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TO: Real Facts NC
FROM: Garin-Hart-Yang Research Group
DATE: March 26, 2018
RE: Results of Recent Statewide Survey

From March 12 to 14, 2018, Garin-Hart-Yang interviewed a representative sample of 603 North Carolina voters (margin of error ± 4.1 percentage points). The following presents the key survey findings.

North Carolinians' mood, while still "underwater," is nonetheless improved compared with just two years ago. Currently, 38% of voters say the state is moving in the right direction and 40% say wrong track. In July 2016, a larger plurality of voters said the state was off on the wrong track (49%) than said headed in the right direction (35%).

Some measure of voters' improved attitude is probably due to the positive assessment of Governor Cooper's performance, with a solid 54% saying they approve and 34% saying they disapprove. Governor Cooper has majority approval among white voters (50% to 39%), especially white non-college-educated women (51% to 33%), who are likely to be an important 2018 target group. The governor also has majority approval among independents (51% to 38%), and importantly, slightly more than one-third (35%) of Republicans approves of Governor Cooper's performance.

By contrast, Donald Trump receives an unfavorable assessment from North Carolinians, with a 51% majority saying they disapprove of Trump's performance and 46% approving. Unlike Governor Cooper, the president garners mixed reviews from independents (48% approve to 47% disapprove).

The upcoming race for supreme court justice is not yet full-formed, and with neither candidate being especially well known, there is a lot of room to define both of them. Just 44% of voters recognize Republican BARBARA JACKSON, who elicits feelings thermometer ratings of 14% positive and 12% negative. Democratic candidate ANITA EARLS has a similar profile, with 42% name ID and feelings thermometer scores of 14% positive and 11% negative. Not surprisingly then, the trial heat for supreme court justice is a virtual tie, with Jackson at 38%, Earls at 37%, and 25% undecided. Each candidate wins a substantial majority of their base (Earls garners 79% of Democrats and Jackson is supported by 77% of Republicans), while the Republican candidate has a narrow 30%-to-23% lead among independents (but fully 47% are undecided).