



HITstrategies
TALKER CALL SERIES

Advancing Equity in 2025 & Beyond: Health, Abortion Access & LGBTQ+ Rights

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◎ HIT Talker Call Agenda

- 1 Why We Are Here
- 2 What We Know So Far
- 3 Unanswered Questions & Pathways Forward
- 4 Messaging & Movement Building In This Moment – Spitfire
- 5 Holding the Line – PDM Consulting
- 6 Navigating the Election + Government Fallout

Roshni Nedungadi



Chief Research Officer & Founding Partner

Roshni Nedungadi is a founding partner and Chief Research Officer at HIT Strategies. She leads complex research projects on issues including gun control, mass incarceration, and abortion, centering the perspectives of BIPOC and low-propensity voters. Roshni previously spent five years at Brilliant Corners Research & Strategies, conducting research for political candidates and major advocacy organizations. With a background in legislative work and political campaigns, Roshni is committed to elevating the voices of marginalized communities in American politics.



The **HIT** Team

HIT Strategies is a firm of young, diverse, innovative social scientists that use research and data to understand and communicate with hard-to-reach and underrepresented voters.

We live and work at the intersections of society that are driving rapidly diversifying voter and consumer trends. We represent communities often misunderstood, overlooked, and underserved in American politics.



About Us

Who Are We?

For organizations striving to understand the values, behavior, and opinions shaping our rapidly changing society, HIT Strategies is a leading public opinion research firm with a proven track record of delivering the most accurate data and targeted insights about the deciding electorate and diverse populations in the U.S.

What To Expect?

- 🎯 Thought partners with innovative approaches to research
- 🎯 Deep understanding of trend-making audiences
- 🎯 Strategic insights tailored to your needs

Our Promise

Conduct culturally competent research and deliver a brilliant [Research Experience](#) with [Impactful Insights](#) and [Strong Analysis](#) Each Time, Every Time.

Who We Serve

-  Advocates
-  Philanthropists
-  Non-Profit Leaders
-  Candidates
-  Party Leaders
-  Political Action Committees
-  Civil Servants
-  Union & Labor Leaders
-  Business Leaders
-  Industry Professionals



Our Portfolio

Populations	Issues	Elections	Corporations (Coming Soon)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth (18 - 34)• Women• People of Color (POC)• LGBTQIA+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthcare• Education• Climate• Economy• Labor• Immigration• Racial Justice• Voting• Public Safety• Housing• DEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local• State• Federal• Ballot Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consumer Insights• Corporate Social Responsibility• Employee Relations

Why Clients Come to HIT

- Cultural competency
- Unparalleled research and data on Black voters
- Adaptive field research
- Thorough data collection
- Multi-modal outreach
- Diverse respondents
- National, regional, state, and local reach
- Values-driven analysis
- Bold thought leaders with representative backgrounds
- Expansive network of subject matter experts
- Proven and proprietary frameworks for targeting and messaging multi-cultural, multi-generational audiences



Ashley Aylward



Senior Research Manager

Ashley leads HIT's research team that covers young voters, women, abortion, healthcare, and public safety work. Her expertise in these bodies of work has been quoted in outlets ranging from The New York Times, The Washington Post, to Politico and Teen Vogue. You can view her Op-Eds in TIME Magazine on young voters and their impact on election cycles.

During election cycles, her work focuses on engaging with tuned out voters who require careful targeting and messaging to reach. Outside of elections, Ashley and her team are frequently presenting research on Capitol Hill and the White House with legislative and advocacy client teams. Their experience in these settings allow them to give advice on research design to best cater to gaining the attention and action of elected officials and their staff.



🎯 How We Got Here – Trump's First 100 Days Brings on Full Attack

We all work on issues and for communities that overlap with a common theme: Protecting Health Equity.

AP AP News

Anti-abortion groups aim to end Planned Parenthood funding and suggest Musk's DOGE to get it done

Major anti-abortion groups have gathered in the nation's capital to begin a lobbying effort with Congress and President Donald Trump's...

3 weeks ago



NPR

Trump's ban on gender-affirming care for young people puts hospitals in a bind

Hospitals and clinics that have offered gender-affirming treatments to transgender youth reacted in a variety of ways to an executive order...



