

SPEAKING WITH AUTHORITY

*From Economic Security
to National Security*

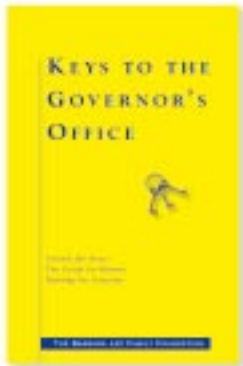


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FOREWORD

I believe that now more than ever, women have a key role to play in speaking out to improve the lives of others, at home and around the world. I also believe that the best way to do this is through elective office.

A new urgency emerged from September 11, one in which we recognize the need to address terrorism and the causes of terrorism in addition to the economy, education and the other issues on our national agenda. We must elect leaders who have the compassion and wisdom and courage to create a new world - free of violence, hatred and inequality.

As our research shows, women offer different skills and perspectives during times of crisis. That is why I am working to elect more women to public office. That is why I commissioned this research.

Speaking With Authority: From Economic Security to National Security is intended to help women speak out on key voter issues in a difficult environment for female candidates. This guide provides specific advice on connecting with voters about their concerns over jobs and personal security.

The work builds on our previous guide for female candidates, *Keys to the Governor's Office*, which is the most comprehensive research ever conducted about women running for executive political office.

Women across the country are enthusiastically using "our little yellow book" to structure their campaigns, hone their messages and plan their career tracks.

Our poll results are not intended to substitute for a candidate's personal position on issues. To the contrary, we want more women to win public office so they can exercise their power to change the status quo, not adapt to it.

We hope that our new research will prove just as useful. Read it and share it with a woman you would like to see run for higher office.

Only when women achieve critical mass in positions of leadership will our nation be as strong in practice as in promise. Together we can elect more women to high political office and in the process, create a better democracy and a better world.

Barbara Lee

The Barbara Lee Family Foundation

Cambridge, Massachusetts

March 15, 2002

INTRODUCTION

On September 11th, everything changed. Plans. Habits. Priorities. Lifelong assumptions were opened to reevaluation. Only today are we fully realizing the impact the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, DC, have had on our thinking.

What, then, is the effect of 9/11 on women's candidacies for public office, we wondered? How will women fare in a political climate that is infused with anxiety about personal and national security? Will the recession add to the traditional hurdles women candidates face when dealing with the economy? How will these two mega-issues interact in voters' calculations?

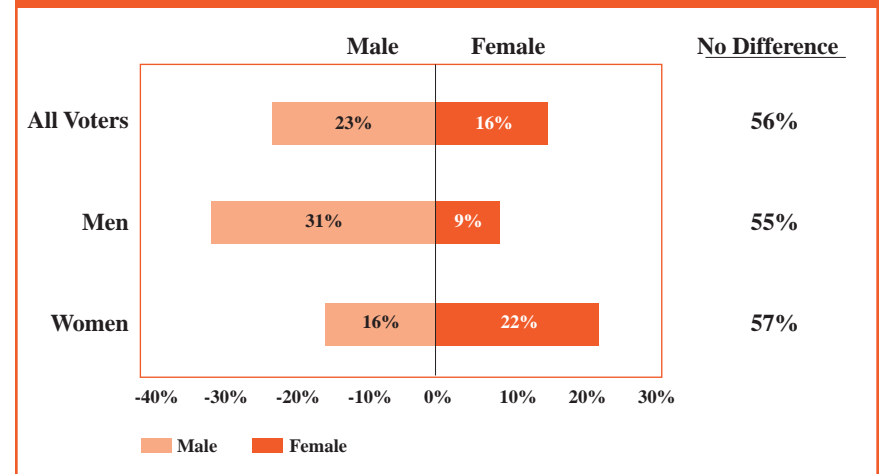
Instinctively we suspected that the post-9/11 political environment would be less hospitable to women. A great deal of research – including our own¹ – has documented the challenge women face speaking authoritatively on: financial issues, war, military strategy and international policy. None of these issues have ever been viewed as “natural” subjects for women. We wanted to know how today's environment would affect voters' perceptions of women's candidacies.

Between December 10 – 13 we conducted a national survey to explore these issues and identify the specific hurdles women face in the 2002 elections.² In order to make our work immediately useful to candidates and their campaigns, we have set forth the significant findings, the policy approaches and specific “messages” that will enable women to advance clear and compelling ideas in language that conveys authority and instills voter confidence.

