

MODERN FAMILY: How Women Candidates Can Talk About Politics, Parenting, and Their Personal Lives

Why We Did this Research

Women candidates and elected officials are often asked about their family lives: “Are you married? Who’s taking care of your kids? As a single parent how would you manage your job as an elected official and your role as a parent? How can you relate to families if you don’t have kids?”

There are lots of questions due in part to the changing definition of family. Families in America, regardless of race, have evolved since the 1960s when two-parent households were the norm, most adults were married, and less than a quarter of married women with children worked outside the home. Today, babies are nearly as likely to be born to women who are single or unmarried with a partner as they are to be born to married parents. More women with young children are working than ever before and women’s labor force participation rates rise as their children grow older.

Despite sweeping societal changes, traditional gender roles remain powerful, influencing what we perceive to be acceptable and appropriate behavior for men and women. Many people still assume motherhood is a central role for women. Many see a critical and unique role for a mother which cannot be replicated by anyone else, even a child’s father.

As more women run for office and are elected, voters question how women can serve constituents and take care of family responsibilities at the same time. Women candidates wonder whether they should talk about their families and personal lives and how to do so without alienating voters.

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The purpose of this study was to gather data to advise candidates seeking executive office on how best to communicate about their families and personal lives. The goal is to provide women candidates with tools to respond to voter questions about their personal lives while showing they are up for the job. It's no small feat.

For nearly 20 years, the Barbara Lee Family Foundation has conducted research on the obstacles and opportunities women candidates encounter on the campaign trail. We have consistently found that voters hold women to a higher standard—and that remains true in this research. Women candidates and elected officials with children pay a price with voters who worry about how women can manage it all. At the same time, voters wonder if candidates who do not have children can understand their lives.

Fortunately, there are clear ways to navigate the terrain of talking about family life. Our findings take a comprehensive look at how voters judge a woman's family life and provide strategies on how candidates can connect with voters in a genuine and relatable way.

Six Key Findings

- 1 Voters express concern about the ability of women candidates and elected officials to balance the competing priorities of their families and their constituents. Further, voters worry about the effect of running for office on the candidate's children, on the candidate as a person, and on the job she or he will do in office.
- 2 It is important for women candidates—no matter their family situation—to talk to voters about their personal lives. When questions arise about a woman's family life and her ability to manage her personal life and professional responsibilities, she must respond. If voters' doubts and concerns go unaddressed it negatively impacts the candidate's perceived likability and effectiveness.
- 3 While men candidates are able to recover from critiques about their abilities to manage family and public office, the same is not true for all women candidates. Some women candidates do not gain back all the ground they lose after critiques.
- 4 It is more challenging to overcome critiques for a woman candidate or elected official who has young children, whether she is married or single. The age of the child or children matters a great deal. Voters perceive women with infants, young children, school-age children, and middle school or older children differently, and each scenario presents its own challenges. In general, having younger children is more challenging for voters to accept than having older children.
- 5 Voters will raise questions about a candidate's role as a mother as part of campaign discussions. They recognize a double standard for moms, who will get the most questions, but actively participate in it and are conscious of doing so.
- 6 Some voters also worry that a candidate or elected official who has never married and does not have children will not be able to truly understand the concerns of families.

Why It's Important for the Candidate to Respond

- Once a critique—a question, concern, or criticism—of an elected official's family life is part of the public discussion, voters expect the candidate to address it. Voters want a response from the candidate, even if they think the critique is unfair. For example, if a voter hears a question about how a woman with two young children can manage politics and her personal life, they then expect her to respond.
- Voters acknowledge that our culture places different expectations on women and on mothers, and at times, they question this double standard. However, even as they analyze the double standard, they still actively participate in perpetuating it.
- Women candidates who are mothers cannot ignore voters' concerns if they are parents of young children; they must publicly address it. Candidates gain the most points from voters by responding to questions about how they manage parenting and politics with answers that combine information about their personal lives, their accomplishments as leaders, and their stances on policy issues.
- An effective way for a candidate to respond to questions about her personal and family life is to talk about both her accomplishments and policy solutions. Talking about family-friendly policies such as education, safe communities, and paid sick days help voters see that a candidate understands them and reassures voters that she is working on issues they care about. One caveat: be cognizant of partisan cues in policies, as they can negatively sway voters. Voters are keenly aware when language veers into partisan areas such as raising the minimum wage.

