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CONNECTING WITH FEMALE VOTERS

Polling of 1600 female registered voters
across four states (CO, NH, OH, VA)
with focus groups in VA and NH

June-July 2015

conducted by Echelon Insights



WHEN DEMOCRATS CRY “WAR ON WOMEN!”
MOST WOMEN THINK IT IS JUST POLITICS...

BUT FEW WOMEN THINK REPUBLICANS
UNDERSTAND THEIR LIVES AND CHALLENGES.



WAR ON WOMEN? NOT REALLY, BUT...DO WE HAVE GOOD IDEAS?

Which do you agree with more?	% Agree	% Agree (Independents)	% Agree (Undecided on ballot test)
I think the Republican Party is waging a "war on women" and is out-of-touch with what is good for women in America today.	30%	27%	29%
I think the Republican Party is not waging a "war on women" but I'm not sure they have ideas for how to make women's lives better.	28%	33%	29%
I think the Republican Party is not waging a "war on women" and in fact has a lot of good ideas that would make women's lives better	26%	23%	9%



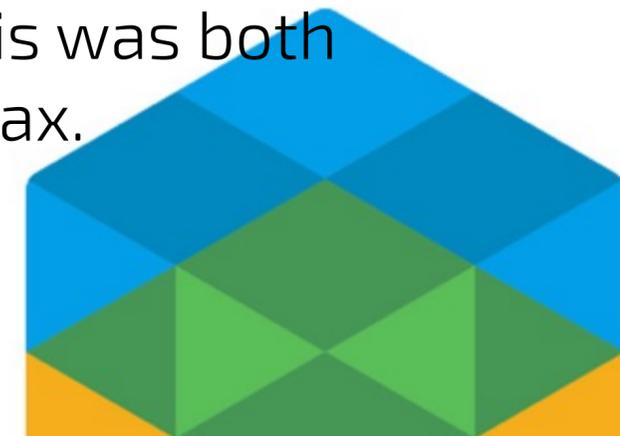
OVERCOMING THIS MEANS SHOWING WE
HAVE PEOPLE IN OUR PARTY WHO GET:

WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY AND FULFILLED?
WHAT MAKES YOU STRESSED OR WORRIED?



HAPPINESS AND FULFILLMENT LOOK LIKE...

- **Knowing that loved ones are alright.** Most just wanted to know that the people they love the most are in good health, are safe, and are generally going to be OK. For some, that meant knowing their kids would be able to go to college or that their parents were going to be cared for.
- **Spending quality time with loved ones.** Many said that the best thing in their life is quality time enjoying the company of their loved ones. They were concerned that life was so busy, with pressure to work more at their job to make ends meet and then with more work (errands, bills, transporting kids, etc.) waiting when they got home, that they never had time to just peacefully enjoy being with their families.
- **Checking off the last item on the “to do” list.** In multiple focus groups, respondents said that the best feeling they get is when they check that last item off their “to do” list. This was both about a sense of accomplishment as much about feeling permission to finally relax.



THE INVERSE, OF COURSE, IS STRESS AND WORRY...

- **Feeling that everything is very fragile.** In two different groups, women who said they had found a good “work-life balance” also said they felt that at any minute, that happy equilibrium could be upended by a health crisis or layoff. Many women felt that even if they had things figured out today, there was no guarantee that tomorrow would be OK, and living paycheck to paycheck heightened this anxiety that everything could go up in flames tomorrow. This translated into serious economic and national security concerns, that even if we are in “recovery” or “not at war” we are just teetering on the edge of the next big crisis.
- **Feeling “set up to fail” with work-life balance.** Because of the rising cost of living and stagnant wages, many of the working women said they needed to work more to keep up. This meant not enough time to enjoy loved ones. They felt that as women, this uniquely fell on their shoulders. Some noted that even on days when they wake up with a short checklist, their families and jobs always add more and more and the list can feel never ending.
 - In the words of a focus group participant: **“You work to make money to spend time to do things with your family but you’re always at work so you don’t have time to spend with your family.”**



CORE QUESTION:

HOW DO OUR IDEAS CREATE PEACE OF MIND,
A FEELING OF ACCOMPLISHMENT, AND HELP
PEOPLE SPEND MORE QUALITY TIME WITH
THEIR LOVED ONES?



#1 STRUGGLE OR CHALLENGE WOMEN SAY THEY FACE: HEALTH/STAYING HEALTHY.

