

# Relaunch: Strategies for African American Women After an Electoral Loss





# Key Findings



Women of color candidates who lose their races are perceived favorably and as qualified. Democrats and African American voters are particularly responsive to African American women candidates who lose.

An African American woman who loses is perceived more favorably than she is perceived to be qualified. This pattern also holds for a Latina woman who loses and a Democratic woman who loses.[1]

The best-testing statements focus on listening to voters, continuing to fight for her ideals, and getting things done for the community based on their needs.

Women voters and Democrats really respond to messaging from an African American woman who loses.

[1] While the survey did not specify party identification for an African American woman or a Latina woman, it is clear that survey respondents assumed these candidates were Democrats.



# Voter Attitudes toward African American Women Candidates Who Lose

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

In the survey, we segmented the sample so that respondents reacted to different kinds of women candidates. A segment of the sample reacted to an African American woman. This fictional candidate was not identified with a partisan affiliation, although in the data there is evidence that survey respondents assumed the African American woman is a Democrat. We also tested a Latina woman candidate, a Democratic women candidate, a Republican woman candidate, as well as a Democratic man and a Republican man as a control.

Survey respondents heard a short description of one of the types of candidates described above, and then they were asked to rate the candidate on how favorable they feel toward the candidate and how qualified the candidate seems.

Description of African American candidate who lost: Jada Martin, an African American state senator, lost her election to Joe Allen after campaigning on access to affordable health care, bringing good-paying jobs to the state, and making the state a leader in public education.

Favorability Rating			Qualified Rating		
(0-100 Scale)	% Rated "100" Very Favorable	% Rated "51-100" Favorable		% Rated "100" Very Qualified	% Rated "51-100" Qualified
African Am. woman	<b>23</b>	<b>74</b>	Democratic man	21	60
Democratic man	23	63	Republican woman	20	55
Democratic woman	23	63	African Am. woman	<b>19</b>	<b>67</b>
Republican woman	23	56	Democratic woman	18	58
Latina woman	20	74	Latina woman	16	62
Republican man	17	51	Republican man	13	49

Jada Martin, an African American woman who loses her race, is quite popular across the board, and extremely popular among voters of color. Voters are quite favorable toward Jada Martin, and they believe she is qualified, too. However, an African American woman is more likely to be perceived favorably than she is to be perceived as qualified: she is seen as 7 points more favorable (74%) than qualified (67%).

- Nearly three-quarters (74%) rate Jada Martin 51-100 on favorability, with 23% who rate her 100/very favorable. Only 12% are unfavorable, with 14% neutral.
- Two-thirds rate her qualified (67% rate 51-100), with 19% who rate her 100/very qualified. Only 11% say she is not qualified, and 22% are neutral.

