TO:	SBA Allies
FR:	Marjorie Dannenfelser, President
RE:	Key takeaways from last night
DATE:	November 9, 2022

The key takeaway from last night is clear:

<u>GOP pro-life candidates win in competitive races if they define their opponents as abortion extremists who support abortion on demand with NO limits, and contrast that with a clearly defined pro-life position centered around consensus such as pain-capable or heartbeat limits</u>.

This must be the key takeaway for the GOP as we head into the 2024 presidential cycle, especially those eyeing a run for the White House.

There are many examples of candidates in competitive races who did this effectively and either have won or have a strong shot at winning as races are settled, such as Sen. Marco Rubio, Senator-elect Ted Budd, Senator-elect J.D. Vance, Herschel Walker, Gov. Ron DeSantis, Gov. Greg Abbott, Gov. Brian Kemp, Gov. Mike DeWine, and Kari Lake.

It's especially worth highlighting governors who signed ambitious pro-life legislation into law and never flinched politically, despite running in competitive states:

- Gov. Ron DeSantis (R-FL) signed a pain-capable law, won by 19.4%.
- Gov. Mike DeWine (R-OH) signed a heartbeat law, won by 25.6%.
- Gov. Brian Kemp (R-GA) signed a heartbeat law, won by 7.5%.
- Gov. Greg Abbott (R-TX) signed a heartbeat law and a trigger law with complete protections, won by 11.1%.

<u>There's no doubt that the *Dobbs* decision was a political earthquake – creating a unique opportunity for Democrats to motivate their depressed base and giving them the best opportunity they'll ever have to use the issue politically</u>.

Democrats took the opportunity and ran with it, spending $391 million on abortion-focused TV ads alone during the general election, versus just $11 million on the GOP side, a 35:1 spending ratio. Yet for those candidates who went on offense, the astonishing amount of money did not prevail.

While we have examples of pro-life GOP candidates who were prepared and went on offense, there are also examples of candidates who were not prepared and took the ostrich strategy:

burying their heads in the sand and running from the issue, allowing their opponents to define them. A good example of this is Dr. Oz in Pennsylvania.

The losing ostrich strategy was largely pushed by the inside-the-beltway consultant/strategist class, who urged candidates to totally ignore abortion and hope it went away.

Given the *Dobbs* earthquake – that everyone knew for months was coming – the ostrich strategy was political malpractice.

As we head into the 2024 presidential cycle, we have a clear message for GOP presidential hopefuls. The 2024 election has to be about the GOP going on offense: exposing President Biden and the Democrats as the true extremists who don't support ANY limits on abortion and contrasting it with a strong GOP pro-life agenda centered on national minimum protections for the unborn child and mothers either at the point in which they feel pain or when their heartbeat can be detected. GOP primary candidates may have different views on what is achievable, and we welcome that debate – and even more so welcome the debate in the general election setting.