Recommendations for Women Candidates: Messages That Work

Make it about the voters. Show how your experiences contribute to your work on behalf of voters.

Be matter-of-fact. When sharing details about your personal life, do not be defensive. Do not be negative. For example, avoid negative phrasing like this: "While I would love to say I am able to 'have it all' and be the perfect mother in addition to running for office, I must admit it is hard to juggle work and family."

Be confident. Acknowledge that all working families strive to manage children and work. Describe situations when you have successfully managed both parenting and politics. Avoid pointing out your weakness or failings, since voters take those statements literally. Instead, focus on statements like "families work in all kinds of different ways" and "time with my daughters is priceless."

Strike the right balance. Sharing too much information about your family situation hurts as much as sharing too little information. People need reassurance that you have your professional and personal life under control, rather than substantive examples of the trade-offs you make in order to manage both.

Acknowledge your support system. Talk about the roles that a spouse, partner, grandparent, and other adults play in your children's lives. At the same time, avoid statements that may sound as though you are uninvolved.

Avoid excuses. Reassure voters that your family life is under control and then pivot to your positions on family-friendly issues like education, safe communities, and paid sick days to show how your personal experience helps you understand what families are experiencing themselves. For example: "I want to ensure our policies reflect children's best interests—be it increased funding for our public schools or ensuring our community is safe."

"We don't make any males running for office explain what's happening with their children."

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

Understand perceptions about wealth. Voters believe anyone running for governor is likely to be wealthy. Voters reject a candidate "over-claiming" that they are in the same situation as ordinary voters. Empathy can easily go too far and feel inauthentic. For example, it is acceptable to talk about child care, but not nannies. For voters, having a nanny gives the perception of elitism and paints the candidate or elected official as out of touch.

Show, don't tell. It is more effective to describe concrete examples of your family life rather than vague assertions of "being there." For example, talk about how you spend time with your family, whether it is cooking dinner or giving your children a bath.

Be real. For parents, share snippets of your parenting experiences and explain your solutions for how to manage family and work. The most acceptable scenarios for voters are traditional childrearing tasks such as teaching children values or doing chores. Some voters see things like play dates and reading stories as frivolous. Voters want to know they have a full-time governor.

Give credit. For non-parents, assert that you value parents and appreciate how hard they work. Acknowledge how you engage with extended family, such as nieces or nephews, and how you support children in your community by volunteering and championing public education funding to show your commitment.

Get back to the issues. After sharing personal values and experiences related to family, show voters how you have and will continue to work on their behalf.

Recommendations for Women Candidates: Images that Work

We tested photographs of candidates with various family configurations: married mother, married father, single mother, single father, unmarried woman with no children, and unmarried man with no children. We included images of candidates of different races, as well as children of different ages. Voters judge candidates' images quickly and read a great deal into body language, clothing, and settings. See addendum on pages 18-19 for examples.

Be authentic. All candidates must strive for images that are professional, natural, and authentic, without looking too staged.

Keep it (somewhat) casual. Women candidates need to strike a balance between looking qualified and professional without looking too much like a politician. A posed shot in a casual setting is best to balance a woman's qualifications with her relatability.

Be careful about the kids. Voters are extremely sensitive to how a child is oriented in campaign photos. That is true with both male and female candidates. Without being prompted, voters notice if it seems like a candidate is paying too much attention to the child, or if the candidate seems too distracted from the child.

FAMILY MODELS

In focus groups, we explored voters' reactions to a divorced woman candidate, a lesbian candidate, and a single woman candidate who is dating. None of these scenarios proved to be the problem they may have been in the past – pointing to a change in the way voters perceive these types of family situations.

DIVORCED WOMAN: Voters deeply resented critiquing a candidate based on her divorce. Views on divorce have evolved with greater recognition that divorce is not uncommon.