People of all walks of life face challenges and tough choices. Which of the following would you say are struggles or challenges you face?

% Top Choice	Colorado	New Hampshire	Ohio	Virginia
Dealing with health issues or trying to become healthier	36%	35%	32%	33%
Wanting to earn a little more money than I currently am	20%	17%	18%	16%
Trying to get a job that pays enough to make ends meet	9%	10%	13%	13%
Trying to balance work with spending time with family	4%	7%	8%	7%
Caring for my own parents or aging family members	7%	7%	7%	8%
Other	8%	7%	7%	4%
Paying for school or paying off student loans	6%	7%	7%	5%
Make sure my children are getting a quality education	5%	7%	4%	8%
Wanting to be in a career that I enjoy more	5%	3%	3%	6%

HEALTH AND ECONOMIC CONCERNS TOP THE LIST

- **Health is both about physical well-being and economic reality.** In our open ended question, women who put health as a top challenge noted both the challenge of trying to get and stay healthy (whether in terms of quality care from doctors, fitness, smart eating) and the financial issues related to health care, including very high insurance premiums and drug costs. Many wanted more tools and resources (including time) to be in control of their own health. This was a top choice among demographic groups but was particularly highly ranked with senior women.
 - “More time for exercise, better access to quality healthcare, financial difficulties being resolved.”
 - “Cheaper and better insurance so I can afford to go to the doctor and get my health issues taken care of.”
- **Wanting to earn more wasn't just about money, but also about time and flexibility.** In our open ended question, women who put wanting to earn more as a top challenge often noted that they wanted to do things like go back to school or start their own business. Our focus group respondents often talked about having higher earnings in terms of the freedom and flexibility that a slightly higher income might allow. This also wasn't just about “leaning in” or becoming a CEO - for some, having slightly higher earnings could mean something as simple as sending their child to hockey camp without having to work late nights every day to save up for it.
 - “I just feel like I'm in a job not a career. It's okay but it doesn't bring me a huge amount of joy.”
 - “I'm still 'surviving', but hating the job I go to every day. I am working on becoming self employed. Taking my age into account, it is about the only option I have available to me.”
 - “Finding a more enjoyable job that isn't so mentally and physically exhausting that when I get home from work, I don't feel like just sleeping.”
 - “If I could afford to go back to school and finish that would help tremendously.”



WOMEN AREN'T MONOLITHIC...

- **Women 65+** are primarily concerned with health issues.
- **Women 45-64** find themselves mostly shouldering responsibility for caring for their aging parents.
- **Women 30-44 and women with kids** are more likely to face the tension between work responsibilities and family.
 - While single moms are more likely to name health issues and making ends meet as top concerns, married moms are more likely to name education.
- **Women 18-29** are very concerned with affording school/student debt.



MANY WOMEN THINK THAT WOMEN FACE
UNIQUE ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AS A
RESULT OF THEIR GENDER.



WOMEN FACE UNIQUE PRESSURES THAT SOME FEEL HURTS THEIR ECONOMIC SITUATION

- **Some noted a “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” problem facing women, work, and family.** Because many of the women we spoke to are shouldering most of the responsibilities for childcare in addition to some kind of work or search for work, whether full or part time, they felt that women likely find it harder to earn more in part because of the expectations they face.
 - “Want you to be at work all the time, but society is judging you when you’re not at the soccer game or you’re trying to get care for them when they’re sick and your employer won’t let you take time off but this other half of society is judging you.”
 - “It doesn’t matter to my company if I’m fine, I’m expected to be there and it’s hard when I have responsibilities or want to be with my family but it’s not looked upon well if I say I have to go or have to pick my child up from school.”
- **For women who chose to step back from work when their children were young, they can feel left behind.** Many noted wanting to go back to school or to find a way to get additional training, but having no resources to do so or idea of where to start.
 - “Women who take time off to raise children aren’t given the tools to be where they were.”



WOMEN OF ALL AGES AND PARTIES THINK PAY GAP DOES EXIST.

% agree...	TOTAL	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+
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Women are often paid less than men for doing the very same work.

79% 80% 74% 81% 80%

% agree...	TOTAL	Republican	Independent	Democratic	"No War on Women/No Ideas"
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Women are often paid less than men for doing the very same work.