NBC News

Trump's FDA pick says he'll review whether abortion pill must be dispensed in person again

Dr. Marty Makary, Trump's nominee to lead the FDA, said he would review a Biden-era rule that allowed patients to obtain mifepristone...



NPR

Trump administration signals it will let Idaho enforce its restrictive abortion ban

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration signaled Tuesday it will let Idaho enforce its strict abortion ban in the treatment of pregnant women...



The Guardian

Judge pauses Trump's order restricting healthcare for transgender youth

Judge pauses Trump's order restricting healthcare for transgender youth ... A federal judge on Thursday temporarily blocked Donald Trump's recent...



NPR

Republican proposals to cut Medicaid could be politically fraught : Shots - Health News

Republicans are proposing deep cuts to Medicaid to finance tax cuts and other priorities. Pushback is coming not only from Democrats,...





Our communities & our issues are banned from Government Speech. Where do we even begin to fight back?

accessible	biologically female	equality	inequity	pronouns
activism	biologically male	equitable	injustice	prostitute
activists	BIPOC	equitableness	institutional	race
advocate	Black	equity	intersectional	race and ethnicity
advocates	breastfeed + people	ethnicity	intersectionality	racial
affirming care	discriminated	excluded	key groups	racial diversity
all-inclusive	discrimination	exclusion	key people	racial inequality
allyship	discriminatory	expression	key populations	racial justice
anti-racism	disparity	female	Latinx	racially
antiracist	diverse	females	LGBT	racism
assigned at birth	diverse backgrounds	inclusive	LGBTQ	segregation
assigned female at birth	diverse communities	inclusive leadership	marginalize	sense of belonging
assigned male at birth	diverse group	inclusiveness	marginalized	sex
at risk	diverse groups	inclusivity	men who have sex with men	sexual preferences
barrier	diversified	increase diversity	mental health	sexuality
barriers	diversify	increase the diversity	minorities	social justice
belong	diversifying	indigenous community	privilege	sociocultural
bias	diversity	inequalities	privileges	socioeconomic
biased	enhance the diversity	inequality	promote diversity	status
biased toward	enhancing diversity	inequitable	promoting diversity	stereotype
biases	environmental quality	inequities	pronoun	stereotypes
biases towards	equal opportunity			systemic



What We Know So Far

🎯 Grounding Our Work in the Truths that Research Has Uncovered

2024 – 2025 Research on Healthcare, Reproductive, and LGBTQ+ rights

1

Our core values and priorities are preferred by the majority of voters, not just Democrats. Data on voter preferences speaks just as loudly as money when it comes to policy work.

The majority of voters, regardless of party identification in many cases, prefer the principles of equality in healthcare – whether it's on access to affordable healthcare, access to abortion, or keeping the government out of decisions related to care (which in some cases can include gender-affirming care).

2

Republicans taught people to be fearful of our policies and view them as a zero-sum game, which is where we begin to see drop off in support.

Republicans built a field of landmines around our winning issues and we have stepped in all of them. They created the weeds for voters to get lost in; when we boil our priorities back down to simple values and asks, voters overwhelmingly side with us on these issues.

3

All audiences, including conservatives, recognize there are unfair barriers to our freedoms to thrive that people have to overcome.

We can have conversations about unfair barriers with everyone. Universal barriers that are recognized across ideology include barriers to quality and affordable healthcare, barriers to accessing higher education and opportunities, and more.

🎯 Grounding Our Work in the Truths that Research Has Uncovered

4

There is a growing gender values gap that needs to be addressed amongst voters under the age of 45 to course correct for future advocacy.

In 2023, we started noticing growing trends in how the different genders were responding to our abortion, reproductive healthcare (including IVF), and cost-of-living work in regards to freedoms to make decisions for your family and future. In 2024, we learned just how far that rift would take us.

5

2024 saw an unexpected rise in “traditional family values” for young men and anxieties about future “caregiving” (both for elderly family members and children) as a concern for young women.

Towards the end of the year, we were able to verify with repeated testing that these weren’t one off variances in research. We consistently throughout the year found these values and anxieties popping in our research amongst these audiences in a number of different tests.