LESBIAN: Voter attitudes about lesbians have evolved faster than attitudes about mothers. If a candidate is a mom and lesbian, people feel reassured that the mom role will be filled by her partner or spouse – taking some of the pressure off the candidate to be a good leader *and* a good parent.

DATING WOMAN: Voters do not want to know about a single woman candidate's dating life. They do not need a plan for how this will work. They believe that candidates should not have any time to date while running for or holding office. Voters are more concerned about how children will be affected by a woman's run for office, than they are about how her dating life will affect her run for office.

Key Takeaways about Specific Family Models

The pattern that emerges in the data is that women candidates start out strong, regardless of their family situation: a married mother, a single mother, or a never married woman with no children. When critiqued about their ability to manage their personal lives and the job of governor, each candidate loses ground with voters.

Responding effectively to critiques helps women candidates rebound in some cases. For the single mom and the unmarried woman with no children, responding to critiques helps her regain lost ground. That is not true for the candidate who is a married mom with a young child.

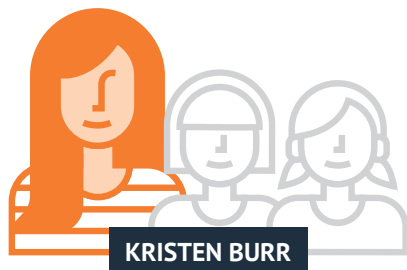
Fictional Candidates Tested



Married mother of a young son, age five



Never married, no children



Single mother of two young daughters, ages five and seven



Married father of two young daughters, ages five and seven

Family Models Tested

Voters were presented with profiles of fictional candidates for governor in the form of newspaper articles. We deliberately avoided references to a political party and issues that could signal partisanship, so the candidates appeared neutral.

After reviewing the newspaper articles describing each candidate, voters read critiques of each of the candidates which focused on their ability to manage their family life and at the same time be effective office holders. Then, the voters read how the candidates responded to the critiques. We tested two different types of responses:

The Accomplishments Response: These responses focus on the candidate's previous track record of results either in elected office or previous professional experience.

The Modern Partnership/Support Response: These responses acknowledge that the candidate's family support system is different from the traditional "nuclear family" of a dad, mom, and two kids. For example, this type of response could include childcare support from grandparents or other extended family.

How Specific Family Models Fared



MARRIED MOTHER

Amy Jones is introduced to voters as a married mother of a young elementary-aged son. Amy starts off strongest out of all the candidates on vote likelihood, effectiveness, and relatability, and women voters start out more likely than men voters to believe that she would be effective. However, she loses ground on the critiques about her family life, even though over three-quarters of voters say they have few doubts about her. She does not recover the ground she loses in effectiveness, relatability, and voters' likelihood to vote for her.

For this candidate, responding to critiques by discussing her accomplishments is stronger than responding by discussing her modern partnership or support system.

Nearly half of voters say that none of the comments that criticize Amy for running for governor with a little boy at home are effective. Of those who respond to the critiques, concern is expressed about how her very young son needs her most now and they question whether she can take on the pressures of being governor. The most powerful statements are less direct and forceful, and seem almost regretful about expressing the tension between her two roles. Those statements allow people to draw the conclusion rather than drawing it for them.

Examples of critiques:

- Did you see State Senator Amy Jones is running for governor? And she has that little boy! I am torn. I don't think being a family person herself will keep her from being a good leader. Most elected officials are married. But the downside is she has a very young son. These are the years when he needs his mother's presence.
- It does make me wonder how she will be able to raise her son if she is taking on the pressures of an office like the Governor. Yes, men do it all the time, but women are nurturers, and we are needed especially when children are very young.
- She needs super powers to handle things if she wants to be both a mom and a governor. It is a huge responsibility... It is a matter of what she is willing to give up because she cannot have both all the time.