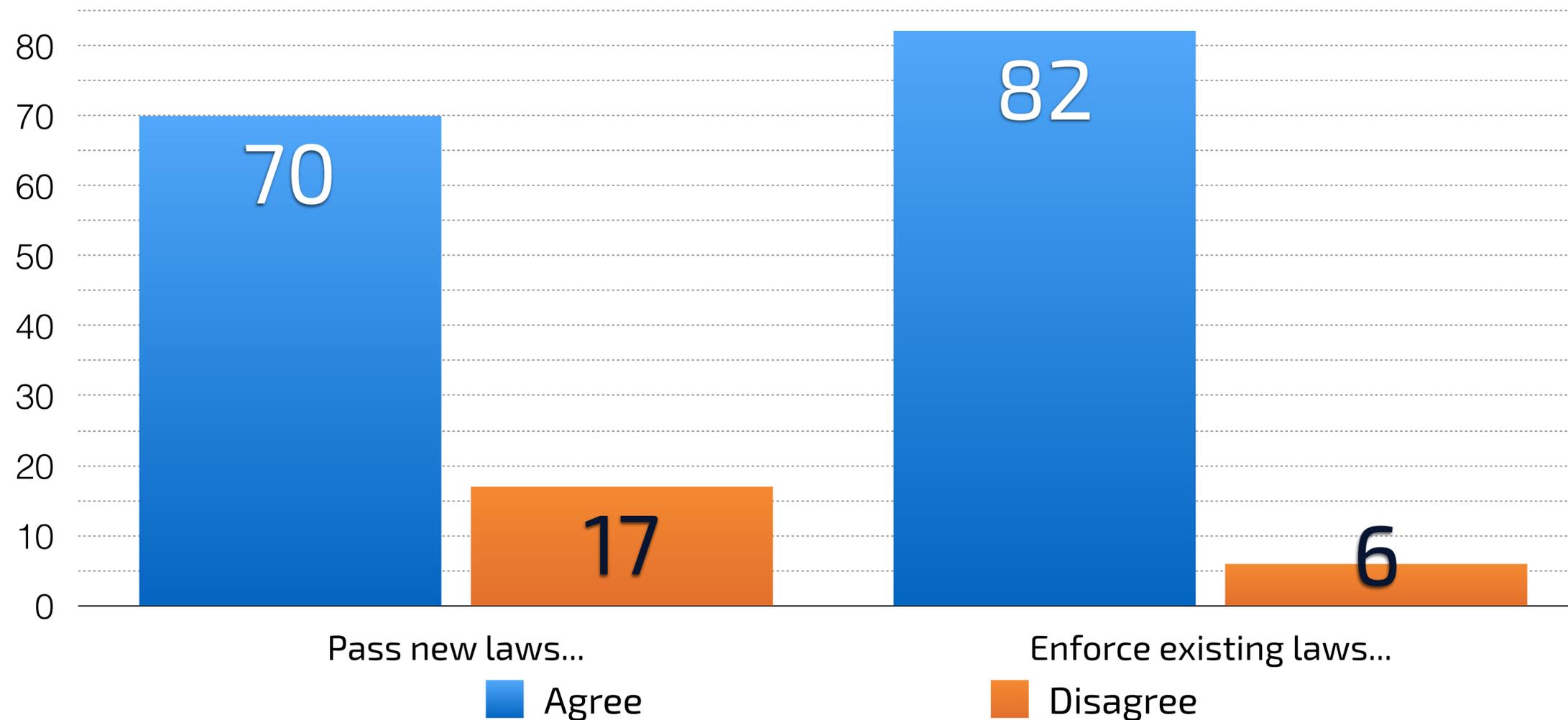
79% 64% 79% 93% 87%

"No War on Women/No Ideas"
87%



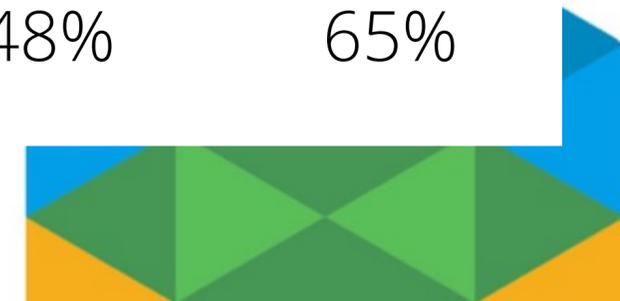
WOMEN BOTH THINK WE SHOULD ENFORCE CURRENT LAWS AND CREATE NEW ONES.