Unanswered Questions & Pathways Forward

🎯 Next Steps for Polling for Policy Advocacy

Identify Primary Policies Moving in Session

1

Narrow on key policy or policies that your teams believes will be moving in the coming months either on the hill or in state legislatures.

Test Policy Principles

2

Boil down the primary concepts and points within the policy to test in neutral and understandable language for an average voter. There are both c3 and c4 ways of conducting this.

Present Voter Preferences to Legislative Offices

3

There are 2 primary concerns for elected officials – fundraising and favorability for reelection. Presenting clear, neutral, data that shows voter preference for policy carry a lot more power in meetings.

Timeline & Session Strategy

- What policies or policy principles are we confident will be voted on this session?
- When can we draft and field a survey to hold meetings with electees in advance of voting?

Create the Need

- What are voters top concerns right now?
- What current events or concerns can we connect the work to in order to measure urgency?

Test the Solutions

- Create simple statements of the primary concepts of the policy to make it easily digestible.
- Test favorabilities, pro & cons, movement, motivations, need.

Present to Legislators

- Voter data is a motivation for offices to make time to meet.
- Make the analysis very clear as to what this means for policy movement.

◎ Next Steps for Messaging & Movement Building – Addressing Gender Disparities

Diagnose Gender Gap

1

- Which values are no longer in alignment between the genders?
- Identify anxieties for future selves, including family planning or caregiving needs by genders.
- How have we shifted on the benevolent sexism scale?

Identify values & anxiety disparities

- What amongst our values are no longer in alignment across genders?
- Identify priorities for future selves, family planning, and anticipation of caregiving by genders

2

Find messaging alignment

- Identify messaging strategies to get men back into our bandwagon without compromising on values.
- How do we start addressing anxieties and needs around caregiving?
- How do our family support policies work into this new moment?

Understand Push & Pull Factors

- What is driving men to defect from our issue/communities politically? What are their fears and motivations that are fueling this?
- Where is each gender spending their time and forming their opinions?

3

Engage New Messengers & Online Media

- Identify and pivot to the new messengers and medias people are paying attention to.
- Don't just infiltrate our messages, build new messengers, influencers, podcasters.

Build New Messaging Pathways

- Test bodily autonomy and reproductive healthcare initiatives framed as freedoms for family planning.
- Test addressing aligned anxieties across genders to better meet the concerns of young people facing attacks on their futures.

Invest in the Communities

- Create the podcast that doesn't yet exist.
- Get on the podcast, youtube channels, tiktok, or influencer pages now with the messaging and content



Messaging & Movement Building

Spitfire Strategies

Michael Crawford

Vice President

Michael Crawford, a VP at Spitfire, has worked at the intersections culture, and social change to build the movements that won marriage equality, defeated Donald Trump the first time, and showed young people that their votes are power. He believes that if purpose-driven organizations thought more like brands, we'd have a better shot of transforming America into something that it's never been: a truly multiracial democracy. In a bid to become the Black Don Draper in-the-making, he studied advertising at Miami Ad School.



Erin Uy

Managing Senior Vice President

Erin Uy is a seasoned communications strategist with over 20 years of experience advancing justice in areas from health to the environment. She collaborates with nonprofits and foundations like Asian Americans Advancing Justice, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition. Erin is passionate about amplifying community voices, supporting public health efforts, and shifting power to people through storytelling and strategic advocacy. She specializes in working with grassroots organizations to create impactful, community-centered campaigns.



Shift Terms, Not Values

Erin Uy & Michael Crawford, Spitfire Strategies
May 2025

Defend equity,
academic freedom and
democratic values in
higher education and
blunt the war on fair
and equitable
opportunity.

Our Charge

Methodology

We worked with our partners at HIT Strategies to engage with the following groups:

- Liberal people of color registered voters
- Liberal white registered voters
- Conservative Black registered voters
- Conservative white registered voters
- Conservative Asian American and Pacific Islander registered voters
- Conservative Latinx general population

With HIT, we also conducted an online survey of 2,000 people. The survey took place between Sept. 24 and Oct. 3, 2024.

We held stakeholder interviews with the following categories of experts in the space. We spoke with more than two dozen stakeholders.