# Subgroup Analysis

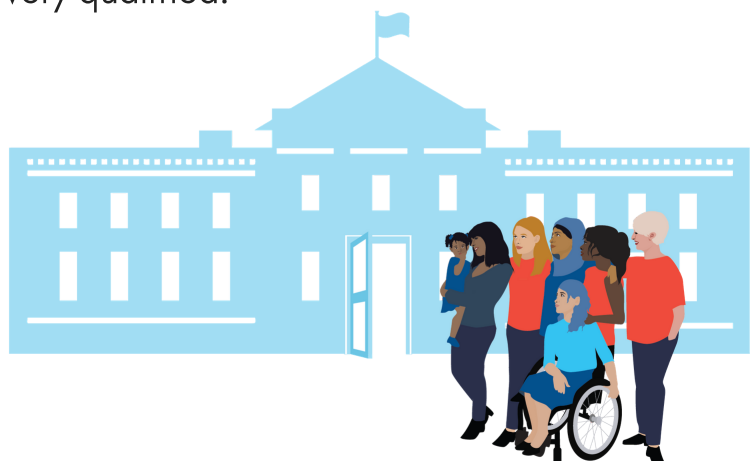


- The subgroups who are most likely to say they view Jada Martin very favorably (rate 100) include voters ages 65 and older (30%), Democrats (37%), and African American voters (44%).
- The subgroups who are most likely to say they view Jada Martin as very qualified (rate 100) include voters with a post high school education (24%), non-college educated women (24%), Democrats (28%), African American voters (39%), voters in the East North Central region (27%), and Midwest women (25%).
- Women voters are slightly more likely than men voters to say Jada Martin is very qualified (21% 100 among women, 16% 100 among men) and to say they feel very favorably toward her (24% 100 among women, 21% 100 among men).
- African American voters are particularly favorable toward Jada Martin (44% rate her 100) and believe she is very qualified (39% rate her 100). African American voters rate Jada Martin higher on favorability and qualifications than the rate a generic Democratic woman and a Latina woman.
- Latinx voters are more likely to feel very favorably toward Jada Martin (27% rate her 100) than they are to believe she is very qualified (15% rate her 100). On favorability, Latinx voters rate Jada Martin higher than they rate a generic Democratic woman, and about the same as they rate a Latina woman. However, on qualifications, Latinx voters rate Jada Martin slightly lower than a generic Democratic woman, and lower than a Latina woman.
- Millennial voters respond slightly lower than voters overall (18% rate 100 on favorable, 13% rate 100 on qualified). Millennial voters tend to rate Jada Martin similarly to a generic Democratic woman and to a Latina woman.

# Comparison to Women Candidates

While there is not a significant difference in how voters overall rate an African American woman, a Latina woman, and a Democratic woman who loses on being very qualified and feeling very favorable, some of the key subgroups rate the African American woman better.

- Men rate the African American woman (21% rate her 100) more favorably than the Latina woman (15% rate her 100). They rate all three women about the same on qualifications.
- Women and Millennials do not differentiate between the African American woman, Latina woman, and Democratic woman on favorability or qualifications.
- African American voters rate the African American woman even higher than the Democratic woman and Latina woman on both favorability and qualifications:
  - Favorability – 44% rate African American woman 100, 37% rate Democratic woman 100, 29% rate Latina woman 100. African American women voters (48% rate 100) are more likely than African American men (38% rate 100) to say they feel very favorably toward an African American woman who loses.
  - Qualification – 39% rate African American woman 100, 35% rate Democratic woman 100, 23% rate Latina woman 100. African American women voters (47% rate 100) are more likely than African American men (26% rate 100) to say an African American woman who loses is very qualified.



# Comparison to Women Candidates

- Latinx voters tend to rate the African American woman higher than the Democratic woman on favorability, but lower on qualifications.
  - Favorability – 27% rate African American woman 100, 20% rate Democratic woman 100, and 30% rate Latina woman 100.
  - Qualification – 15% rate African American woman 100, 19% rate Democratic woman 100, and 23% rate Latina woman 100.
- Democratic voters are slightly more likely to rate the African American woman higher than the Latina woman on both favorability (37% to 32%) and qualifications (28% to 23%).
- Independent voters rate the African American woman slightly lower than then Latina woman on feeling very favorable (13% to 18%) and slightly lower than the Democratic woman on believing she is very qualified (10% to 18%). However, it is just the intensity that is low. When looking at the overall favorability and qualifications (i.e. giving a rating in the 51-100 range), Independent voters see Jada Martin as more qualified/favorable than the generic Democratic woman and about as qualified/favorable as the Latina woman.

## Favorability Rating

	African Am. Jada Martin		Democrat Julie Martin		Latina Juanita Martinez	
(0-100 Scale)	% Rated "100" Very Favorable	% Rated "51-100" Favorable	% Rated "100" Very Favorable	% Rated "51-100" Favorable	% Rated "100" Very Favorable	% Rated "51-100" Favorable
<b>Men</b>	21	75	23	62	15	68
<b>Women</b>	24	74	22	63	26	80
<b>African Am.</b>	44	82	37	76	29	74
<b>Latinxs</b>	27	77	20	71	30	85
<b>Millennials</b>	18	73	21	73	20	70
<b>Democrats</b>	37	86	39	86	32	89
<b>Independents</b>	13	71	14	56	18	66
<b>Republicans</b>	11	63	7	38	10	61

