navigator

Navigator's Grift Guide
How to talk about Corruption

In an era of historic and unprecedented corruption, messages that highlight the historic and unprecedented nature of the corruption are *least likely* to break through.

Americans see corruption as a feature of *both* parties, not a unique trait of President Trump. As a result, messages that finger-point at Donald Trump are less likely to break through than messages that meet Americans where they are.

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1. Lead with a message that identifies corruption as an overarching Washington problem to be solved, without finger-pointing at Trump or saying Trump is unprecedented.

Washington has a major corruption problem in both parties, and we need to enact significant reforms and overhaul the system to hold Trump, as well as other Republicans and Democrats, accountable for corruption.

- Why? Americans believe corruption is bigger than Trump. Indeed, Americans believe corruption is a long-standing problem in Washington that pre-dated Trump.

- What? Trump is a symptom of a bigger problem, not the source of the problem. They believe the worst of Washington. When advocates start by pointing at Trump, Americans believe they are missing the whole point.

2. Identify specific examples of corruption.

Trump has fired watchdogs, given government contracts to friends and donors, and accepted a luxury jet from Qatar.

- Why? Our research shows that Americans, in particular non-MAGA Republicans, are moved by these examples.
- What? The most effective examples center on 2 themes: 1) politicians abusing power to punish critics and reward allies, and 2) politicians who personally profit from their positions.

3. Bring solutions.

We need forward-looking reforms to hold government officials and elected leaders accountable to the people. We need major reforms to make sure our elected leaders are looking out for us, not their own personal bottom line.

- Why? Americans care about corruption and want big changes in Washington.