



To: Interested Parties  
From: National Partnership for Women & Families  
Re: Economic Security Issues for Women and Families in the 2014 Midterm Election, as Presented on Candidates' Campaign Websites  
Date: November 10, 2014

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In 2014, the economic security of women and families was a noticeable and important theme in the national dialogue on public policy. Lawmakers at all levels of government introduced, debated and, in some cases, enacted policies to combat gender-based pay discrimination, provide paid sick days and paid family and medical leave, and promote reasonable workplace accommodations for pregnant workers.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Department of Labor awarded grants to four states to study paid family and medical leave programs.<sup>2</sup> Media coverage and editorial board support reflected much of this activity.<sup>3</sup> And, on election night, voters in Massachusetts as well as in the cities of Montclair and Trenton, N.J., and Oakland, Calif., overwhelmingly approved paid sick days laws, bringing the number of jurisdictions that do or will soon guarantee workers the right to earn paid sick days to 16.<sup>4</sup>

Against this backdrop of heightened awareness of and momentum around public policies that create greater economic fairness and opportunity for working families, the National Partnership for Women & Families reviewed the websites of all the declared general election candidates for governor, U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives to see whether candidates' issue platforms and press statements included references to four key issues: fair or equal pay, paid sick days, paid family and medical leave, and pregnancy discrimination/workplace accommodations for pregnant workers.\*

The National Partnership's analysis shows that some candidates – but, in our view, not enough – addressed these issues on their websites. More than **one-fifth of candidates for governor, U.S. House and U.S. Senate indicated their positions on or accomplishments related to fair or equal pay, paid sick days, paid family and medical leave, or workplace**

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\* The National Partnership reviewed the campaign websites of all declared general election candidates for governor, U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives twice between September 1 and November 4, 2014. On each candidate's campaign website, we reviewed the candidate's position statements, issue pages and press releases to identify whether they included any references to the candidate's positions on or accomplishments related to fair or "equal" pay, paid sick days, paid family and medical leave or workplace fairness for pregnant women. The analysis and conclusions presented here are based solely on the National Partnership's review of candidate websites and press releases and do not extend to press coverage or any traditional or social media content analysis, or the official websites of any incumbent candidates. We compiled this information, along with: (1) assessments of the competitiveness of races from the Cook Political Report's website (<http://cookpolitical.com/>) as of late October 2014; (2) the candidate's political party affiliation; (3) the candidate's status as an incumbent or challenger, or whether the candidate was running in an open seat and (4) the candidate's gender. On November 5 and 6, we used publicly available and widely trusted data sources to determine whether the candidate won or lost (as of November 6, 2014) and her or his reported share of the vote. We then ran bivariate analyses and multivariate models to arrive at the conclusions reported here. As a nonpartisan, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization, the National Partnership does not support or oppose candidates for office. This analysis is for educational purposes only and is not intended to suggest an organizational position on any candidate for office.

**fairness for pregnant women.** Even though only a minority of candidates addressed these issues in this way, we found that, accounting for other factors that can affect a candidate's success, **candidates whose websites mentioned this set of issues were more likely to win.** Notably, not a single candidate who mentioned these issues expressed opposition to them or suggested that, if elected, she or he would fight efforts to address these issues.