- Winners fighting back
- Civil rights organizations
- Trustees
- Higher education associations
- Policy advocates
- State-level policymakers
- Funders

Clear, Direct and Memorable Communication

- Finding 1: Say what you mean in clear terms.
- Finding 2: Use shared values to build common ground.
- Finding 3: Use “race” alongside other facets of identity or experience.
- Finding 4: Don’t Say “diversity, equity and inclusion”

Why We Need to Pivot

The opposition has weaponized DEI. Hearing the phrases causes persuadables to dismiss efforts as divisive, overly focused on race and often exclusionary of their experience.

To be effective in this work, we recommend that when you are communicating to persuadable audiences outside of the base, you shift your language but never your values.

To successfully reach persuadable audiences, it is critical to speak in terms of shared values and in a tone that invites your audience into the conversation. The good news is that we do have shared values.

Freedom to Marry

The marriage movement is a strong example of shifting terms, while centering values.

“Civil rights issue”



“Love, family, commitment”



Recommended Shifts



The diagram consists of two large circles connected by a white arrow pointing from left to right. The left circle has a vertical gradient from red at the top to orange at the bottom. The right circle has a vertical gradient from orange at the top to red at the bottom. The background is a solid orange color with faint, larger-scale circular patterns.

“diversity”
“diverse perspectives”
“diverse identities.”



“fair representation”
“different perspectives”
“people of different
backgrounds.”

Recommended Shifts

“equity”



“fair opportunity for all”
“equal opportunity for all”
“equal opportunity to
succeed”

Recommended Shifts

“inclusion”

“belonging”



“Students should be safe and seen enough to ask questions, explore ideas and learn from one another”

“Students should be included and seen as people who can be successful, increasing graduation rates.”

Recommended Shifts

Don't name race explicitly on its own.



“regardless of background”

“people of all backgrounds”

Where possible, name race alongside other facets of identity or experience by using phrases like:

“Equal opportunity for all across race, gender, income, etc.”



Holding the Line: Policy + Advocacy

PDM Consulting

Preston Mitchum

Founder & CEO

Preston Mitchum (he/him) is an award-winning Black queer attorney, advocate, and founder of PDM Consulting, where he champions the rights of Black, LGBTQ+, and young people. With nearly 15 years in law and policy, he has held leadership roles at The Trevor Project, URGE, and the Center for American Progress. He's taught at Georgetown and American University law schools and serves on the Board of Spark Reproductive Justice. A frequent media commentator, Preston is also known for his activism, including his role in the 2021 Nellie's Sports Bar 10-week protest and his appearances on Bravo's Summer House: Martha's Vineyard.



Hold the Line: Unapologetic Advocacy in an Age of Retreat



Preston D. Mitchum, Esq., LL.M.
Founder, PDM Consulting

“This moment demands clarity and courage. If we allow our work to become political pawns—discarded at the convenience of power—we risk abandoning the very people our missions were created to serve. But if we hold the line—if we stay rooted in our values even when the winds shift—we can build a society that doesn't just survive political cycles, but transcends them.

Presidents come and go. But people stay. Movements stay. Our responsibility to each other stays. Progressive and movement building work are not trends to be tested or paused—they are commitments to be upheld, refined, and defended. Not for politics, but for people. Not for appearance, but for liberation.”

-Preston D. Mitchum, PDM Consulting

Setting the Stage

In times of backlash, our mission must get louder, not quieter.

- Acknowledging the **rising threats**:
 - Return of Trump-era leadership and its implications
 - Attacks on abortion and gender-affirming care
 - Organized attacks on trans people, Black communities, and reproductive autonomy
- **Philanthropy** shifting back to “safe” grantees and institutions
- **The call**: We cannot afford to move to the middle

The Consequences of Playing It Safe

We can't help communities by appeasing systems designed to harm them.

- **Risks** of centering neutrality over justice - short term “wins” versus long term movement gains
- The **cost of moderation**:
 - Mission drift
 - Internal burnout
 - Marginalized people left behind
- Lack of long-term infrastructure planning
- What's *not* working:
 - Chasing **bipartisan appeal** - not the same as seeking bipartisan support

What Is Working?

Courage is not optional—it's a strategy.

- Organizations staying deep in internal leadership & **wellness**
- Deeply rooted in **values** and **community**
- Public **narrative campaigns** *naming harm and visioning possibility*
- Ecosystem work: **coalitions** that practice shared leadership and shared wins
- Strategic foresight & scenario planning

Our Framework at PDM Consulting

This is the work of staying free—even when it's unpopular.