AGREE/DISAGREE? "We need to pass new laws to ensure men and women are paid equally for doing the same work." AND "We need to better enforce existing laws ensuring men and women are paid equally for doing the same work."



DEM “WOMEN’S AGENDA” ITEMS TEST WELL, PARTICULARLY WITH YOUNG WOMEN; PAIN CAPABLE ABORTION BAN ALSO SEES SUPPORT.

% agree...	TOTAL	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+
Working parents should have the flexibility to spend more time with their children through the option of earning paid leave time.	72%	87%	77%	70%	62%
We need to pass new laws to ensure men and women are paid equally for doing the same work.	70%	73%	69%	70%	69%
Employers should be required to provide paid maternity leave to their employees.	69%	85%	76%	66%	57%
The government should ensure all children have access to Pre-K programs.	62%	70%	68%	59%	57%
Abortion should be prohibited once the unborn child is capable of feeling pain, with exceptions if the mother has been a victim of rape or her health is in danger.	52%	44%	49%	48%	65%



POTENTIAL CONCERNS WITH DEM “WOMEN’S AGENDA” IN FOCUS GROUPS...

- **“Will it hurt small business?”** While many thought that sick leave and maternity leave should be standard and required, some did note that they felt torn, as smaller businesses might have a hard time meeting requirements.
- **“Who is paying for this?”** Some in the focus groups were very concerned about debt and spending issues, and wanted to know where the money would come from to fund programs and priorities that sounded lovely but costly.



WE TESTED A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL
CONSERVATIVE POLICY IDEAS TO SEE WHICH
IDEAS WOMEN THINK ARE GOOD IDEAS...



TOP THREE IDEAS TESTED: STUDENT LOANS, STOP ISIS, PASS ENDA

	TOTAL % VERY GOOD IDEA	TOTAL % VERY + FAIRLY GOOD IDEA
We need to reduce student loan interest rates and lower the cost of college so that students can learn without taking on outrageous levels of student loan debt.	60%	82%
We should increase efforts to stop ISIS and radical Islamic extremists from recruiting terrorists here at home.	58%	82%
We should make it illegal for an employer to discriminate against employees on the basis of sexual orientation.	55%	73%



ON THE ISSUE OF COLLEGE COSTS...

- **People think the sticker price of college is unnecessarily high.** The value of a college education was not necessarily in doubt, but many questioned why tuition costs were so high. Some pointed the finger at administrators and athletic coaches; others bemoaned the high price of textbooks.
- **Job training outside the traditional four-year institution has appeal.** Many women noted that they wanted ways to gain skills to become more marketable in the workforce, but going back to school isn't an option. Lower-cost, higher-flexibility, quality education options would be extremely valuable to many.



THE RETURN OF “SECURITY MOMS”?

- **Women can feel that the world is increasingly unsafe and unstable.** While this message is about ISIS, in the focus groups, concerns about Russia and Iran also emerged, as well as fear about homegrown threats and gun violence.
- **What’s the plan?** It is important, however, to be clear about what the plan would be to deal with ISIS. Other research suggests ground troops are not terribly popular; some open-ended responses raised respondent concerns over surveillance and free-speech issues when seeking to stop budding extremists on home turf.



NEXT BEST IDEAS: SUPPORT FOR CURING DISEASES, FOR PARENTS OF DISABLED CHILDREN, FOR THOSE WHO NEED CONTRACEPTION

	TOTAL % VERY GOOD IDEA	TOTAL % VERY + FAIRLY GOOD IDEA
We should increase government-funded medical research efforts aimed at finding cures for things like autism, Alzheimer's disease, and cancer.	40%	69%
We should improve programs that provide support and assistance to parents of children who suffer from illnesses or disabilities.	39%	74%
We should provide funding to community organizations that provide health exams and effective birth control to low-income women who cannot afford it.	38%	66%



WHAT ABOUT DEFUNDING PLANNED PARENTHOOD?

- **At the time of the focus groups, the Planned Parenthood videos were out but had not yet been viewed very widely.** Some women had seen the videos but were reluctant to volunteer that they had seen them and were clearly upset by the content.
- **For women across the political spectrum, Planned Parenthood is associated with far more than abortion.** This of course may change as the videos continue to be released. However, even some pro-life respondents noted that they had known people who had relied on Planned Parenthood for other tests and services, and supported the overall mission of trying to avoid unplanned pregnancy.



GOOD BUT PERHAPS NOT GREAT? BOTTOM FOUR MESSAGES...