The chart below shows candidate Amy Jones's responses to the most damaging critiques used against her. The What Works and What Falls Short columns provide insights into the language that is more effective with voters. **Amy rates more positively with voters when she uses language that is direct, specific, and focused on her commitment to the community.**

RESPONSE TESTED: ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I've been getting a lot of questions about my personal life. Yes, I do have a child and I have a job. I love my son and I love my job, and I'm good at it, too. I hear from my constituents every day that things are tough. That's why I can't wait until my son is older to serve. Our state has urgent problems that need solutions now. Through my work as a state senator, I have been able to help communities, and if I am elected Governor, I'm excited for the opportunities to help communities across our state. I'd like to refocus the conversation on issues that matter most to our communities, like good schools, jobs that pay well, and safe streets that help all our families.

WHAT WORKS

- ✓ "Yes, I do have a child and I have a job"
- ✓ "I hear from my constituents every day that things are tough"
- ✓ "Need solutions now" (solution language works well)
- ✓ "Help communities"
- ✓ "Good schools, jobs that pay well, and safe streets"

WHAT FALLS SHORT

- x "I'm excited" (may be too emotional)
- x "Urgent problems" (urgency may backfire by elevating voters' concerns about the woman's ability to deal with the problems)

RESPONSE TESTED: MODERN PARTNERSHIP

I've been getting a lot of questions about my personal life that I want to address. Families work in all kinds of different ways, but this works for us. Both my husband and I are equally responsible for raising our son. I kiss just as many boo boos as he does; he does just as much laundry as I do. We try to sit down for family meals so we can talk about our days and our son's day. I help with homework and my husband runs our son's bath. Our family makes time for play and stories and then my husband and I get back to our jobs after our son goes to sleep. That is how we make things work.

WHAT WORKS

- ✓ "Families work in all kinds of different ways"
- ✓ "I kiss just as many boo boos as he does"
- ✓ "We try to sit down for family meals"
- ✓ "Get back to our jobs after our son goes to sleep"

WHAT FALLS SHORT

- x "Our family makes time for play and stories" (Voters respond more to candidates talking about caregiving and teaching values than playing)



UNMARRIED WOMAN WITHOUT CHILDREN

Danielle Smith is introduced as a woman who is single and does not have any children. Danielle starts off as relatable and effective to nearly three-quarters of voters; the same number of voters also initially say they are likely to vote for her. Compared to the other candidates, Danielle starts off competitively on relatability and effectiveness. However, voters rate her slightly lower on their likelihood to vote for her than they do the two women candidates who have children.

Danielle loses ground with voters in the areas of relatability, effectiveness, and likelihood to vote for her when they hear critiques about her personal life — although over three-quarters say their doubts are not serious. By responding to the critiques, Danielle gains back some support, but not all. Danielle's responses help her pick up lost ground on all of the measures, most noticeably on vote likelihood, where she ends the survey higher than she started. There is no difference between the two responses tested (accomplishments response and a response talking about children), although the voter comments suggest that a candidate drawing parallels between parenting and engaging with other children falls flat. The experiences are not the same.

One-third of voters say none of the critical comments about Danielle's life are powerful. However, one-fifth of voters say a comment about how Danielle does not need to consider others resonates with them. This was followed by a comment that assumed she would not understand families' struggles and public schools.

Examples of critiques:

- It will be tough for her to really understand the struggles of providing for a large family or dealing with children's needs in local public schools.
- I've been following Danielle Smith's campaign and one thing that bothers me is that she's never been married and she doesn't have any kids. Because of this, her life can completely be about herself. Her needs and wants come first. When a person doesn't have to put others first, it can be challenging to realize what other people want and need.

The chart below shows candidate Danielle Smith's responses to the most damaging critiques used against her. The What Works and What Falls Short columns provide insights into the language that is more effective with voters. **Danielle rates more positively with voters when she uses language that shows she values parents and quality education for children.**

RESPONSE TESTED: TALKING ABOUT CHILDREN

I have been getting a lot of questions about how I can relate to people with kids. It is true that I don't have children of my own, but I want to make it clear that I value the mothers and fathers in our state. I see that having kids is hard work. I stand with them and the families in our communities by working for good paying jobs and high quality public schools. It took me five years, but I got a bill passed that made sure that all kids in our state have access to quality early education opportunities.