## Qualified Rating

	African Am. Jada Martin		Democrat Julie Martin		Latina Juanita Martinez	
(0-100 Scale)	% Rated "100" Very Qualified	% Rated "51-100" Qualified	% Rated "100" Very Qualified	% Rated "51-100" Qualified	% Rated "100" Very Qualified	% Rated "51-100" Qualified
<b>Men</b>	16	67	16	58	13	63
<b>Women</b>	21	67	20	57	18	62
<b>African Am.</b>	39	83	35	79	23	70
<b>Latinxs</b>	15	71	19	73	23	75
<b>Millennials</b>	13	69	16	68	14	70
<b>Democrats</b>	28	77	31	78	23	77
<b>Independents</b>	10	67	18	59	13	65
<b>Republicans</b>	11	56	5	34	9	46

# Comparison to Male Candidates



Jada Martin's ratings on favorability and qualifications are similar to the Democratic man, but she is seen as more qualified and voters feel more favorably toward her than they do toward the Republican man. Women, African Americans, Latinxs, and Millennials all rate Jada Martin significantly higher on qualifications and favorability than they rate the Republican man. Only African American voters rate Jada Martin higher on qualifications and favorability than they rate the Democratic man.

One important note for African American women candidates who lose: Independents rate Jada Martin lower than both the Democratic man and the Republican man on both intense favorability and qualifications (rating 100). A different pattern emerges among Independent voters who feel favorable or that Jada Martin is qualified overall (rating 51-100): Jada Martin is seen as favorable and qualified as the Democratic man, and considerably more favorable and qualified than the Republican man

## Favorability Rating

	African Am. Jada Martin		Democrat James Martin		Republican Joe Allen	
(0-100 Scale)	% Rated "100" Very Favorable	% Rated "51-100" Favorable	% Rated "100" Very Favorable	% Rated "51-100" Favorable	% Rated "100" Very Favorable	% Rated "51-100" Favorable
<b>Men</b>	21	75	22	61	18	58
<b>Women</b>	24	74	24	65	17	46
<b>African Am.</b>	44	82	26	76	3	20
<b>Latinxs</b>	27	77	32	78	11	46
<b>Millennials</b>	18	73	16	60	9	33
<b>Democrats</b>	37	86	36	88	3	22
<b>Independents</b>	13	71	26	68	19	47
<b>Republicans</b>	11	63	8	32	34	87

## Qualified Rating

	African Am. Jada Martin		Democrat James Martin		Republican Joe Allen	
(0-100 Scale)	% Rated "100" Very Qualified	% Rated "51-100" Qualified	% Rated "100" Very Qualified	% Rated "51-100" Qualified	% Rated "100" Very Qualified	% Rated "51-100" Qualified
<b>Men</b>	16	67	20	62	13	56
<b>Women</b>	21	67	21	59	13	43
<b>African Am.</b>	39	83	25	75	5	21
<b>Latinxs</b>	15	71	33	72	8	41
<b>Millennials</b>	13	69	11	59	8	40
<b>Democrats</b>	28	77	32	82	2	26
<b>Independents</b>	10	67	20	61	21	49
<b>Republicans</b>	11	56	9	37	23	78



# Next Steps After Losing

Voters have clear preferences for things a woman candidate could do after she loses that would make her qualified to run again. No matter her party affiliation or race, voters want to see a losing candidate who is a community-focused, issues-oriented public servant. After losing an election, voters want to see an African American woman continue to serve as an elected official in her current office – 49% say this would make her very qualified to run again. In a second tier are going on a listening tour to learn about the concerns of her community (42% very qualified) and taking a role in her political party (42%).

Voters also have a clear idea about things that do not make a woman seem qualified. For an African American woman who loses becoming a political commentator, teaching at a university, taking a prominent high-paying job in business, or writing a book are rated the lowest for making her seem qualified to run for office again. An African American woman is not penalized more than a Latina, Democratic woman, or Republican woman for taking these paths – these are the lowest rated for all.

