

VIGOURTIMES

‘Nonpartisan’ No Labels Faces Challenging Task: Paving the Way for Attractive Centrism

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No Labels, a centrist political organization, recently held a convention in New Hampshire to introduce their “Common Sense” platform. While the platform is sensible, it lacks substance in terms of actual solutions. The group has hinted at a potential third-party bid in the 2024 presidential race, particularly if it involves another Trump/Biden face-off. Rumors suggest that West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, who calls himself “the most independent Democrat you’ve ever met,” may be No Labels’ preferred candidate. For the majority of American voters who are dissatisfied with both Biden and Trump, No Labels offers a much-needed alternative to the “lesser of two evils” choice.

However, No Labels faces a significant challenge in making centrism appealing. Their 30-point policy platform includes ideas that most Americans, free from partisanship, can support. These ideas range from promoting financial literacy and ethical AI development to advocating for border security and logical legal immigration. While these stances are commendable and differ from divisive party politics, some points in the platform state obvious truths that are hard to argue against, such as the importance of respect, ending child hunger, and making housing more affordable. No Labels provides a foundation for a centrist candidate, but whoever takes on this role must find a way to turn common-sense positions into bold and transformative solutions, even if skeptics view them as idealistic platitudes.

The candidate chosen by No Labels will face important questions. For instance, No Labels declares that “no child should be forced to go to a failing school,” which implies a need for broader school choice, possibly through a voucher system. However, this stance is likely to alienate teachers’ unions and Democrats who rely on their support. The platform also addresses the delicate balance between women’s reproductive rights and protecting human life, which will require the candidate to navigate the opinions of pro-life and pro-choice advocates. Additionally, while No Labels suggests some gun reform measures to keep dangerous weapons away from dangerous individuals, a candidate must take a more definitive stance and be prepared for opposition from NRA-supported Republicans.

Unsurprisingly, partisans are already criticizing No Labels, labeling them as spoilers and denouncing them as watered-down centrists. Critics from various institutions, including The Washington Post and the Cato Institute, have attacked the organization. However, looking ahead

to the 2024 election, 59% of voters express openness to an alternative to Trump and Biden. Whether No Labels can capitalize on this majority depends largely on their choice of candidate. Interestingly, only 3% of Americans believe a president over 70 is ideal, meaning that potential candidate Joe Manchin, aged 75, could face similar criticisms as Trump (77) and Biden (80). Attracting younger voters, particularly Gen Z and Millennials, who are becoming increasingly influential, may be crucial. Many Americans, especially the youth, yearn for an energizing, new, and provocative option outside the two-party system. Winning over these voters could be No Labels' path to the White House.

To appeal to frustrated Americans, a third option must be presented as a radical and restorative solution to the problems plaguing the nation. This would require fearlessly confronting partisan biases, calling out gridlock, and taking bold stands. In a time of overwhelming partisanship, moderate voices are the new radicals. The growing disaffected middle presents an opportunity, but empty slogans won't suffice. Time will determine whether No Labels can rise to the challenge.