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Via Email

Karin:

Following Peter's conversation with JD on Friday, it has become clear to us that the campaign no longer plans to honor the operating agreement we've been working under for the last seven months. And that is despite a phone conversation with JD as recently as January 29th, in which we were specifically told that we would be one of two media firms working with the campaign moving forward. It is now clear to us that you have no intention of allowing us to do the work that we were hired to do. The fecklessness and dishonesty with which you've approached this working relationship is shocking.

We have helped Wendy through tough campaigns in the past, and looked forward to doing the same this year. We added value far beyond the television ads we created and all of the other work we did for the campaign last year. But because of you, the campaign is now so far off the rails that we doubt it is salvageable.

We had high hopes when you were hired that you would bring the steady hand this fast-out-of-the-gates venture needed. We looked forward to working with a strong leader who could harness the skill and talent of an experienced consulting team – people who had worked with Wendy and her team on the ground for years. But your divisiveness, your dishonesty, your lack of attention to details, and your refusal to tap into the team's expertise all lead us to one conclusion: things simply aren't going to get better on your watch.

The memo we wrote at the beginning of the year laid out our deep concerns, so we won't enumerate them all here. While no one (including you) disputed the facts of the memo, you chose to focus on the tone. The wording may have been harsh, but you had an obligation to fix the issues of substance that it raised. You've chosen not to, and instead to complain that it was mean for us to write the memo because it made you look bad while you were in a power struggle for control of the campaign.

Our disagreements go far beyond management style. Your vision of the campaign message, as articulated in the Texas Tribune a few weeks ago, is this:

"I'm for the regular guy. I mean I think that's pretty basic. There are all kinds of things that can shoot out from that, but — for the little guy."

We've talked for years about ensuring that Wendy always sounds authentic, original, and, above all, like a Texan. The above message reads like the boilerplate talking points that the Democratic National Committee sends to campaigns across the country. You don't understand how different this race is from anything you've worked on in the past, and we've come to the conclusion that you're not going to get it figured out. Running Wendy Davis as a generic national Democrat is not only the quickest path to 38%, it's also a huge disservice to Wendy, her record, and the brand she has built.

At every stage, your messaging guidance has been disastrously off base. You thought it was "brilliant" when Wendy referred to herself as "pro-life," even though it angered friends and foes alike, and ignited a conversation we didn't need or want to have. You took what should have been a clean hit for us on payday lending and approved press releases to go out with massive factual errors – resulting in headlines about "fuzzy math" and ensuring that the hit didn't land cleanly. On the very few occasions when you have allowed a message to get out that might have helped move Wendy to the center, you mishandled the rollout – like allowing Wendy to get out on the concealed carry issue without ever talking to the campaign's biggest donors, allowing them to read it in the press and harming the campaign's relationship with the finance committee.

The past month has been the worst period of the campaign thus far. But even with the storm brewing on Wendy's bio – even once the Dallas Morning News interview had taken place and it must have been clear that this was going to be a huge problem for the campaign, you failed to engage the team until the article had actually appeared. It's as if you spent the 36 hours between the interview and the article's publication just hoping it wouldn't be that bad – instead of using that time to put a plan in place. This is not leadership. And in the midst of all that was happening, you remained incredibly passive – only taking action when multiple members of the team repeatedly insisted. To the media and the outside world it was clear that the campaign was in a reactive crouch, waiting nervously for the next round of Republican attacks. With a candidate who is beloved by women across this country, you failed to engage allies and create an echo chamber that would make the Republicans regret ever starting this fight. It took nearly a week before you would allow anyone to ask Wendy's daughters to make public statements coming to her defense, or allow Wendy to refute the accusations publicly – and when she did, you engineered it in such a way that nearly every Texas reporter was furious with the campaign. Your fear of action and lack of skill at handling a crisis has hurt the campaign immeasurably.

The campaign's most recent internal polling makes clear that you've now put Wendy in a position where it is nearly impossible for her to win. All the consequences we warned about in our January memo and conversations have come to fruition. Your incompetence is dashing the hopes of people across the country who believe in Wendy and have given her money. That money is now being wasted on a losing vanity campaign at the expense of other, viable campaigns across the country.

Senior members of the consulting team have repeatedly remarked on how passive you've been. There is no planning, no message, no strategic vision, and no tactical roadmap. You react only when pushed, and then the responses are slow and inadequate to the attacks. This is an

absolutely deadly sin in a state where the opponents are laser-focused on defining and disqualifying your candidate.

We regularly hear you place blame for the campaign's shortcomings on "the Angle boys" and "the Texans" (as you derisively call the people who've worked with and for Wendy for years) and on the "incompetent staff" you say has been forced upon you. But four months into your tenure, it's time for you to start taking responsibility for the campaign you're running. If you can't build and manage a competent campaign staff, that's on you – nobody else. At this point, we have serious doubts about your ability to run a campaign of this size. All the evidence to date says that you are simply not up to the task.

Unfortunately, the answer to the question too many in the press and political worlds are asking right now is "no." No, this campaign is not ready for prime time. And it won't get there without serious changes in leadership.

This campaign needed a competent manager who could build the disciplined, message-driven plan needed to win in a red state. Instead, we got a condescending, divisive, passive, ideologically-driven liberal who has added only chaos and dysfunction.

We have tried in vain to get you to understand some basic facts: Texas is not Wisconsin, and Wendy Davis is not Tammy Baldwin. This is red state politics, and the events of the last several weeks will be replicated time and time again over the next nine months. You are clearly not up to the job, and your insistence on blaming everyone around rather than actually righting the ship you means you never will be.

Sincerely,

Peter Cari and Maura Dougherty