The notions that women policymakers are less well equipped to manage a faltering economy or resolve international conflict are based on old but persistent biases. When voters are asked about issues that concern them – whether that concern is job security, terrorism, education or social security – men favor a male candidate to do a better job of dealing with the problem by 22 points, while women give female candidates only a slight, 6-point advantage in dealing with the issue.

With this research we aim to reduce this burden on women candidates and provide the tools for addressing economic and national security issues directly, persuasively, authoritatively and – most importantly – successfully – in their campaigns.

OVERALL, VOTERS FAVOR MALE CANDIDATES BY 7 POINTS. MEN FAVOR A MALE CANDIDATE BY 22 POINTS, WHILE WOMEN GIVE FEMALE CANDIDATES ONLY A 6 POINT ADVANTAGE IN DEALING WITH THEIR ISSUES OF CONCERN.



Democratic men and independent men prefer a male by 17 and 15 points, respectively; Republican men prefer a male by 29 points; Democratic women and independent women prefer a female by 15 points; and Republican women prefer a male by 8 points.

¹ In 2001, the Barbara Lee Family Foundation released “Keys to the Governor’s Office,” a comprehensive guide that examined the relationship between gender and campaigning for executive office.

² The Barbara Lee Family Foundation commissioned Democrat Celinda Lake from Lake, Snell, Perry & Associates (LSPA), in consultation with Republican Linda DiVall from American Viewpoint, Inc., and Democrat Mary Hughes from Staton & Hughes to conduct a multi-part project on women running for governor. LSPA and American Viewpoint designed and administered a telephone survey from **December 10-13, 2001**. The survey included 1,000 likely voters age 18 and over. Telephone numbers for the survey were drawn from a random digit dial sample, and the sample were stratified geographically by state based on the distribution of registered likely voters in each state. The margin of sampling error for the total sample is +/- 3.1 percentage points. The margin of sampling error for subgroups is greater than the margin of error for the entire sample.

1 NATIONAL SECURITY



VOTER GENDER BIASES: WHAT ARE VOTERS THINKING?

In the current environment, male and female voters have the same agenda. Jobs and the economy, terrorism and national security are the dominant issues.

On the issues of terrorism and military response, both men and women voters listen for male voices. However, female candidates are persuasive when they talk about safety, preparedness and keeping voters informed.

Furthermore, female candidates benefit from talking about national security both as a domestic issue and as an international issue. Both male and female voters want to get back to a domestic agenda – good news for women, who are stronger on such issues as education and health care.

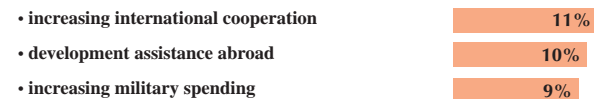
WHICH “NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES” GIVE WOMEN CANDIDATES THE GREATEST CREDIBILITY?

VOTERS’ TOP PRIORITIES IN DEALING WITH LONG-TERM NATIONAL SECURITY

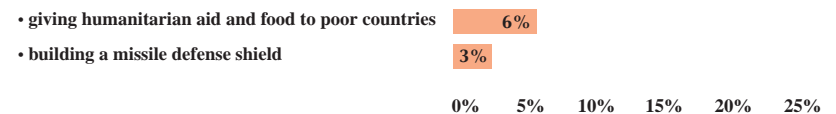
1. Voters’ top priorities in dealing with long-term national security are:



2. Voters’ other priorities include:



3. All voters are least concerned with:



NATIONAL SECURITY MESSAGES THAT WORK

We tested more than 20 messages on national security to understand what works best for women.

The three key “messages” from female candidates that are the most believable *and* convincing to voters revolve around public health, infrastructure and overall homeland security:

- “Since September 11, public health and infrastructure throughout the country must be higher priorities. We need to adequately fund

the upgrading of state and local health departments, improve lab security and stockpile antibiotics. We also need to create specialized military and law enforcement teams to respond to bioterrorism attacks and to keep the public informed.”

(85% of women and 74% of men found this somewhat or very **believable** coming from a female candidate; 83% of women and 75% of men found this to be somewhat or very **convincing** coming from a female candidate.)