- **Mission Alignment:** Keep your North Star visible
- **Organizational Audacity:** Lead with values, not fear
- **Sustainable Infrastructure:** Build internal culture that reflects external goals
- **Strategic Visioning:** Prepare for the next 5, 10, 20 years—now
- **Narrative Power:** Say the hard thing—and clearly

How We Move Forward (Together) - p.1

Start from Values, Not Just Reactions

- This moment demands more than just policy rebuttals — it demands values-rooted vision.
- Anchor in racial justice, gender justice, bodily autonomy, and LGBTQ+ liberation — not just opposition to the right.
- Resist the pressure to move to the center for “safety” — clarity is power.

Protect the Infrastructure

- *Infrastructure is policy defense.* This includes:
 - Legal teams
 - Local advocacy networks
 - Health clinics, abortion funds, LGBTQ= centers, and mutual aid
- These are the frontlines — underfunded but over-relied upon. Invest in them.

How We Move Forward (Together) - p. 2

Play Defense and Offense at the Same Time

- Defensive policy work *is not* passive — it requires strategy.
 - Use administrative advocacy.
 - Leverage state/local momentum even when federal power shifts.
- Simultaneously create bold policy frameworks (e.g. The EACH Act, BREATHE Act, trans-inclusive Medicaid reforms) to keep vision alive.

Build and Maintain Coalitions that Actually Work

- Partnerships should be intersectional *and* accountable.
- Coalitions should share resources, not just press releases.
- Policy defense only works if it's not siloed — reproductive justice *is* racial justice *is* economic justice.

Use Data and Lived Experience to Drive Messaging

- Protect what's true: communities know what they need.
- Use stories of impact — especially from Black, Indigenous, disabled, trans, immigrant communities — to humanize the stakes.

How We Move Forward (Together) - p. 3

Practice Political Education as a Policy Tool

- Reproductive rights orgs, LGBTQ+ policy shops, health spaces should not only defend legislation — they should educate their base.
- Civic engagement, base building, and education are policy tools in authoritarian times.

Hold Electeds Accountable — Without Playing Respectability Politics

- Don't shrink the ask.
- Don't confuse access with influence.
- Call out betrayals with strategy, not fear.

Orie Ward



Chief Operating Officer

Orie is the Chief Operating Officer at HIT Strategies, where he leads operations across accounting, HR, IT, and legal functions, with a focus on democratizing research for underserved communities. He previously served as Principal and Head of Operations at OzoneX Capital, managing the sourcing of 3,000+ ventures and supporting 13 portfolio companies in sectors like sustainability, health, and education. With over 15 years in management consulting, Orie is known for his expertise in strategy, organizational design, and operational effectiveness. He has led innovation labs and social impact initiatives for major brands like Google, Coca-Cola, and CARE USA—collectively reaching over 400 million people. His work bridges public and private sectors, driving lasting change and civic innovation.





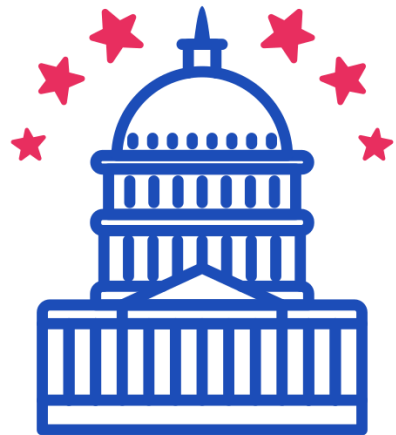
Navigating the Election + Government Fallout

WE = MINORITIES + DEMOCRATICS + PROGRESSIVES



Democracy + Government Under Seige

Totalitarian government control x Free press compromised by misinformation x Hyperpartisanship x Political polarization x Legacy protections dismantled by the courts





Facing Reality:

Do we still fight for
our agenda?