WHAT WORKS

- ✓ "I have been getting a lot of questions about how I can relate to people with kids"
- ✓ "I value the mothers and fathers in our state"
- ✓ "I see that having kids is hard work. I stand with them"
- ✓ "High quality public schools"
- ✓ "Quality early education opportunities"

WHAT FALLS SHORT

- x "I got a bill passed that made sure that all kids" (absolute language like "made sure" often does not work)
- x Slow start

RESPONSE TESTED: ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Though I do not have any children of my own, I am actively involved in the community and with children, volunteering in our local schools and as a mentor for Big Brothers, Big Sisters. I am fortunate enough to have an extended family of nieces and nephews, all of whom I love dearly. I think about my nieces and nephews and the young girl I mentor, as well as the other children in our community and their futures every day. I want to ensure our policies reflect their best interests — be it increased funding for our public schools or ensuring our community is safe.

WHAT WORKS

- ✓ "Mentor for Big Brothers, Big Sisters"
- ✓ "Extended family of nieces and nephews"
- ✓ "I want to ensure our policies reflect their best interests"
- ✓ "Ensuring our community is safe"

WHAT FALLS SHORT

- x "I am actively involved in the community"
- x "I think about my nieces and nephews and the young girl I mentor..."
(Voters do not accept analogies to parenting.)
- x Slow start



SINGLE MOM

Voters are introduced to Kristen Burr, a single mom of two daughters, who are ages five and seven. Over seven in 10 voters initially find Kristen relatable and would vote for her. Kristen starts off the survey competitive on relatability, effectiveness, and vote likelihood when compared to the other candidates. There is not much movement throughout the survey on Kristen's effectiveness; it is the most stable characteristic for her.

Kristen suffers the most from the critiques about her personal life: 12 percent of voters say the concerns about her family raise very serious doubts, and 35 percent of voters say very serious or serious doubts. While she does lose ground on relatability and effectiveness after the critiques, when she responds touting her accomplishments, she sees a boost that brings her back to her initial standing on both of these traits.

One-third of the voters say that none of the comments that criticize her family situation are powerful. Of those who pick a comment, the most powerful is the difficulty of governing while raising kids alone.

Compared to the other candidates, voters have the most doubts about the single mom. A solid majority of voters say they have modest, serious, or very serious doubts about the single mother's ability to do the job.

Examples of critique:

- I think she is able to be governor and raise her children at the same time. It is going to be REALLY hard though.
- I saw another post today about the Kristen Burr campaign for governor. She is a single mom who has young kids, and these are the ages that kids are so demanding. I worry that her kids need more attention now.

The chart below shows candidate Kristen Burr's responses to the most damaging critiques used against her. The What Works and What Falls Short columns provide insights into the language that is more effective with voters. **Kristen rates more positively with voters when she uses language that acknowledges that all families manage work and home priorities and she pivots to discussing family-friendly issues like paid sick days.**

RESPONSE TESTED: ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I've been getting a lot of questions about my personal life. I have found that as a single mom, life itself involves constantly managing work and family priorities. That's why I support paid sick days for all families, including those taking care of a sick child, spouse, or parent, and whether they are married or unmarried, or with and without children. That is why I led the fight to raise the minimum wage and sponsored legislation to improve the quality of retirement savings plans. I admit, it is difficult to raise children on my own, but mine is not the only family doing this juggling act of life and work. This is something most families experience.

WHAT WORKS

- ✓ "Life itself involves constantly managing work and family priorities"
- ✓ "Support paid sick days for all families"
- ✓ "Married or unmarried, or with and without children"
- ✓ "It is difficult to raise children on my own"
- ✓ "Juggling act of life and work"
- ✓ The combination of personal experience and policy works

WHAT FALLS SHORT

- x "Led the fight to raise the minimum wage"
(This policy is more controversial.)

RESPONSE TESTED: SUPPORT SYSTEM

I've been getting a lot of questions about my personal life, so I want to share with you how I raise my children as a single mom. I am present for them, whether that is playing make believe, enforcing our family rules, or baking banana bread together. But as a state senator I have a job to do, too, and that sometimes takes me away from my daughters. Thankfully, I have wonderful parents who are able to step in and help. They regularly watch my kids after school and on weekends when I am working. With their help, I care for my family and get things done for all the families in the state.

