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Winning Women in 2016 Findings from a Web Survey of American Adults

To: Interested Parties

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Despite a low unemployment rate and modest economic growth, many people continue to struggle to make ends meet, particularly as the cost of living continues to rise. Wages have not recovered to pre-2007 levels, but the cost of education, transportation, healthcare and housing have increased exponentially. Women, especially younger, unmarried and minority women, are particularly stressed especially if they have caregiving or financial responsibility for their children or their parents.

These women strongly favor policies that address their economic reality--they are looking for changes that put more money in their pocket, such as equal pay for men and women and raising the minimum wage. They want paid sick days and paid family and medical leave, affordable childcare and ways to alleviate their student debt. Finally, they seek lower taxes, good jobs and access to reproductive healthcare.

The following memo is based on a national online survey of 800 registered voters, with an oversample of 200 millennial women (ages 18-35) female voters, for a total sample size of 1,000 registered voters, weighted to be representative of registered voters nationally. The survey was conducted from December 7-10, 2015.

American Women thanks its coalition of progressive leaders and organizations who helped make this project possible, including Center for American Progress Action, Make it Work, National Women's Law Center Action Fund, Voto Latino, Voter Participation Center, and PowerPAC.

Economic Security is Wanting

Having enough money to meet bills and expenses is the biggest source of stress for all voters, but women – especially millennial, unmarried and minority women – are significantly more likely than men to express economic anxiety. Women just have less money and have less saved for retirement than men. While women earn less than men, they are more likely than men to be the caregivers for children and aging parents and they are also more likely than men to report having adult children living at home. Wage discrimination in the work place matters too. Nearly half of women (45 percent) report having been paid less than a man for the same job or knowing someone who has been paid less than a man.

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Figure 1: Greatest Causes of Stress

	Total	Men	Women	Millennial Women	Unmarried Women	Minority Women
Bills and expenses	54	48	59	72	69	76
Saving money for retirement	24	20	27	18	25	20
Your health	24	24	23	13	24	21
Your family's health	16	16	15	12	15	8
Caring for your family	13	15	11	10	12	14
Your relationship with your partner	13	14	11	13	11	12
Balancing caretaking and career responsibilities	9	8	9	19	9	9
Meeting your boss's expectations at work	6	6	5	10	6	6

There are differences among women, depending on stage of life. Not surprisingly older women are more concerned about retirement and health than younger women, while moms have greater stress associated with family than women without children. Still, it is striking how simply not having enough money unites women, even if the actual economic experiences of women differ.

Millennials on the Edge: Economic Realities and Policies that Matter

Millennials have come of age at a challenging time economically. The Great Recession affected everyone, in every sector, but younger people had, and continue to have, much higher rates of unemployment. It is also the case that in this information economy, there are few good paying jobs for people without a college education and even young college graduates struggle to find work and pay off student loans. Not surprisingly, the burden of expenses and bills is the biggest source of stress for millennial women (72 percent compared to 54 percent overall); almost half of millennial women have struggled to pay tuition or student loans and a third report falling behind on rent or mortgage payments, having to take a second job, having lost a job and having hours cut at work. Nearly 30 percent are living with their parents.

Figure 2: Millennial women face greater impact from recession; nearly half struggle with student loans