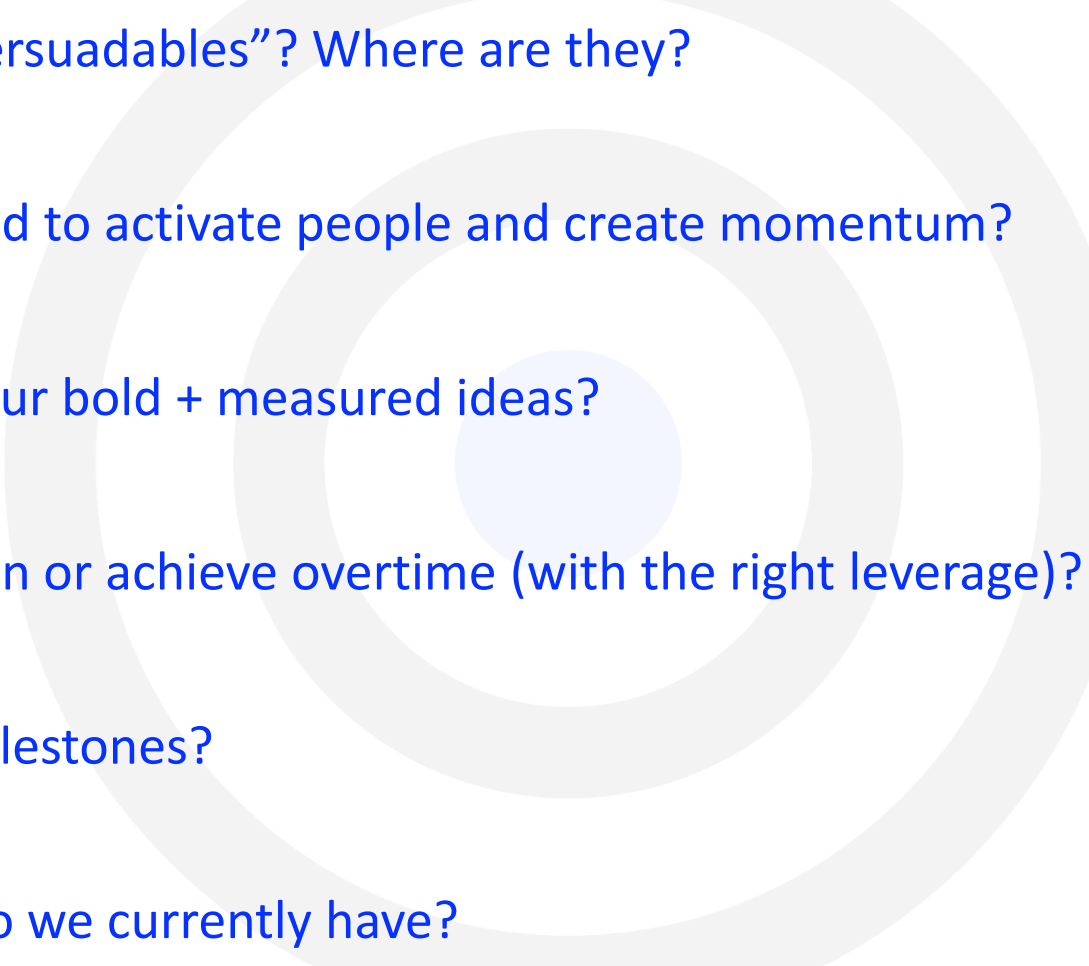
Or

Do we accept the
Fallout?

🎯 Take Stock

- 
- ➔ How are our stakeholders being impacted?
 - ➔ What is our S.W.O.T.? What can we do?
 - ➔ Are we willing to face our internal and external threats head on or over time?
 - ➔ How much of the fallout can our stakeholders sustain?
 - ➔ What's our intervention strategy?
 - ➔ Who are our partners? Where can we coordinate?

© Navigating Opposition & Disagreement

- 
- Who are the “persuadables”? Where are they?
 - What do we need to activate people and create momentum?
 - What are both our bold + measured ideas?
 - What can we gain or achieve overtime (with the right leverage)?
 - What are our milestones?
 - What traction do we currently have?

© Final Thoughts: We Can't Give Up

- Create inclusive priorities
- Strengthen your connections with people who align
- Stay active during critical moments
- Find your leverage
- When there is gridlock, find the persuadables





Turning the Conversation Over

What questions do you have for us or the group?

What support might you need for additional collaboration or coalition efforts in order to achieve next steps?



Thank You!