% Very Qualified to Run for Office Again	Latina Woman	African Am. Woman	Democratic Woman	Republican Woman
Keep serving as an elected official in her current office	49	54	51	48
Go on a listening tour to learn about the concerns of her community	42	45	45	41
Take a role in her political party	42	48	41	48
Help other women run for office	37	40	39	38
Create a group that holds the winning candidate accountable for key priorities	36	37	33	34
Start a nonprofit to follow up on an issue that she has been engaged in	35	40	37	35
Serve on a commission for economic development	35	38	37	35
Focus on her family	32	33	36	35
Take a prominent leadership role at a nonprofit organization	33	38	34	31
Become an active adviser and public supporter on a presidential campaign	32	34	32	33
Serve on the board of directors at an organization in the community	31	36	30	29
Work as an entrepreneur at a small business, and focus on creating jobs	30	32	32	30
Become a political commentator	22	24	21	23
Teach at a university	21	19	23	21
Take a prominent high paying job in business	19	20	21	17
Write a book	16	19	21	17




# Messages



	% Perception that the Woman is Very Effective as a Leader	African Am. Woman	Latina Woman
<p>Relaunching a future run can and should start on election night. For an African American woman, the best-testing statements focus on listening to voters, a candidate continuing to fight for her ideals, and getting things done for the community based on their needs. The best messages center on the voters, not candidates.</p> <p>Voters respond similarly to messages from an African American woman who loses and a Latina who loses.</p>	<b>Cooperation - Close Race*</b>	52	51
	<b>Meeting People</b>	49	47
	<b>Cooperation*</b>	48	52
	<b>Shared Values</b>	46	45
	<b>Bring People Together</b>	45	49
	<b>Glass Ceiling</b>	41	40
	<b>Reform</b>	40	43

\*Split sampled questions

Voters respond better to the best testing messages from an African American woman who loses compared to a Democratic woman and a Republican woman. In particular, the African American woman outperforms the Democrat and Republican women on the Cooperation message when it is characterized as a close race and the Meeting People message about talking to voters and listening to them about their hopes and aspirations. Men, non-Millennials, Independents, and Latinx voters elevate the African American woman on the Cooperation - Close Race message; she outperforms the Democratic woman and Latina woman among these groups. Men and Millennials respond better to the African American woman delivering the Meeting People message. Subgroups react about the same to the African American woman, Democratic woman, and Latina woman on the Cooperation message.

	% Perception that the Woman is Very Effective as a Leader	African Am. Woman	Democratic Woman	Republican Woman
	<b>Cooperation - Close Race*</b>	52	41	46
	<b>Meeting People</b>	49	43	45
	<b>Cooperation*</b>	48	48	49
	<b>Shared Values</b>	46	41	47
	<b>Bring People Together</b>	45	37	40
	<b>Glass Ceiling</b>	41	38	42
	<b>Reform</b>	40	42	41

\*Split sampled questions

# Looking at key subgroups

- Women voters respond better than men voters to every message from the African American woman who loses. Except for Glass Ceiling and Reform, half or more women find every message makes an African American woman who loses seem like a very effective leader.
- Democrats love every message, and they respond better than Independents, who respond better than Republicans. Independents really drop-off on Reform and Meeting People.
- With a few exceptions, there is not much of a difference in how Millennials versus non-Millennials and non-college educated versus college educated voters react to messages from an African American woman who loses. Millennials react better to Meeting People than their older counterparts, and non-college voters respond better than college educated voters to the Cooperation message when it is noted that the race was especially close.