**TOTAL % VERY
GOOD IDEA**

**TOTAL % VERY +
FAIRLY GOOD IDEA**

Parents whose children are in failing schools should be able to move their child to a better school.

35%

62%

We should make birth control available for purchase over-the-counter without a prescription but with a consultation with a trained pharmacist.

32%

56%

We should allow each city and state to set a minimum wage that is right for them rather than increasing it across the country, which studies show can cost jobs.

25%

49%

We should create and expand tax credits for childcare and for paid maternity and paternity leave.

22%

50%



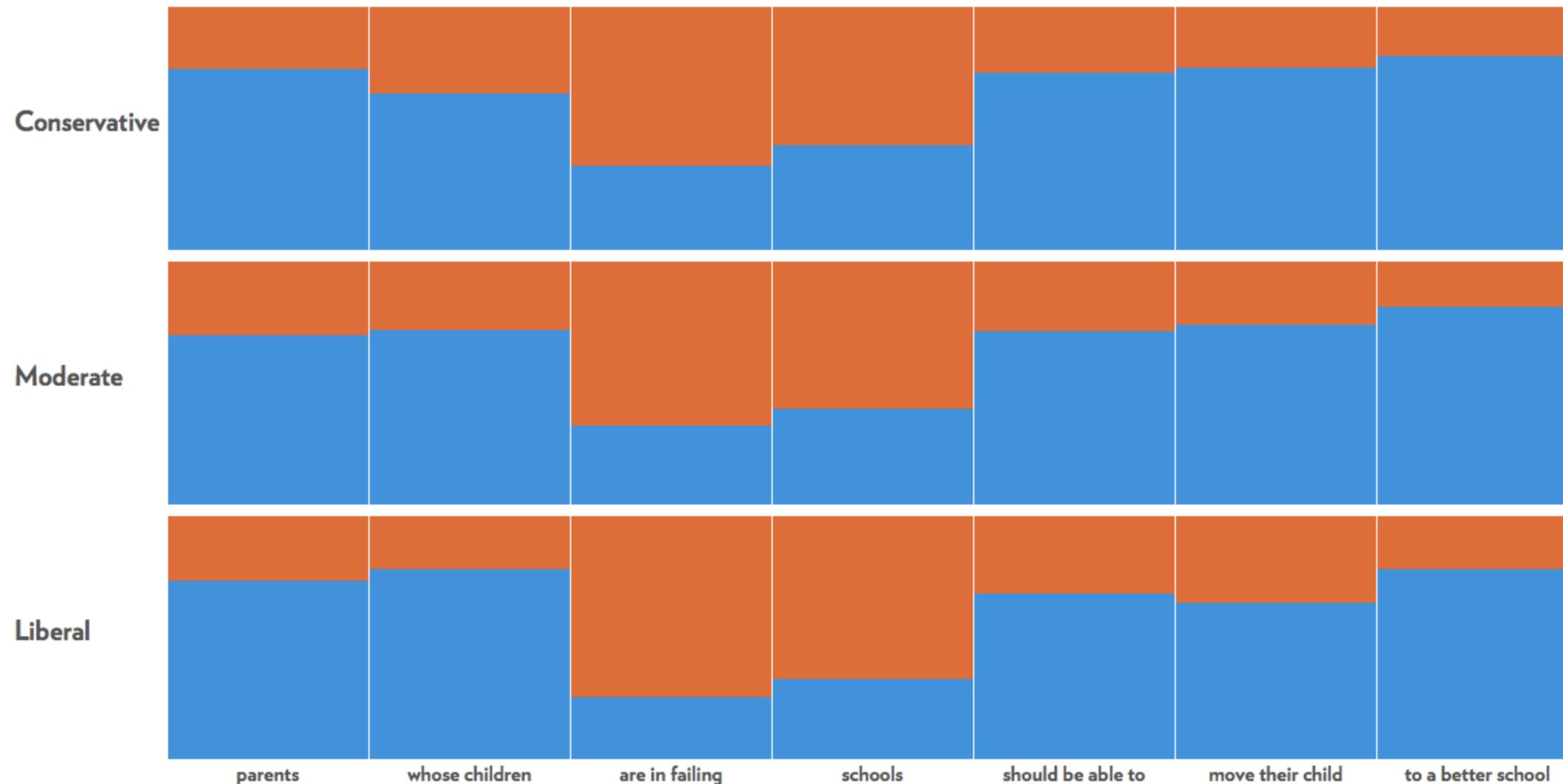
FOR EACH MESSAGE, WE LOOKED AT HOW RESPONDENTS OF DIFFERENT IDEOLOGIES REACTED TO THE SPECIFIC LANGUAGE USED.

