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To: Interested Parties

Subject: Voters Want Federal Reserve to Focus on Creating More Jobs and Higher Wages, Want More Public Input on Fed Decisions

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A new national survey from Public Policy Polling finds that voters want the Federal Reserve to keep interest rates low and prioritize job creation. A strong majority feels that the public does not have enough input into the Fed’s decision-making process, and think that Fed Directors should have more diverse professional backgrounds than the current crop of directors, who are primarily bankers and corporate executives. Key findings from the survey include:

- Large majorities of voters say that the economy is still recovering and the Fed should keep interest rates low. By a 62-30 margin, voters want the Fed to keep interest rates low rather than raise them. Men, women, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and voters of all age and income levels agree.

- By a 55-38 margin, voters think the Fed should prioritize creating more jobs and higher wages over ensuring that inflation does not get any higher. When asked about a potential trade-off between higher wages and inflation, a solid majority of voters want the Fed to focus on tightening the labor market. Democrats think so by a 72-22 margin, while Independents are split 49-46, and 40% of Republicans agree. 52% of Republicans say the Fed should focus on curbing inflation.

- Voters overwhelmingly feel that the public does not have enough input into the Fed’s decision-making process. 71% of voters feel this way as compared to just 17% who think the public does have enough input. Men, women, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and voters of all age and income levels agree.

- When asked who they would trust most to be a Fed Director, voters favor a broad spectrum of backgrounds rather than just the bankers and corporate executives who currently dominate regional Fed governance. When asked what kind of background they would like to see for Federal Reserve leaders, 55% of voters choose representatives from community-based organizations, workers’ centers, and labor unions, consumer advocates, or academic scholars. Just 25%
say they prefer bankers and people from financial services companies or corporate executives.

While all respondents cited high unemployment and low wages as problems for the economy, Hispanics and African Americans were more likely than whites to rate these as major problems. 73% of Hispanics and 66% of African Americans rated high unemployment as a major problem, while only 60% of whites did. 77% of Hispanics and 72% of African Americans rated low wages as a major problem, compared to 55% of whites.

Public Policy Polling surveyed 716 national voters on September 4th - 6th. The survey’s margin of error is +/-3.7%