which led to an IG investigation.
* He’s also given top jobs to friends – including a disgraced banker who had been banned from the banking industry for life for repeated ethical violations – while sidelining scientists at the EPA.
* It is not a secret that Pruitt has ambitions to hold political office in Oklahoma, and disproportionately traveling there at the expense of taxpayers is completely unethical.

**Scott Pruitt’s dirty dealings have real and damaging consequences for children, seniors and families.**

* The actions that Scott Pruitt has taken at the EPA to roll back pollution limits have real consequences in every Americans’ lives.
  + As EPA administrator, one of Pruitt’s first actions was to allow continued use of chlorpyrifos, a pesticide that has long-term harmful effects on children.
  + When he was attorney general of Oklahoma, Scott Pruitt attacked lifesaving measures against dangerous mercury pollution, industrial methane pollution from the oil and gas companies, carbon pollution and other toxic substances.
  + And he has ignored how pollution disproportionately impacts communities of color.
* Under Pruitt, the EPA has brought far fewer cases against polluters than previous administrations about one-third fewer than the number under President Barack Obama’s first EPA director and about one-quarter fewer than under President George W. Bush’s over the same time period.
* Corporations that are breaking the law are getting away with it. (e.g., a company that released hundreds of pounds of ash containing lead and arsenic into the air of a neighborhood in a small Ohio town.)

**Scott Pruitt raised political money from the companies and industries he now oversees at EPA.**

* When Pruitt was attorney general of Oklahoma, his campaigns and political organizations received more than $3 million from fossil fuel interests – and he repeatedly took actions to benefit corporations within days of their checks being delivered.
* Now that he's at the EPA, polluting industries have an open door.
  + Pruitt met with a huge trash collection company, and within weeks announced that the EPA was going to hold off on air quality rules at landfills.
  + He met with representatives of big industrial agriculture companies, and days later announced that the EPA was going to loosen standards for the use of pesticides.
* Scott Pruitt has an alarming record of dirty dealings with political patrons. He is unfit for office.

**Scott Pruitt’s actions at EPA threaten our health and let polluters break the law and get away with it.**

* When he was attorney general of Oklahoma, Scott Pruitt used his position of power to attack lifesaving measures established by the EPA, including restrictions on dangerous mercury pollution, industrial methane pollution from the oil and gas companies, carbon pollution and other toxic substances.
* Pruitt even disputes the Clean Air Act, which has provided the bipartisan bedrock of our public health and environmental protections for decades.
* Scott Pruitt’s coziness with industry and his record of undermining pollution protections make him unfit for office.