BLUE INDICATES MORE POSITIVE REACTION
ORANGE INDICATES MORE NEGATIVE REACTION



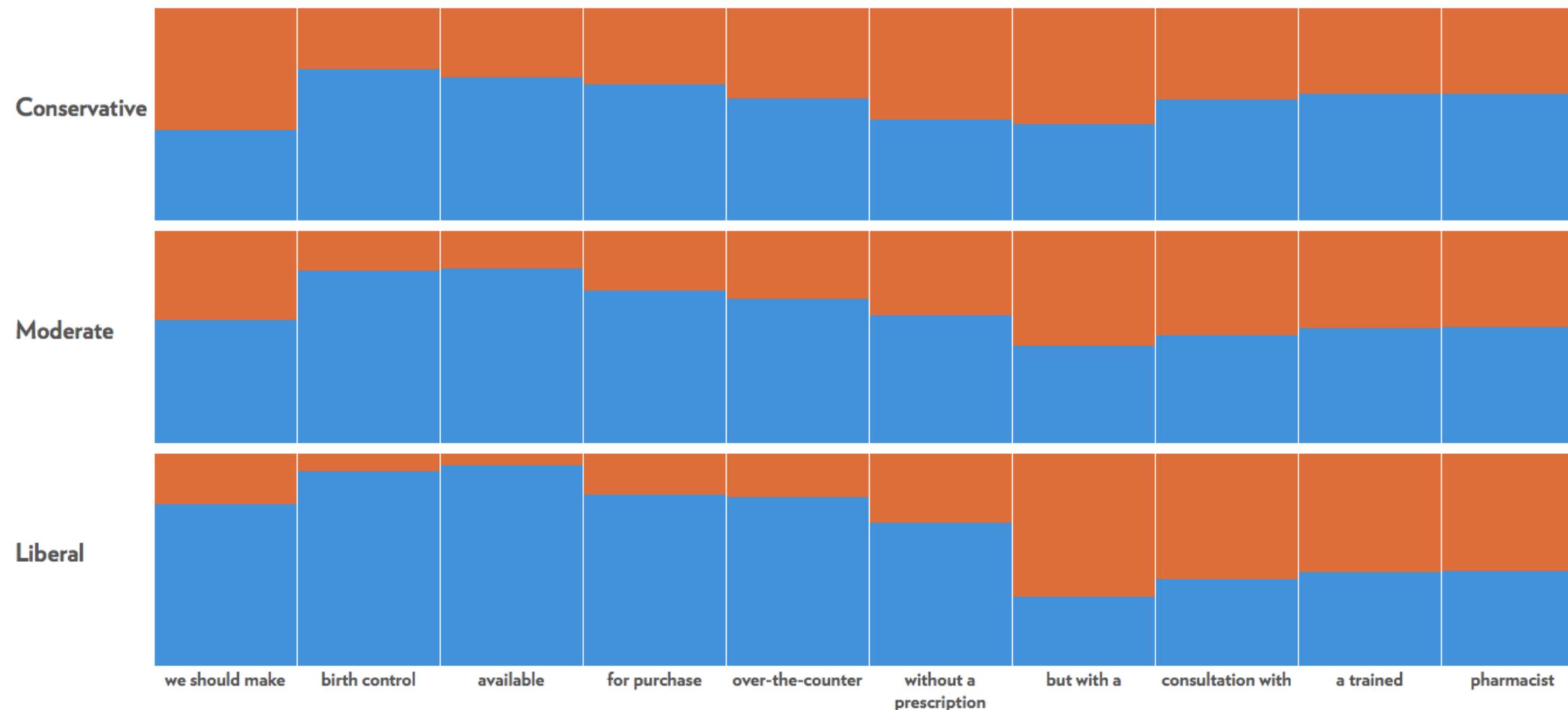
PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN ARE IN FAILING SCHOOLS SHOULD BE ABLE TO MOVE THEIR CHILD TO A BETTER SCHOOL.

Respondents of all stripes, but particularly liberals, questioned the idea of “failing schools” and how that determination would be made. In focus groups, standardized tests were railed against and represent a serious hot button with female voters.