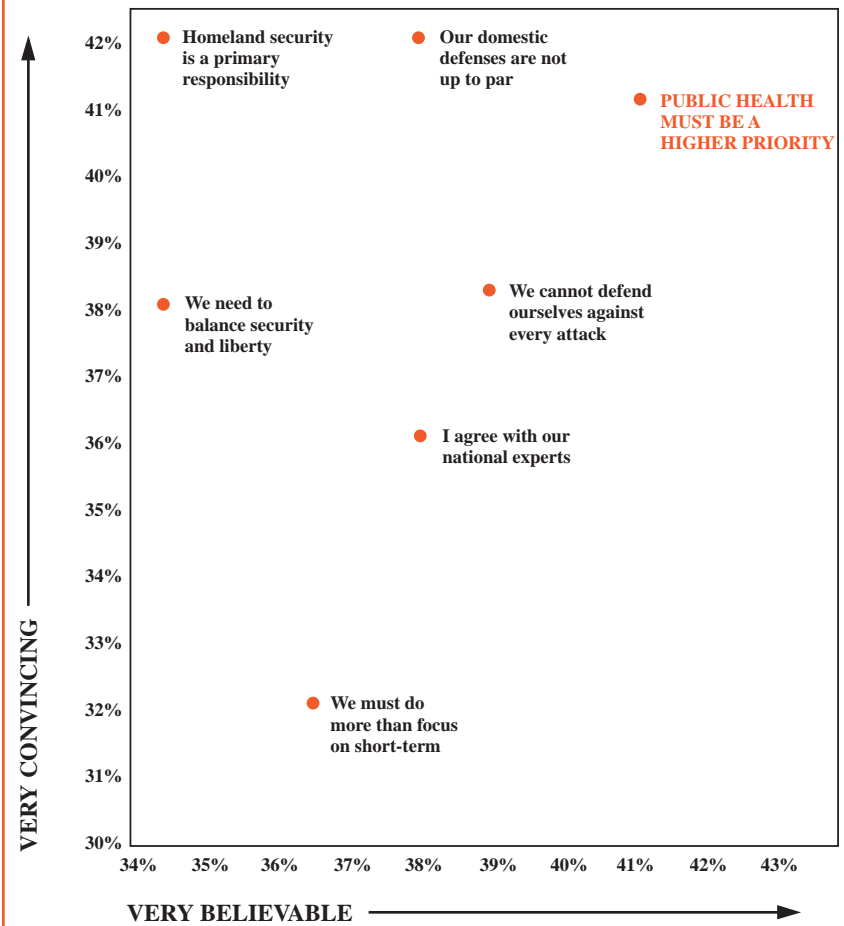
- “Homeland security is a primary responsibility of our national government. Better intelligence, cooperation, sharing of information and increased monitoring are all required. Currently federal responsibility for terrorism is divided among more than 40 offices, which spend more than \$11 billion a year. We need to enforce accountability and ensure that we are prepared to meet new threats to our security.”

(84% of women and 72% of men found this somewhat or very **believable** coming from a female candidate; 80% of women and 75% of men found this to be somewhat or very **convincing** coming from a female candidate.)

- “Many of us have heard about domestic defenses that are not up to par. Public health agencies say they need to identify biological threats and treat those affected should those threats materialize. The FBI is stretched thin and needs more officers to stop terrorists before they strike. We need more food inspectors. We need proper equipment to protect our mail. Finally, we need more Coast Guard cutters patrolling our shores, and inspection agents should be stationed around the clock at every border point.”

(80% of women and 75% of men found this somewhat or very **believable** coming from a female candidate; 77% of women and 74% of men found this to be somewhat or very **convincing** coming from a female candidate.)

THE MESSAGES THAT ARE MOST CONVINCING AND BELIEVABLE FOR VOTERS AND THOSE THAT PROMPT THEM TO VOTE FOR A WOMAN CANDIDATE ARE PUBLIC HEALTH AND HOMELAND SECURITY.



THE BEST LANGUAGE FOR WOMEN CANDIDATES SPEAKING ON NATIONAL SECURITY

Our data reveals that across issue areas, women close the voter “confidence gap” with male candidates by developing messages about cooperation and safety, public health and preparedness. For all of the suggested messages, your language should be inclusive, specific and have a local plan and/or examples.

Specific language and phrases that resonate with voters are detailed on the opposite page.