## Key Findings

- ▶ **Fair pay, paid sick days, paid family and medical leave, and protections for pregnant workers were discussed on 23 percent of candidates' websites.** 227 out of 982 candidates for Congress and governor in the 2014 elections had statements in support of at least one of these key economic security issues for women and families.
- ▶ **Women's and families' economic security issues were mentioned on the websites of candidates in nearly every state** (47 out of 50). Candidates in North Dakota, South Dakota and Utah were the exception. In four states (Massachusetts, Maine, Montana and New Hampshire), more than 40 percent of the candidates' websites mentioned at least one of these women's and families' economic security issues. In the nation's four most populous states, 10 or more candidates mentioned at least one of the issues: In Florida, 18 candidates mentioned at least one of the issues. In California, there were 17. In New York, there were 14. And in Texas, 10 candidates mentioned at least one of the four key issues on their campaign websites.
- ▶ **Senate candidates led the way in website mentions of women's and families' economic security issues.** Forty-two percent (30 out of 71) of Senate candidates mentioned at least one of the key issues on their campaign websites, while 26 percent (19 out of 72) of gubernatorial candidates and 21 percent (178 out of 839) of House candidates did so.
- ▶ **A higher percentage of candidates in competitive races than in noncompetitive races included women's and families' economic security issues on their websites.** One-third of candidates who were running in competitive races (34 percent, or 73 out of 212) mentioned at least one of the key issues on their campaign websites, while only 20 percent of candidates for noncompetitive seats (154 out of 770) did so. The vast majority of candidates (78 percent, or 770 out of 982) were running in noncompetitive races, while only 22 percent (212 out of 982) of candidates were running for seats that political analysts believed had a chance of switching parties.<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ **Political party affiliation was the most significant indicator of whether candidates mentioned women's and families' economic security issues on their campaign websites.** Nearly half of the Democratic candidates (45 percent, or 216 out of 475) talked about women's and families' economic security issues, while only two percent of Republican candidates (10 out of 470) did so. For context, the number of candidates this cycle was evenly split between the two major political parties, with 48 percent Democratic (475), 48 percent Republican (470) and four percent third-party (37).
- ▶ **Women's and families' economic security issues were mentioned on the websites of candidates of both genders, although a higher share of women candidates' websites included these issues.** Thirty-seven percent of women candidates (69 out of 186)

mentioned at least one of the key issues on their websites, as did 20 percent of male candidates (158 out of 796). For context, the vast majority of candidates were men: Eighty-one percent of candidates in this year's elections were men (796) and 19 percent were women (186).

- ▶ **Fair pay was the most common issue mentioned on candidates' websites.** Almost all the candidates (226 out of 227) who mentioned at least one economic security issue for women and families mentioned fair or "equal" pay. Fifty candidates mentioned one other issue in addition to fair pay. The second most common issue candidates mentioned was paid family and medical leave, followed by paid sick days and then pregnancy discrimination.
- ▶ **A higher share of candidates running for open seats and challengers mentioned women's and families' economic security issues on their websites than did incumbents.** Thirty-five percent of the candidates running for open seats (44 out of 126) mentioned women's and families' economic security issues on their campaign websites. In races in which incumbents were running, nearly one-quarter of challengers (24 percent, or 100 out of 413) and 19 percent of incumbents (83 out of 443) mentioned one of the women's and families' economic security issues on their campaign websites. For context, incumbents made up 45 percent of candidates (443) this year and many ran unopposed. Challengers made up 42 percent of candidates (413), and candidates in open seats made up only 13 percent of the field (126).
- ▶ **Candidates who talked about a basket of women's and families' economic security issues increased their likelihood of winning, taking other relevant factors into account.** Certainly many factors – and especially incumbency, race competitiveness and political party – impact whether a candidate wins her or his election. However, in models that control for these and other factors, candidates whose websites mentioned paid sick days or paid family and medical leave in addition to fair or equal pay were eight percent *more likely* to win.<sup>6</sup> This finding reinforces public opinion research showing that voters are more likely to vote for candidates who support these issues.