WE SHOULD MAKE BIRTH CONTROL AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE OVER-THE-COUNTER WITHOUT A PRESCRIPTION BUT WITH A CONSULTATION WITH A TRAINED PHARMACIST.

Respondents were ok with the idea, but grew concerned as “without a prescription” was explicitly introduced into the message. In focus groups, respondents said they worried about side effects and in open-ends they were skeptical of pharmacists..



WHY ISN'T OTC BIRTH CONTROL WILDLY POPULAR?

- **Women of all political stripes lean toward wanting a doctor involved.** Many noted either experiencing side effects or knowing friends who needed to try multiple methods, or to be screened for blood pressure, etc. before being prescribed a method of birth control.
- **How would parents be involved?** In the open-end responses and in focus groups, people do worry that birth control access would absolve parents of the responsibility to talk to their children about pregnancy, and were concerned about teens having access without parent involvement.



WHAT'S NEXT?



STEP ONE: SHOW THAT REPUBLICAN WOMEN EXIST (AND ARE DIVERSE!)

- **Women want to see women in elected office who have experienced the same struggles they have.** On the right, we have an incredible group of voices to elevate. Many women feel that there aren't really any voices in politics who get what they are going through; the mere act of demonstrating that there is a diverse array of women from all walks of life - ethnically, economically, regionally, etc - within the ranks of Republican elected officials is absolutely essential.
- Showcase Republican women in an unscripted or casual format. Both times testing footage of Republican women delivering prepared remarks generally left respondents unmoved. However, a video of Sen. Kelly Ayotte speaking about the heroin epidemic was very well received in the New Hampshire groups because the topic was one that spoke to their real-life concerns and the language/tone were far warmer.
- Break down stereotypes. Women want to see other women who look like them in terms of family and economic status, not just women from the "white picket fence" lifestyle.



STEP TWO: SHOW THAT REPUBLICANS UNDERSTAND KEY DAILY CONCERNS

- **Women want to feel like someone in politics or Washington understands what its like in their shoes.** Most respondents, for completely understandable reasons, viewed politicians as out-of-touch, protected in a bubble, and without any of the economic concerns facing most Americans. When politicians use well-worn talking points to make ideological points, it seems like politics as usual. A simple acknowledgment of real-world concerns could go a long way.
- **Use language that clearly and vividly acknowledges concerns.** “The last thing you need is more items added to your to-do list,” “even when things feel like they’re OK, that ‘OK’ can feel fragile,” “most of us just want to spend more time enjoying time with our families,” “that pit in your stomach when it is time to sit down and pay the bills, that’s the worst.”
- **Be sensitive to generational and family-status differences in daily concerns;** student loans won’t be nearly as resonant with seniors as with millennials, acknowledging the pressures of caring for elderly parents makes most sense with women in their fifties and early sixties, etc.



STEP THREE: CLEARLY LINK POLICY IDEAS TO REAL FULFILLMENT

- **Of course women like low taxes, less national debt, etc...but real resonance comes from drawing a clear link to fulfillment.** Take the message we tested on childcare tax credits; while a policymaker may view that in terms of dollars and cents and think it is a clear political winner, we found that it raised anxiety about complicating the tax code, which means more time and stress figuring out how to even get that money back from the government in the first place. (Another item on the to-do list, another thirty minutes at the kitchen table having tense discussions with a spouse, etc.) **Are we really helping women feel more secure, feel like the future is less fragile, and more fulfilled...or are we adding more stress, more to-dos, more work to their plates?**
- **Discuss what policies will mean for women, both in terms of money *and* time *and* peace of mind.** These are all valuable resources, and in many cases, women want to earn more money not just to make ends meet but so they can have more time and feel peace of mind. For those who feel on a constant treadmill of stress, talking about policies that enhance flexibility and give women more power over their time would be welcome.
- **Stay positive.** In the messages we tested, whenever the message would take a turn for the more partisan or negative, it would get tuned out. (For example: conservative women balking at a good minimum wage message as soon as it took a *right* turn and brought up the idea that minimum wages can kill jobs.)



METHODOLOGY NOTES

The survey data presented in this deck come from a series of focus groups and online surveys of female registered voters. Research was conducted by Echelon Insights.