NATIONAL SECURITY LANGUAGE THAT IS LEAST EFFECTIVE FOR FEMALE CANDIDATES

The national security issues on which voters find women most persuasive – providing humanitarian aid and food to poor countries, and building democracy and economic opportunities abroad – are also the lowest priorities for voters. Voters view men as strongest on increasing military spending for conflicts abroad and creating a missile defense shield, but these are also not among voters’ top priorities. (See chart on page 5)

Therefore, female candidates should not lead with humanitarian messages and understand they have less credibility on messages that focus on military “toughness” than they have on cooperation and consensus.

The research also reveals that specific **language** that focuses on military defense, terrorism, toughness and decisiveness puts women at a disadvantage. Few voters believe women on these topics. Candidates should therefore avoid “hawkish” language such as:

- “We need to go after the terrorists themselves and defeat them any way possible.”
- “We should do whatever it takes, even if it means going into Iran or Iraq to hunt down terrorists.”

A focus on solutions, the impact on people at home and a “consensus-building” leadership style are most convincing and believable to voters.

FOR CANDIDATES

1. Cooperation and Communication

- “We need to **develop consensus on a strategic plan** that will keep us safe.”
- “We have to **think of national security both here and abroad.**”
- “All members of the **intelligence community must work together** and **act collectively** to strengthen our security.”
- “We need to **increase security at airports, government sites, power plants** and other **terrorist targets.**”

2. Public Health Urgency / Emergency

- “We need to create **specialized teams to respond to bioterrorism** attacks and to **keep the public informed.**”
- “**Public health infrastructure throughout the country must be a higher priority.** We need to upgrade state and local health departments and stockpile antibiotics.”
- “We need more **food inspectors**; we need **proper equipment** to protect our mail.”
- “We need to ensure that security agencies like the **FBI** and the **Coast Guard have the resources** they need to stop terrorists before they strike.”

3. Preparedness: Are We Ready?

- “Part of our long-term national security must include **taking specific precautions to defend potential terrorist targets.**”
- “We need to **increase preparedness for bioterrorism** and **increase security around potential biological attacks.**”
- “We need to adequately fund state and local governments so they are **prepared for potential emergencies**, even evacuations.”

2 ECONOMIC SECURITY



VOTER GENDER BIASES: WHAT ARE VOTERS THINKING?

While one in five voters is looking for a candidate whose top priority is security and terrorism, half are looking for someone focused on economic and domestic issues. This bodes well for female candidates, who are competitive with male candidates on homefront issues and finances.

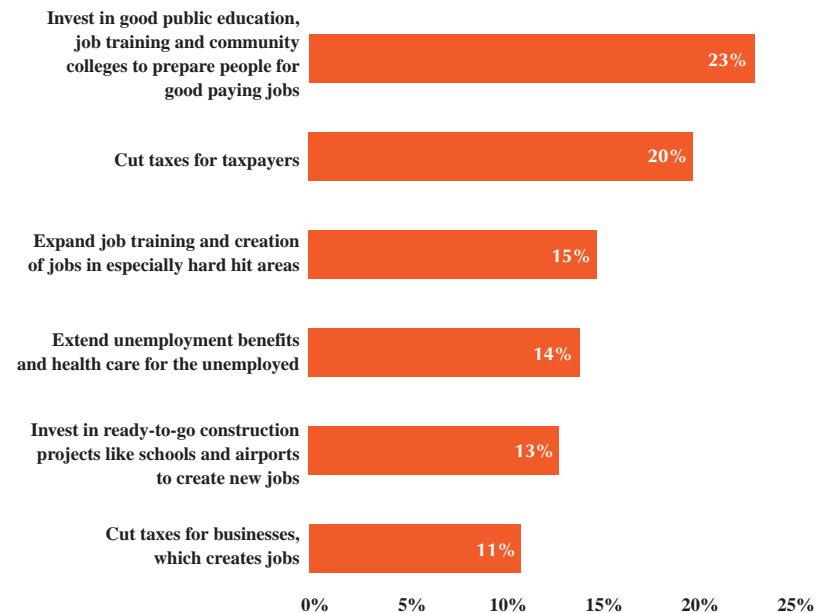
As with national security, some approaches give women greater credibility than others. Women voters believe that female candidates know firsthand the hardships of the economy. Male voters are unwilling to concede this to female candidates.

