Abortion in Women’s Lives: Exploring Links to Equal Opportunity and Financial Stability
Insights From Polling in New York and Pennsylvania | Sept 2014
Goals of Surveys

> Measure the degree of support for legislative packages related to women, such as the New York Women’s Equality Act (WEA) and the Pennsylvania Agenda for Women’s Health (AWH) broadly, as well its individual policy components.

> Assess the extent to which voters believe abortion access belongs in policy agendas around women’s health, financial stability, and equal opportunity.

> Begin to explore reasons why voters feel abortion access is important.

> Identify the links voters may be making between reproductive health and rights, especially abortion, and other issues affecting women’s equality, opportunity, and financial stability.
From Two Statewide Surveys

NY

> Statewide telephone survey (cell and landline)
> N=802 registered voters
> Fielded May 20 – 26, 2014
> Margin of sampling error: ± 3.5 percentage points

PA

> Statewide telephone survey (cell and landline)
> N=802 registered voters
> Fielded May 22 – 26, 2014
> Margin of sampling error: ± 3.5 percentage points
Voters Already See a Link Between Childbearing and Degree of Opportunity

Top of Mind Responses from Open-Ended Question

“What things might prevent women from having the same opportunities (SPLIT: in life or in work) as men? Most common responses – combined

1. Glass ceiling/sexism/bias (27%)
2. Being a mother / primary caregiver (25%)

“What things might prevent women from having the same level of financial stability as men?” Most common responses

1. Being a mother / primary caregiver (20%)
2. Education / experience differences (18%)
3. Gender bias / sexism (14%)
Voters Recognize Important Link Between Control Over Childbearing and Equality

Do you think a woman’s ability to control whether or when she has children is an important part of equality for women?

- Yes, very important: 63%
- Yes, somewhat important: 18%
- Not sure/REF: 4%
- Not important: 15%

N = 802 registered voters
Voters Recognize Important Link Between Control Over Childbearing and Financial Stability

Do you think a woman’s ability to control whether or when she has children is related to her financial stability?

*N = 802 registered voters*
Voters Also See Link Between Abortion Access and Equality & Financial Stability

Do you think issues around access to [split A: safe and legal abortion care] [split B: birth control and] has an effect on equal opportunities for women? 
*N = 802 registered voters*

- Has effect: 55%
- No effect: 29%
- Not sure: 15%

Do you think issues around access to [split A: safe and legal abortion care] [split B: birth control and] has an effect on her financial stability? 
*N = 802 registered voters*

- Has effect: 50%
- No effect: 38%
- Not sure: 11%
The Link is Stronger with Restrictions

Voters in PA

Do you think laws and restrictions that make it harder to access abortion can have a negative impact on a woman’s financial stability? (Base n=401)

- Yes, can have a negative impact: 62%
- No: 31%
- Don’t know: 5%
- Ref.: 1%

Do you think laws that improve access to abortion can have a positive impact on a woman’s financial stability? (Base n=401)

- Yes, can have a positive impact: 48%
- No: 41%
- Don’t know: 10%
- Ref.: 1%
Voters See Link Between Abortion Access and Women’s Rights, Health, and Equality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Having access to legal abortion…</th>
<th>New York</th>
<th>Pennsylvania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be necessary for a woman to be able to achieve her goals</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can allow a woman to continue her education</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can enable a woman to take care of her family</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA: Can enable a woman to be more financially stable <em>(Base NY n=399; PA n=401)</em></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSB: Can enable a woman to be more financially stable for her family <em>(Base NY n=403; PA n=401)</em></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is an important part of equality for women</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is an important part of women’s health care</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is an important part of women’s rights</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is an important part of women’s ability to be financially stable</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Women’s Agendas Overall Receive High Levels of Support

Support for New York’s Women’s Equality Act
- Strongly support: 61%
- Somewhat support: 23%
- Somewhat oppose: 7%
- Strongly oppose: 4%
- Don’t know: 5%
- Total: 84% support

Support for Pennsylvania’s Agenda for Women’s Health
- Strongly support: 49%
- Somewhat support: 31%
- Somewhat oppose: 8%
- Strongly oppose: 4%
- Don’t know: 8%
- Total: 80% support
## Support is Strong for Abortion-Specific Policies in Women’s Agendas

### Voters in NY

Of NY voters support the provision in the Women’s Equality Act protecting a woman’s right to decide to have an abortion, including if her health is at risk later in pregnancy, as is recognized by Roe v. Wade – 61% strongly.

