

MEMORANDUM

TO: THE CONGRESSIONAL INSTITUTE

**FROM: NICOLE McCLESKEY, PARTNER, PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES
KATIE PACKER GAGE, PARTNER, BURNING GLASS CONSULTING
ASHLEY O’CONNOR, PARTER, BURNING GLASS CONSULTING**

DATE: JANUARY 30, 2014

RE: KEY FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND A NATIONAL SURVEY AMONG WOMEN VOTERS

- 1. Women worry a great deal about the economic present, and the future.**
Any improvement in the nation’s economy has yet to be felt by American women:

	Country’s Economic Situation	Personal Financial Situation
Gotten Better	29%	17%
Gotten Worse	34%	32%
Stayed About the Same	36%	51%

American women worry about the present and the future:

- Seventy-five percent (75%) of American women agree that “America is in a state of decline.”
- Eighty-six percent (86%) agree that “I worry even more about the next generation than I worry about myself.”
- Another 82% agree that “the gap between rich and poor in America is growing and even if you work hard it seems almost impossible to get ahead.”

When women talk about the state of the nation in focus groups much of their focus is dedicated to the future for their children:

“That is one of my biggest goals. To hope my children find jobs. They all have degrees. My daughter has two Bachelors and a Masters in criminal justice. She is working in a movie theater selling popcorn. Then my son who is 24 has a degree in history. He went back to get his degree in economics. Now he is going to go for his Master’s because he can’t find a job at all” – Las Vegas Married Swing Voter

“I want my children to be able to attend and complete college at a good university without costing me an arm and leg. I want them to have employment opportunities when they graduate.”- Las Vegas Single Swing Voter

- 2. While the top issue for women is the economy (25%), following close behind is a concern over “government spending and the debt” (18%) which runs parallel to their concern about future generations.**

In focus groups, we heard women from across the political spectrum comment on the entitlement mentality that seems to have seized our country, and a sense of resentment of having to foot the bill for a growing entitlement society. And, even as their frustrations mount over their inability to get ahead financially, the solution does not rest with expanded social welfare. The survey amplified the focus group sentiment:

- 73% of women agree that “we have become a society too dependent on entitlement programs, where people expect good outcomes without having to work for them.”
- Fully 72% of women agree that the government “should promote policies that create equal opportunity for all Americans to be successful,” over the 29% who believe government “should promote policies that promote equal outcomes to create a more level playing field in America.”

- 3. Women are seeking a better balance in government, and more representation of the middle class.** Whereas women perceive the Republican favoring the wealthy, President Obama and the Democrats are now perceived to be tilted toward helping the poor. There is a void in representation of the middle class.

Among Women	Wealthy	Middle Class	Poor
Does President Obama stand up more for ...	19%	35%	40%
Do Republicans in Congress stand up more for ...	67%	26%	3%

4. **A majority of women oppose Obamacare, and are already feeling negative consequences.** Among women overall, 52% oppose the Affordable Care Act, while 47% favor it. Strong opposition to the law hits 36% compared to just 19% who strongly favor it.

- Fifty-one percent (51%) of women believe the law will have a negative impact on the country.
- Thirty-four percent (34%) say they have already experienced some negative personal impact as a result of the law. Another 22% believe the law will have a negative impact on them or their families in the next year or two. Just 13% say the impact of the law has been personally positive.

From the focus groups we heard:

“We have health insurance through my husband’s employer until next year and that’s only because they were exempt through the union. He got a \$600 raise per month this year, but the health insurance went up \$700 a month, so his raise was eaten up by that.” – Denver Lapsed Republican

“My husband works for Disney. Disney pays 80% of our premiums. Our premiums before were like \$3,000 a year. Now through the Obamacare, we are paying \$7,000 a year and like she was saying, the deductibles, our deductibles were \$1,500 for a family of four, now they are \$6,000.” – Orlando Lapsed Republican

Methodology

On behalf of the Congressional Institute, Public Opinion Strategies conducted the following research:

- *A national hybrid survey (telephone and internet) of 800 women nationally from January 8-12, 2013, which has a margin of error of $\pm 3.46\%$.*
- *Eight focus groups conducted from December 2-10, 2013 among swing voting women, lapsed Republican women, and base Republican women. Groups were conducted in Lakewood, CO, Winter Park, FL, Blue Ashe, OH, and Las Vegas, NV.*