WHICH "ECONOMIC ISSUES" GIVE WOMEN CANDIDATES THE GREATEST CREDIBILITY?

Voters have a multi-faceted and sometimes conflicting agenda for dealing with the economy. Their top priorities are investing in education and cutting taxes. Men and women voters show little difference in their priorities.

Democratic women are most credible when talking about education and job training (solutions to unemployment), while Republican women have voters' confidence on tax cuts.

VOTERS HAVE A DIFFUSE AGENDA FOR DEALING WITH THE ECONOMY. THEIR TOP PRIORITIES ARE INVESTING IN EDUCATION AND CUTTING TAXES. MEN AND WOMEN VOTERS HAVE LITTLE DIFFERENCE IN THEIR PRIORITIES.



ECONOMIC MESSAGES THAT WORK

The strongest economic messages for both Democratic and Republican female candidates are about helping people living in distressed economic areas and understanding the problems of unemployed workers and families, such as rising health care costs.

However, when female candidates talk about the *solutions* to unemployment and a sagging economy, they must remember that on the economic agenda, Party affiliation matters to voters more than gender. Voters perceive Republican women as making a stronger case than Democratic women on cutting taxes, and Democratic women as making a stronger case than Republican women on investing in education and unemployment.

DEMOCRATIC MESSAGE

“We need an economic stimulus package that puts helping families that have been hit by the recession and job creation first. We need to invest in job training and create jobs in hard hit areas. We need to delay the large tax cuts passed last year for the wealthiest 1% and keep the budget from sinking into long-term deficits and hurting the economy. We should use the money instead to extend unemployment benefits and help the unemployed pay for health care benefits and provide rebates to those who did not get them. We need to speed up ready-to-go construction programs like airport security and school construction to create jobs.”

(75% of all women and 65% of all men find this statement convincing when coming from a **female candidate**; 72% of women and 68% of men find this statement convincing when coming from a **male candidate**.)

REPUBLICAN MESSAGE

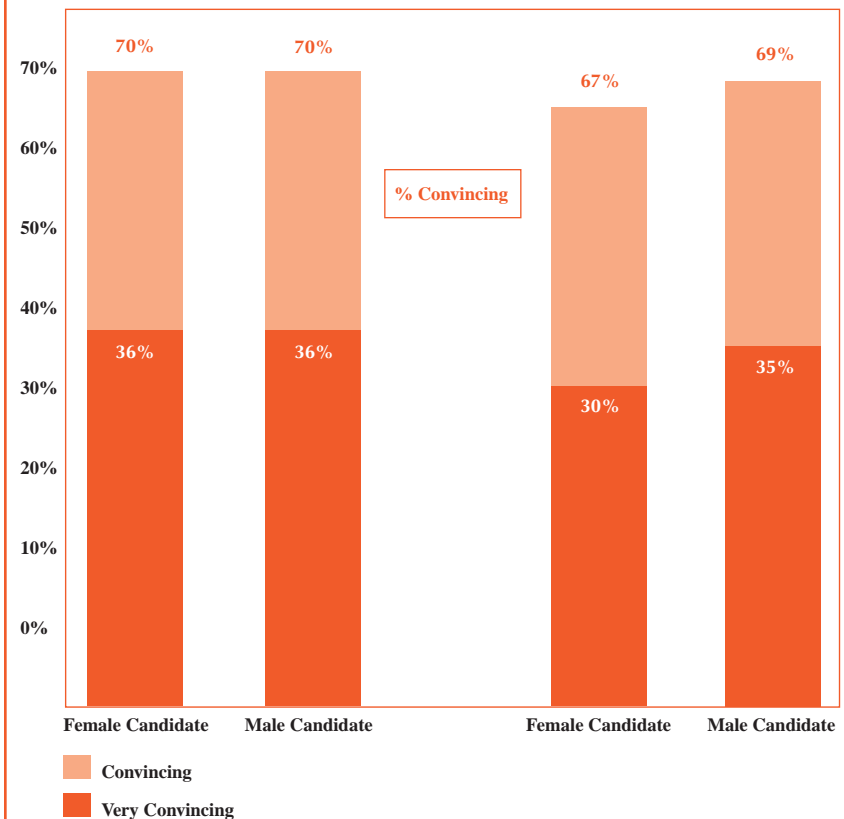
“We need an economic stimulus package that will jump start the economy and help businesses, including small businesses, create jobs. We need to expand on the tax cuts passed last year in order to give people and companies back their money so that they can invest it in our economy. There needs to be: tax rebates of up to \$600 for many families who didn’t qualify for the earlier rebate plan; additional tax cuts to get our economy moving, including tax cuts for businesses hard hit by September 11th who need money to invest and create jobs; and incentives to cut costs for those who create new jobs and keep people employed.”