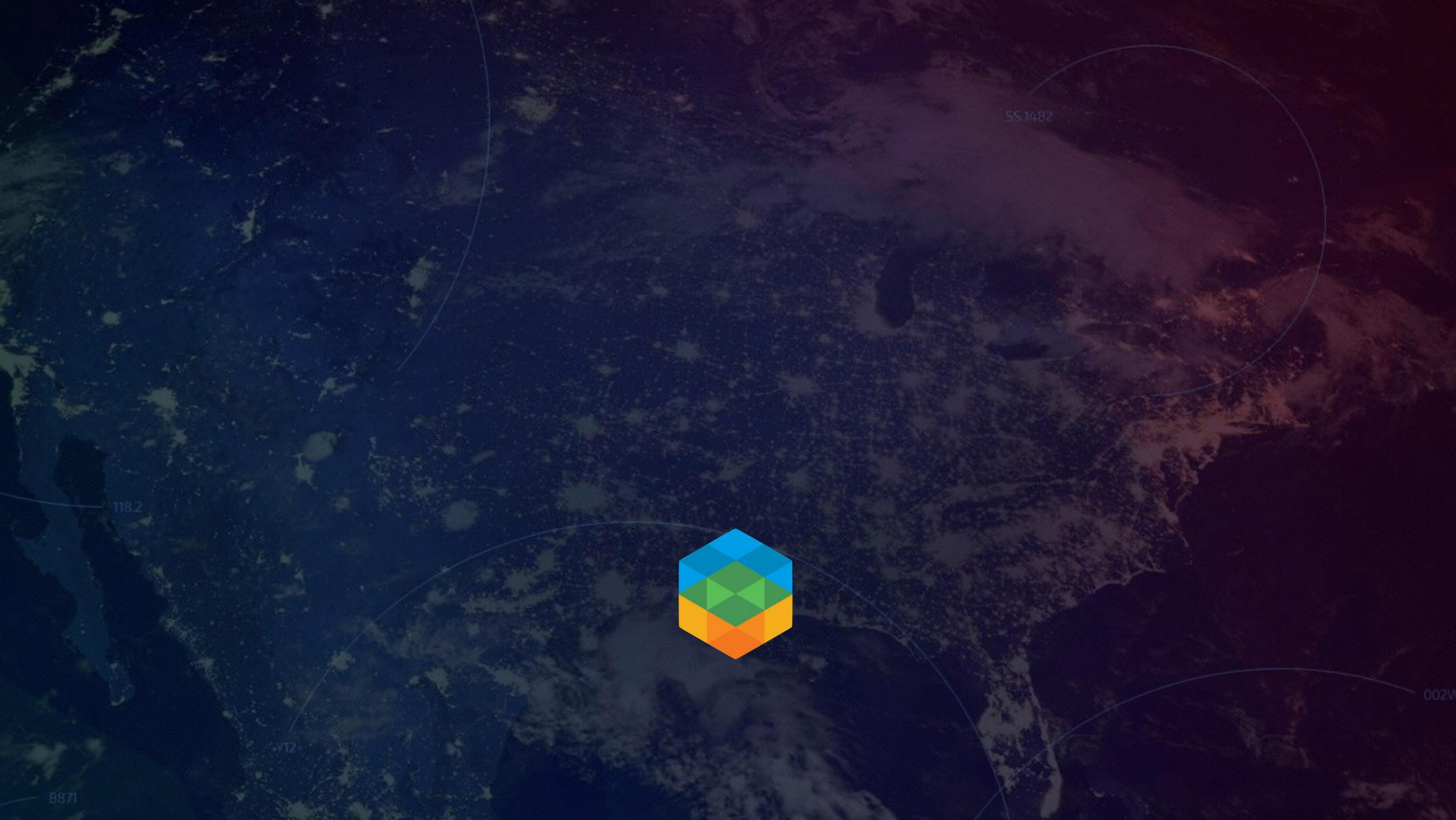
Surveys of 400 female registered voters were conducted in each of the following four states:

- Colorado, June 24-July 6, 2015
- New Hampshire, June 26-July 15, 2015
- Ohio, June 24-29, 2015
- Virginia, June 24-30, 2015

The surveys were conducted online via YouGov using their panel of respondents, who were sampled and matched to a representative population of female registered voters in each state. Results in this presentation are generally drawn from the merged four-state sample with an N = 1600; where individual state results are used, they are noted accordingly.

Focus groups were conducted July 21, 2015 (Richmond, VA) and July 29, 2015 (Manchester, NH) of female registered voters who were not committed to voting for either Hillary Clinton or the Republican candidate in the 2016.





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