WHAT WORKS

- ✓ "how I raise my children as a single mom"
- ✓ "I have a job to do, too"
- ✓ "takes me away from my daughters"
- ✓ "watch my kids after school and on weekends when I am working"

WHAT FALLS SHORT

x Too much "I"



MARRIED FATHER

As a control in this study, we introduced candidate Tom Pavey as a married father of two young daughters who attend kindergarten and second grade at a local school. Initially, Tom starts out the survey rated lowest of all the candidates tested on relatability, effectiveness, and vote likelihood. It really pays off for Tom to respond to the critiques that question his ability to parent and govern. His are the strongest out of all the responses we tested, with the highest relatability and effectiveness ratings.

Unlike the women candidates, Tom is rated higher at the end of the survey than he was at the beginning on all three measurements. Voters rated his responses as most convincing, more so than any of the responses for any of the women candidates, showing it is harder for women to address these concerns.

While the mixture of personal experience, accomplishments, and fighting for the voters works well in Tom's responses, the biographical elements tend to fall flat. Women voters respond with more intensity than men to the response that talks about fighting for voters and includes his family-friendly accomplishments.

Examples of critiques:

- Listen, I won't stop him or anyone else from serving our state if they have the passion for it. Though half of my heart says he should have prioritized his children first.
- I saw Tom Pavey was going to be at a candidate forum at our library next week. I am so busy but I want to go so I can ask him what his motivations for running for office are while his two young daughters need him the most.
- I do think a candidate with grown children is preferable. Being a governor is a really important job and one that requires a candidate's complete focus.

RESPONSE TESTED: MODERN PARTNERSHIP

I've been getting a lot of questions about my personal life. Like a lot of families today, my wife and I both work. When I was growing up in the 1970s, only about one in three people who worked outside the home was a woman. Today, those numbers are closer to 50/50. With both of us juggling family and work, time with our daughters is priceless. I play with my children, I make it a point to be home by dinner, and I worry about things like their sore throats and the quality of their schools. I think it is important to be the best dad I can be while being the best governor I can be.

WHAT WORKS

- ✓ "My wife and I both work"
- ✓ "Those numbers are closer to 50/50"
- ✓ "Time with our daughters is priceless"
- ✓ "Quality of their schools"
- ✓ "Best dad I can be"
- ✓ This integrates policies and real life situations.
- ✓ This illustrates the candidate's real life without insinuating it is identical to constituents' lives.

WHAT FALLS SHORT

x Nothing

RESPONSE TESTED: ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I've been getting a lot of questions about my personal life. My wife and I have two amazing daughters and they are teaching me so much about what our state needs. There were so many days when one of us needed to stay home with a sick child, especially when our girls were babies. That is why I co-sponsored and passed paid sick days, so parents don't have to choose between staying home with a sick child or losing their jobs. I want to be Governor so I can keep fighting for you.

WHAT WORKS

- ✓ "Teaching me so much about what our state needs"
- ✓ "Stay home with a sick child"
- ✓ "Co-sponsored and passed paid sick days"
- ✓ "Parents don't have to choose between staying home with a sick child or losing their jobs"

WHAT FALLS SHORT

- x Slow start

Conclusion

The concept of "family" in the United States has evolved over time, with women increasingly participating in the workforce and children as likely to be born to single-parent households as they are to two parent households. Times, they are changing. While the definition of what makes a family has changed, the way voters view a woman candidate's ability to manage her personal life and public office has not kept pace. Voters still raise questions and express concerns about whether a woman will be able to address their interests, especially if she has young children.

This research reinforces what Barbara Lee Family Foundation findings have made clear for nearly 20 years: Voters hold women candidates to higher standards. That remains true when it comes to women candidates talking about their personal lives—whether they are married or dating, have children or not—and political careers. Our findings reflect the complex feelings voters have about their expectations of women on and off the campaign trail—and the same is not true for men.

Women can successfully navigate these complexities by addressing questions about their family lives directly and confidently. Then they must move on to talk about the public policy issues that matter to their constituents.

