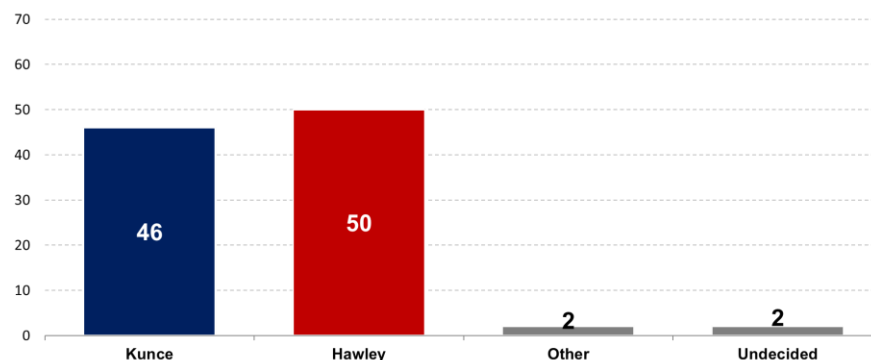September 16, 2024

Lucas Kunce Competitive Against Hawley in Missouri

To: Interested Parties

From: GQR

Once a bellwether state with an uncanny ability to predict presidential winners, Missouri is now often overlooked. However, U.S. Senate Elections in 2018 and 2016 were within single digits, a Democrat won a statewide race in 2018 and there is an abortion amendment on the ballot this year. Missouri deserves a second look in a year that Democrats are playing defense in the Senate.Lucas Kunce is outraising Josh Hawley and has been communicating on television since July 31, 2024, with powerful ads introducing himself to voters and attacking Josh Hawley. Hawley has already spent over 2.5 million dollars attacking Kunce, without much effect. Kunce's strong fundraising—he has consistently been out-fundraising Hawley—means he will continue to have the ability to communicate and keep this race competitive.

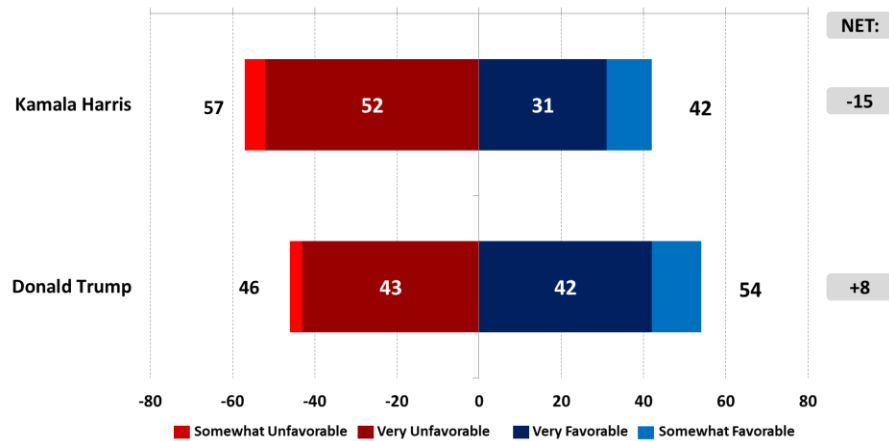### Figure 1: Initial Senate Vote

A recent survey[1] shows Lieutenant Colonel Lucas Kunce closing on Josh Hawley (Lucas Kunce 46 percent – Josh Hawley 50 percent – Other 2 percent). Voters who know enough to have an opinion of Lucas Kunce like what they hear. Kunce has a net 15 percentage points on his favorability (38 percent favorable – 23 percent unfavorable). While Josh Hawley is better known, voters' opinions are mixed (46 percent favorable – 45 percent unfavorable).

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[1] *This memo is based on a 20-minute mixed mode survey GQR conducted among 645 likely 2024 Missouri general election voters, from September 6 to 12, 2024. Text-to-web made 77 percent with online matched to voter file the other 23 percent. Respondents were found through voter file sample. The data of 645 respondents are subject to a margin of error of +/- 3.86 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval. The data are statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, age, education, gender and 2020 Presidential recall composition reflects that of the estimated likely 2024 Missouri general election electorate. Electorate is +13 Republican.*

Kunce is dramatically overperforming the Presidential race, while Hawley is underperforming Donald Trump. Kamala Harris is unpopular (42 percent favorable – 57 percent unfavorable) and trails Donald Trump by double digits (Harris 44 percent – Trump 55 percent – Other 1 percent).

Figure 2: Presidential Candidate Favorability

The closeness of the U.S. Senate race is driven by Kunce's support among traditional Democratic leaning groups, such as college educated women, and younger voters in addition to his stronger levels of support among more Republican leaning groups such as independent men, and non-college voters. Josh Hawley consistently underperforms former President Trump among traditional Republican groups, such as non-college men.

Kunce is currently overperforming the level of support Kander received in the inner St. Louis region and shows the ability to outperform Kander's support levels in the outer St. Louis region, a region that is critical to winning statewide. In the metro Kansas City region, Kunce is equaling Kander's support levels, but overperforming in the south. Kunce's ability to overperform in the south, an area he also did well in the primary, demonstrates his broad base appeal.