(71% of all women and 63% of all men find this statement convincing when coming from a **female candidate**; 66% of women and 73% of men find this statement convincing when coming from a **male candidate**.)

BOTH THE REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC ECONOMIC MESSAGES ARE AS STRONG FOR FEMALE CANDIDATES AS THEY ARE FOR MALE CANDIDATES, ALTHOUGH THE REPUBLICAN MESSAGE IS SLIGHTLY STRONGER COMING FROM A MALE CANDIDATE.

DEMOCRATIC MESSAGE :
We need an economic stimulus package that puts helping families and job creation first.

REPUBLICAN MESSAGE:
We need an economic stimulus package that will jump start the economy and help businesses create jobs.



THE BEST LANGUAGE FOR WOMEN CANDIDATES SPEAKING ON THE ECONOMY

While the persuasiveness of specific economic proposals varies depending on partisanship, female candidates gain credibility by focusing on the health or education consequences of an economic proposal. Retirement and Social Security issues also have particular resonance with voters.

When speaking about these issues, you should be mindful of mentioning specific industries and hard hit areas in your own state. For instance, show how investing in education pays off.

Voters appreciate that national security is a function of both national defense and domestic economic strength.

ECONOMIC LANGUAGE THAT IS LEAST EFFECTIVE FOR FEMALE CANDIDATES

The messages that are least convincing and on which women have the least credibility are those that debate specific tax provisions and fiscal protections.

For instance, since Party affiliation trumps gender when talking about the economy, Democratic women should avoid talking about expanding the tax cuts of last year.

Republican and Democratic women can successfully enter the economic debate indirectly and with specific proposals – such as those that address the impact on families of economic decline, education and pocketbook economics. Female candidates are less credible to voters when they talk about the macro-economics of job creation.

FOR CANDIDATES

1. Democratic Language and Phrases

- “If economic conditions worsen, millions of additional working families will face unemployment and lose their health care coverage. We need to **extend unemployment benefits** and help families keep their **health care coverage.**”
- “We need to invest in **job training programs** as a solution to unemployment.”
- “Corporate lobbyists and big wealthy corporations are **taking advantage of the recession** and the events of September. **Rather than giving them tax breaks,** we need to think about **unemployment** and **health benefits** for laid-off workers and their families.”

2. Republican Language and Phrases

- “If economic conditions worsen, millions of additional working **families will face unemployment and lose their health care coverage.** We need to **invest in tax incentives** to create jobs now.”
- “We need to **expand on the tax cuts** passed last year in order to give people and companies back their money so that they can **invest it in our economy.**”

3. Bipartisan Language and Phrases:

- “We need to build a strong nation here at home with a **well-educated, secure citizenry** and provide a **secure future for our children and our families.**”
- “We need to **create good paying jobs, particularly in economically hard hit areas.**”
- “**True national security will not only come from anti-terrorism and military defense, but from investing at home in good paying jobs, good schools and health care.**”