For women candidates and elected officials, the personal really is political.

Methodology

FOCUS GROUPS

Lake Research Partners and Chesapeake Beach Consulting conducted 11 focus groups with men and women in March and April of 2016 segmented as follows:

Cleveland, OH March 21	White Women Homemakers
	Mixed Minority Men
Minneapolis, MN March 22	White Senior Women
	Millennial Women
	White Men with Children Younger than 5
Atlanta, GA April 7	African American Women
	White Men
Kansas City, MO April 14	White Women Workers Outside the Home
	Millennial Men
Denver, CO April 18	White Women with Children Younger than 5
	Latinas

Participants were recruited to reflect a mix of age, marital status, parental status, income, and education.

Bulletin Boards

Online bulletin board groups include a larger number of respondents who participate in the group over a three-day period. Participants are asked to log in twice a day to answer questions, respond to other participants' posts, and view and respond to stimuli. These groups allow for an iterative process where participants respond to the discussion topics and stimuli over a short period of time.

The groups were held May 17 through the 19 among 60 recruited respondents nationwide. The groups were split by gender among registered and likely 2016 voters ages 25 to 50. We recruited a mix of education, marital status, parental status, employment status, occupation, and party identifications, excluding strong partisans.

Online Dial Survey

Lake Research Partners and Chesapeake Beach Consulting designed and administered this survey that was conducted online from August 1 – August 9, 2016. The survey reached a total of 1,000 likely 2016 voters nationwide with oversamples of 100 African Americans, 100 Latinos, 100 millennials, and 100 parents with children under five.

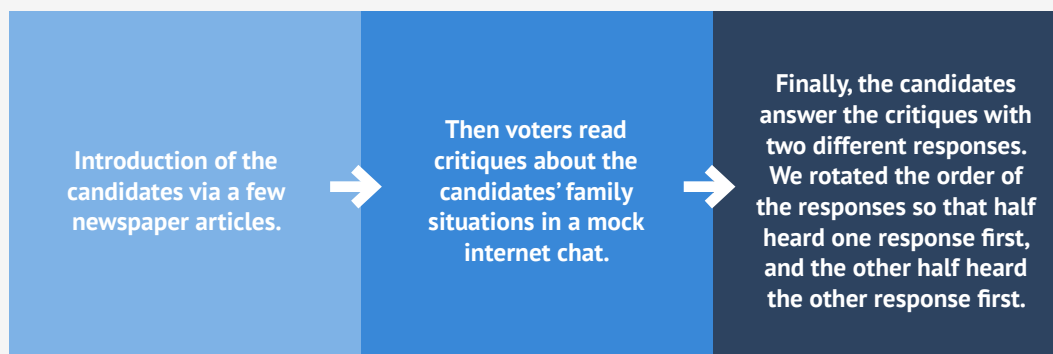
The sample was drawn from an online panel and respondents were screened to be registered, likely 2016 voters. The data were weighted slightly by gender, age, region, race, party identification, and education to reflect the attributes of the actual population. The oversamples were weighted slightly by gender, age, race, party identification and education to reflect the attributes of the actual population and were weighted down to reflect their actual proportion among the total population.

The margin of error for the total sample is +/-3.1%.

We divided this survey into thirds:

- 1 Group A heard about married dad Tom Pavey and married mom Amy Jones
- 2 Group B heard about married dad Tom Pavey and unmarried, childless Danielle Smith
- 3 Group C heard about married dad Tom Pavey and single mom Kristen Burr

Order of Stimuli Tested



Addendum I: Recommendations for Women Candidates

We tested photographs of candidates with various family configurations: married mother, married father, single mother, single father, unmarried woman with no children, and unmarried man with no children. We included images of candidates of different races, as well as children of different ages. Voters judge candidates' images quickly and read a great deal into body language, clothing, and settings.

IMAGES THAT WORK



Images that work strike the right balance of authenticity, formality, and the interaction between the candidate and the child.

IMAGES THAT DON'T WORK



Images that don't work fail because they look too staged, are too casual, and either center the child too much, or seem like the candidate is ignoring the child.



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