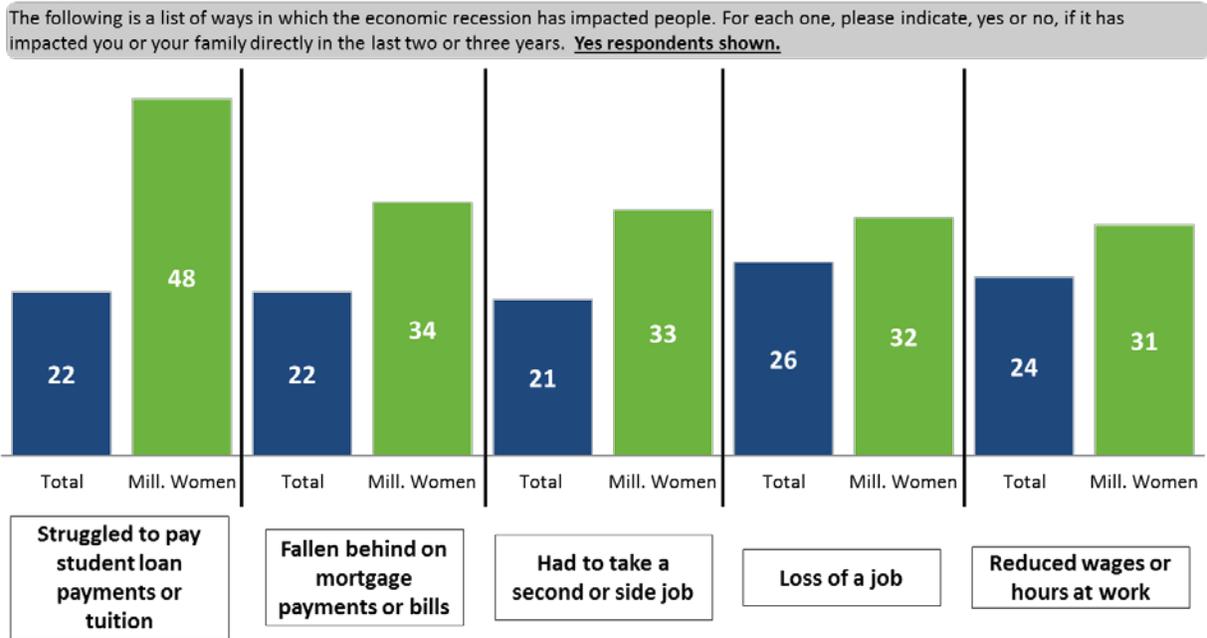
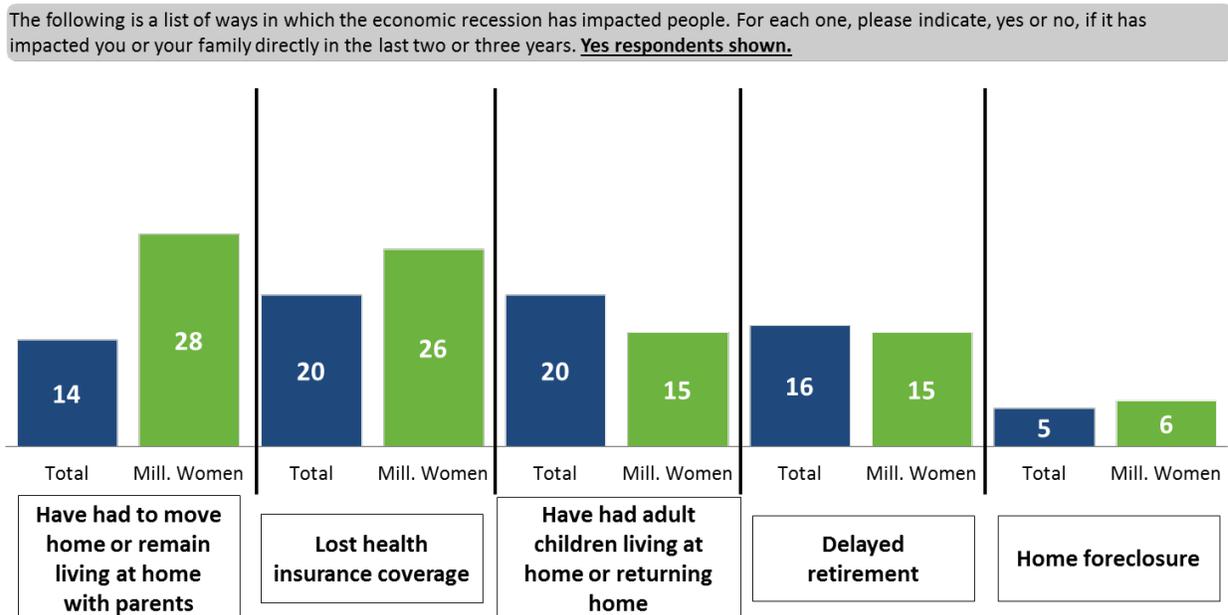


Figure 3: Moving home and loss of insurance also affects millennial women more than total population



While we tend to lump millennials together, there are important differences. Younger millennial women (18-24 years of age) are much more likely to report a reduction in hours and wages (47 percent to 23 percent) than older millennial women (25-35 years of age). They are also more

likely to have to take a second job (42 percent compared to 28 percent). Forty-one percent of younger millennials have moved back home.

When we test a broader set of issues that might impact a voter's likelihood of voting for a candidate, the same distinctions emerge. Women elevate equal pay for equal work as the policy that would make them *most likely* to support a candidate for office. They also say paid sick days, college affordability, investment in public schools, middle class tax relief, and paid family and medical leave would make them more likely to support a candidate.¹

Figure 4: Lowering taxes and equal pay top policy priorities for young women voters

The following is a list of positions on issues that a candidate for elected office might take. For each one, please indicate whether that position would make you more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for that candidate, or would not make a difference either way. Percent more likely shown.