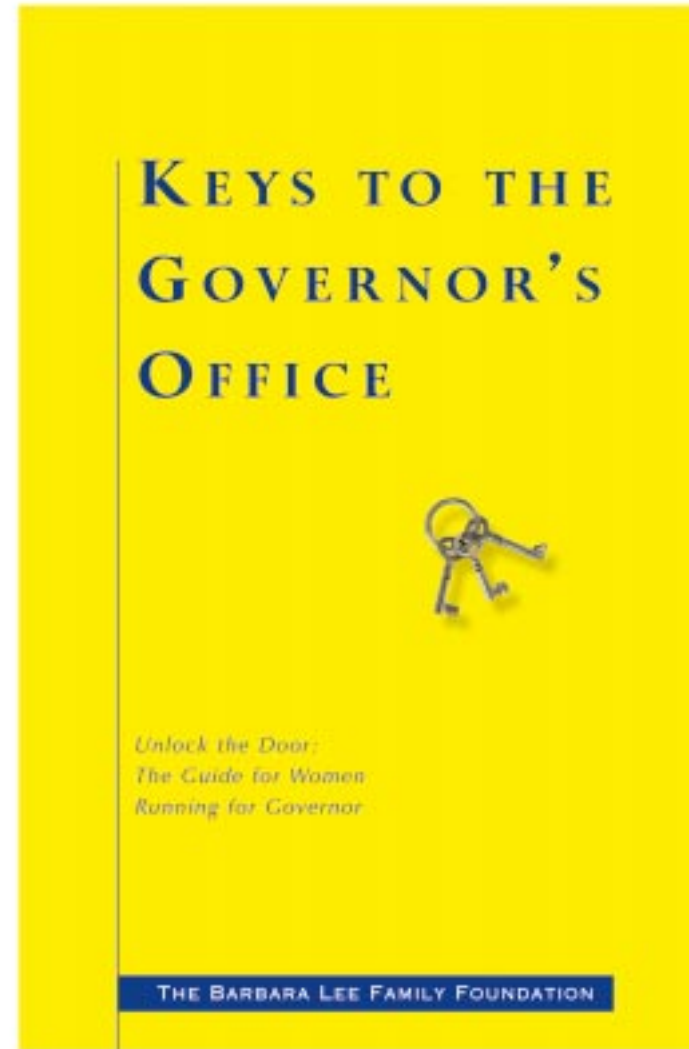
CONCLUSION

The results of our survey confirm that the dominant issues in the current environment make it tougher for female candidates to gain voter confidence. National security, in particular, is a challenging issue for female candidates, especially among male voters.

As we go to print, voter anxiety about terrorist threats and national security is taking a back seat to concern over the economy. However, should the country once again face the kinds of threats we faced in 2001, many of the same concerns will likely move to the forefront of voters' minds once again.

As detailed in this guide, female candidates can level the playing field by honing in on specific messages and language when speaking on national security issues and the economy. When voters hear those messages from female candidates, they *can* be competitive with their male opponents in discussing both national security and the economy.

Even if voters' gender biases will be with us for a while, women candidates can employ strategies to help them succeed in the short run and broaden voter perceptions of their expertise over the long run.



For more information about how to order our first publication, *Keys to the Governor's Office*, please e-mail us at ElectWomenGovs@aol.com

FOR CANDIDATES: NATIONAL SECURITY TALKING POINTS

1. Cooperation and Communication

- "We need to **develop consensus on a strategic plan** that will keep us safe."
- "We have to **think of national security both here and abroad.**"
- "All members of the **intelligence community must work together** and **act collectively** to strengthen our security."
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2. Public Health Urgency / Emergency

- "We need to create **specialized teams to respond to bioterrorism** attacks and to **keep the public informed.**"
- "**Public health infrastructure throughout the country must be a higher priority.** We need to upgrade state and local health departments and stockpile antibiotics."
- "We need more **food inspectors**; we need **proper equipment** to protect our mail."
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3. Preparedness: Are We Ready?

- "Part of our long-term national security must include **taking specific precautions to defend potential terrorist targets.**"
- "We need to **increase preparedness for bioterrorism** and **increase security around potential biological attacks.**"
- "We need to adequately fund state and local governments so they are **prepared for potential emergencies**, even evacuations."

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ABOUT THE BARBARA LEE FAMILY FOUNDATION

The mission of the Barbara Lee Family Foundation is to strengthen democracy by advancing women’s leadership in society. To that end, the Foundation has initiated and underwritten projects that demonstrate the power of women and the extraordinary talent they represent.

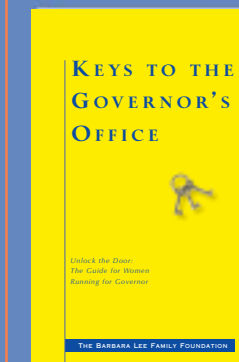
Among these are The Women’s Appointment Project, co-sponsored with National Council of Women’s Organizations and the National Women’s Political Caucus; Women’s eNews, a project of National Organization for Women Legal Defense and Education Fund; the Million Mom March; The Boston Women’s Memorial; and, a Center for American Women in Politics study of women legislators’ impact on public policy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

please visit us at:
www.barbaraleefoundation.org

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