		Men	Women	Millennials	Non-Millennials	
% Perception that an African American Woman who Loses is Very Effective as a Leader	Cooperation - Close Race*	47	56	54	52	
	Meeting People	43	54	53	48	
	Cooperation*	37	57	48	47	
	Shared Values	40	52	43	47	
	Bring People Together	40	50	47	45	
	Glass Ceiling	38	44	47	40	
	Reform	37	43	38	40	
		Non-College	College	Democrat	Independent	Republican
Cooperation - Close Race*	56	49	58	50	45	
Meeting People	48	49	58	31	43	
Cooperation*	47	48	59	44	36	
Shared Values	48	45	55	35	40	
Bring People Together	46	44	56	39	34	
Glass Ceiling	41	41	53	36	30	
Reform	41	39	53	27	30	

\*Split sampled questions

# Text of messages



**Cooperation - Close Race:** We've laid a foundation that needs to be built on. It was such a close race, and this campaign has ended, but our work continues to improve the lives of people and to build an economy that works for everyone. I pledge to work with my opponent to get things done for our community. I will continue to lead and listen to the people in order to impact the issues that affect them, like more affordable health care and fighting drug addiction.

**Meeting People:** The best things about this experience of running for Governor were talking to voters and listening to voters about their hopes and aspirations. I will work my hardest to keep this amazing community we have built working together. I will focus my energy on continuing to fight for a brighter and better future that includes investing in our schools, promoting small businesses to create jobs, and using tax dollars wisely.

**Cooperation:** We've laid a foundation that needs to be built on. This campaign has ended, but our work to improve the lives of people and to build an economy that works for everyone continues. I pledge to work with my opponent to get things done for our community. I will continue to lead and listen to the people in this area to impact the issues that affect them, like more affordable health care and fighting drug addiction.

**Shared Values:** This was a tough race but we all worked really hard. While tonight didn't bring us the result we hoped for, it was worth the fight. You will always be worth fighting for. We have so much to be proud of, a record of courage, honesty, and integrity when it mattered the most. I will continue to fight for our shared values each and every day. These values include respect, fairness, freedom, and putting people first. I will continue to champion issues like health care and education.

**Bring People Together:** Our campaign brought together all kinds of people. Young and old. People of different faiths and different communities. I have never been more optimistic than I am right now, today, after months of seeing the extraordinary idealism, unity, commitment, and passion. Together, we have built a coalition of people, and it is obvious in this room tonight. We will continue to work together to improve our community, state, and country.

**Glass Ceiling:** I want to say this to all the women who have thought about running for office, and all the women who have tried, but maybe did not win. It's important that you try. For every qualified woman who has been passed over for a job or promotion, or who ran a race and lost, I say go right back at it. In 20 years, there will be young women who take for granted that we have equal representation of women in Congress.

**Reform:** I want to thank everyone who believed in and stepped up for this campaign. This election is over, but our principles endure. Two major principles that I will continue to fight for are getting big money out of politics and making sure every vote counts. Changing the way political campaigns work—and getting special interests out of politics—would make it possible for qualified people who aren't already rich and powerful to be part of the decision-making process. And that is better for our state.

# Methodology



## Focus Groups:

Lake Research Partners and Bellwether Research conducted nine focus groups with men and women in July and August of 2018 segmented as follows:

### **Richmond, July 24:**

Independent women  
Republican women

### **Phoenix, July 31:**

Latina women  
Independent men

### **Atlanta, July 26:**

Democratic women  
Millennial women  
Republican men

### **Detroit, August 1:**

African American women  
Democratic men

Participants were recruited to reflect a mix of age, marital status, parental status, income, and education. This memo uses the term “participants” in reference to the participants of the nine focus groups.

Lake Research Partners and Bellwether Research designed and administered this survey that was conducted over the phone from August 21 – 30, 2018. The survey reached a total of 2,413 likely 2018 voters, with oversamples of 368 African-Americans, 364 Latinxs, and 241 millennials (age 18–35).

Telephone numbers were drawn from listed voter file Catalist sample. The data were weighed slightly by gender, age, region, party identification, race, race by gender, and education to reflect attributes of the actual population. The African American, Latinx, and Millennial oversamples were weighted slightly by gender, age, and education. The oversamples were weighted down into the base to reflect their natural proportion of the electorate.

The margin of error for the total sample is  $\pm 2.0\%$ ,  $\pm 5.1\%$  for the African American and Latinx oversample, and  $\pm 6.3\%$  for the Millennial oversample. In interpreting survey results, all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error; that is, the results of a survey may differ from those which would be obtained if the entire population were interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of responses to a particular question.