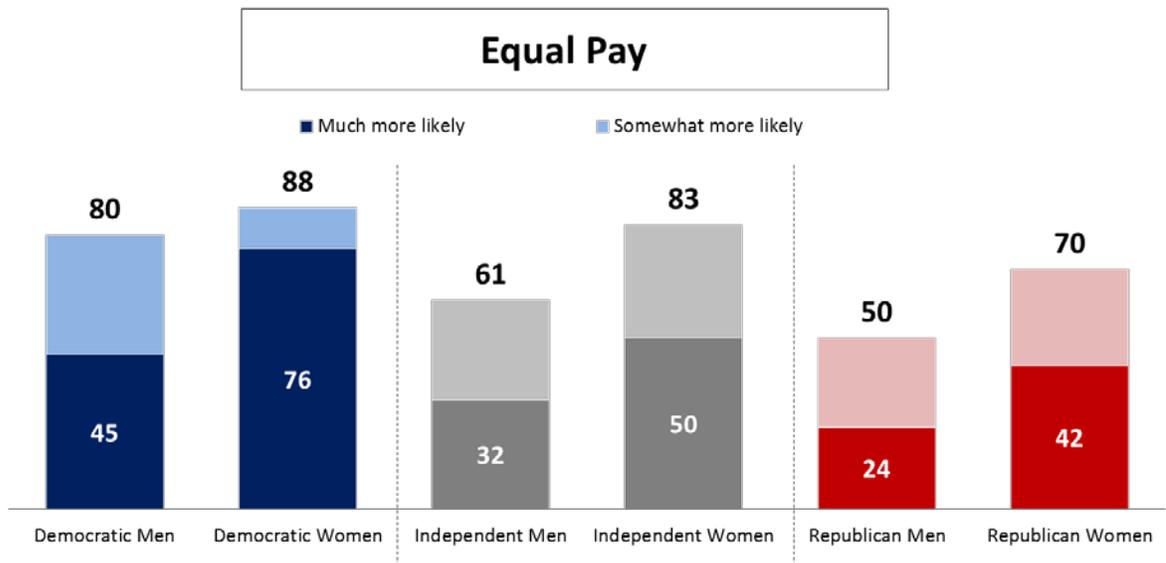
	Total	Men	Women	Millennial Women
Lower taxes on businesses and middle class families to help the economy	76	73	79	77
Make sure women are paid the same as men for equal work	73	64	81	73
Allow workers to earn paid sick days	71	67	75	68
Require employers to provide paid family and medical leave	64	58	69	70
Provide tax credits and subsidies to help working parents pay for childcare	61	56	66	65
Require employers to provide stable, predictable schedules for hourly employees	61	56	66	70
Raise the current minimum wage to \$12 per hour and adjust for cost of living	51	47	56	52

¹ A breakdown of the top policies tested among key groups is included in the attached Appendix.

Support for ending gender discrimination in pay is a policy proposal that has broad appeal for all women voters because it is rooted in their lived experience. Eighty-eight percent of Democratic women and 83 percent of Independent women say they would be more likely to support a candidate who supports an equal pay initiative. Importantly, 7 out of 10 Republican women also are more inclined to vote for a candidate who favors equal pay.

Figure 5: Women, Regardless of Party, More Likely to Support Candidate who Fights for Pay Equality

The following is a list of positions on issues that a candidate for elected office might take. For each one, please indicate whether that position would make you more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for that candidate, or would not make a difference either way.



Appendix: Top 5 Policy Priorities for Candidates among Key Demographic Groups

Women	
1.	Equal pay
2.	Public school funding
3.	Lower taxes
4.	Paid sick leave
5.	Campaign reform

Millennial Women 18-24

1.	Equal pay
2.	Lower taxes
3.	Paid family leave
4.	Tax credits and subsidies for childcare
5.	Protect women's access to health care clinics and birth control

Millennial Women 25-35

1.	Lower taxes
2.	Public school funding
3.	College affordability
4.	Equal pay
5.	More predictable work schedules for hourly employees

Women 50-64

1.	Public school funding
2.	Paid sick leave
3.	Equal pay
4.	Lower taxes
5.	Campaign reform

Unmarried Women

1.	Equal pay
2.	Lower taxes
3.	Protect reproductive health care and birth control
4.	Campaign reform
5.	Public school funding

Women of Color

1.	College affordability
2.	Equal pay
3.	Protect women's access to health care clinics
4.	Paid family leave
5.	Lower taxes

Rising American Electorate (RAE)

1.	Lower taxes
2.	Public school funding
3.	Equal pay
4.	Protect women's access to health care clinics
5.	Paid family leave