### Voters in PA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Description</th>
<th>Strongly Support</th>
<th>Somewhat Support</th>
<th>Overall Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making sure politicians can’t force doctors to give patients medically inaccurate information about abortion (n=401)</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Split) Protecting women’s reproductive health care decisions, including decisions about abortion (n=401)</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing the minimum wage</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting space around entrances to health centers that provide abortions to keep women and providers safe from protestors</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Voters Prefer to Include Proactive Abortion Policies in These Agendas

New York
Which elected officials do you agree with more – those who want the 10-point plan or those who want the 9-point plan?

- 10-point plan: 73%
- 9-point plan: 23%
- Don’t know/refuse: 3%
- Neither: 2%

73% support 10-point plan

Pennsylvania
How important is it that the Pennsylvania Agenda for Women’s Health addresses issues around reproductive health care, including abortion?

- Very important: 42%
- Somewhat: 34%
- Not too: 9%
- Not at all: 12%
- Don’t know/refuse: 3%

76% important
Voters Want to Re-elect Officials Who Support Agendas and Proactive Abortion Policies

**NY Poll**
If your elected official supported the 10-point plan [that includes protecting a woman’s right to have an abortion], would you be more or less likely to vote to re-elect him or her?

- Much more likely to vote for: 46%
- Somewhat more likely to vote for: 22%
- Somewhat less likely to vote for: 6%
- Much less likely to vote for: 14%
- Would not make a difference (Vol.): 9%

**PA Poll**
If your elected official supported the Pennsylvania Agenda for Women’s Health, would you be more or less likely to vote to re-elect him or her?

- Much more likely to vote for: 39%
- Somewhat more likely to vote for: 29%
- Somewhat less likely to vote for: 8%
- Much less likely to vote for: 9%
- Would not make a difference (Vol.): 10%

68% more likely vs. 20% less likely

68% more likely vs. 17% less likely
Voters Less Likely to Re-elect Officials Who Support Restrictions

PA Poll
If your elected official was in favor of laws that make it harder to get an abortion, would you be...

- Much less likely to vote for: 37%
- Somewhat less likely to vote for: 23%
- Somewhat more likely to vote for: 11%
- Much more likely to vote for: 19%
- Would not make a difference (Vol.): 7%

60% less likely vs. 30% more likely
The following segments are most favorable toward women’s agendas and abortion policies:

- Women
- Democrats
- Unmarried women
- African Americans
- 18 to 34 year olds (especially women)
- Voters in urban areas
Insights from Continuing Research

> The link between financial stability and abortion access is more evident when the end goal is improving financial stability and life opportunities, rather than advancing an abortion proposal

> Framing abortion as an economic issue can evoke judgment and resistance

> Important for people to arrive at their own conclusions on this connection

> People need to consider long-term life path and be able to contrast two possibilities – one with abortion access and one without
Conclusion

• Legislative packages related to women, such as the New York Women’s Equality Act and the Pennsylvania Agenda for Women’s Health may not be as controversial among voters as we think, and the abortion provisions are seen as important components.

• Voters across party ID, regions of the state, and every demographic group support both legislative packages. Support is especially high among African Americans, unmarried women, and young people. A majority of registered Republicans and in rural parts of both states support these packages.

• Access to abortion is seen as an important part of women’s rights, health care, and equality.

• The link between control over reproductive decisions and financial security exists among many voters.

• Voting to restrict abortion access is more likely to generate a negative response among these constituents; voting to protect access generates somewhat more support than opposition for elected officials in these states.
Thank You!

Questions? Contact:

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