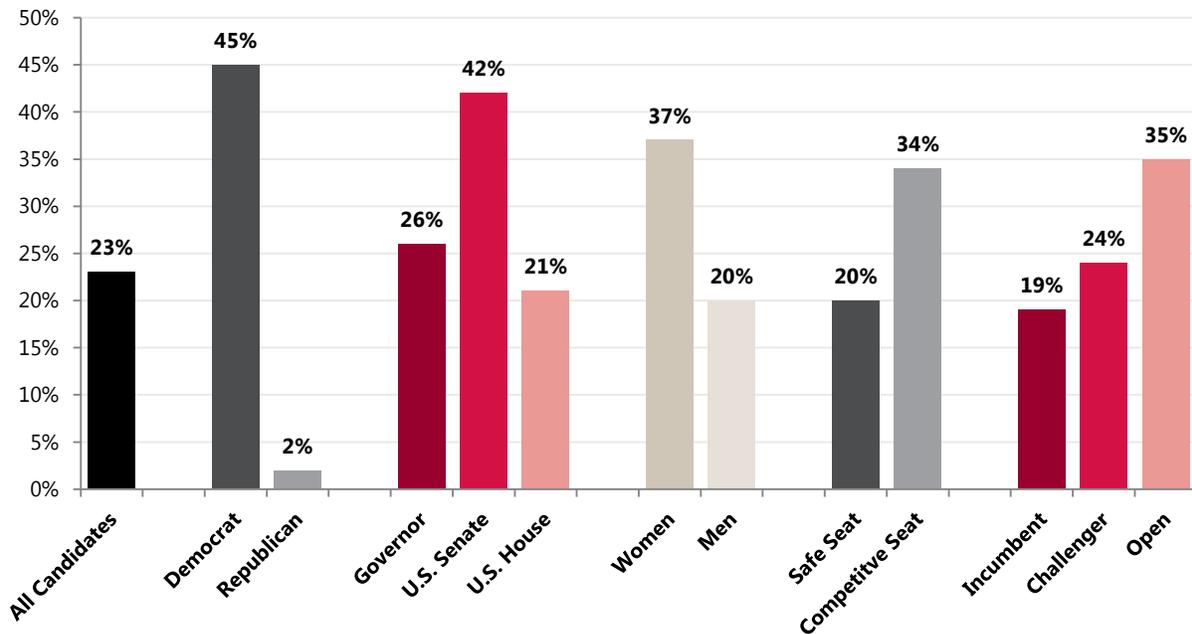
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**In Massachusetts and New Hampshire, higher shares of candidates mentioned their positions on key women's and families' economic issues – and most won.** In Massachusetts, where voters overwhelmingly approved a paid sick days ballot measure, 41 percent of candidates (seven of 17) included statements about at least one economic security issue on their websites; among these, six of the seven (86 percent) won their elections. In New Hampshire, 62.5 percent of candidates (five of eight) – including Senator Jeanne Shaheen – mentioned at least one of the issues; three of the five, or 60 percent, won.

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The National Partnership's analysis, coupled with national data showing that overwhelming shares of voters support policies promoting women's and families' economic security, suggest elected officials and those seeking office would benefit from letting voters know about their support for fair pay, paid sick days, paid family and medical leave, and workplace policies that support pregnant workers.

## Candidates Who Mentioned Women's and Families' Economic Security Issues on Their Campaign Websites\*\*



\*\*Percentage of candidates who mentioned their positions or accomplishments on at least one of the following issues on the issue pages or in the position or press statements on their 2014 campaign websites: fair or equal pay, paid sick days, paid family and medical leave, or workplace fairness for pregnant women.

### Sample Website Statements

- ▶ Successful House challenger Gwen Graham's (Fla.) website states that she wants to help strengthen middle class families by: "Ensuring families receive the paid sick time and benefits they've earned."<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ Successful House challenger Don Beyer's (Va.) website demonstrates how equal pay and paid leave fit together: "Supporting Equal Pay For Women And Expanded Family Leave: On average, full-time working women earn just 77 cents for every dollar a man earns. It's unfair to women and illegal. And it's unfair to families, who in many cases depend on a woman's salary to make ends meet. That's why I strongly support the Paycheck Fairness Act, a bill that updates and strengthens the Equal Pay Act of 1963, which made it illegal for employers to pay unequal wages to men and women who perform equal work. I also support expanding family and medical leave. The United States is the only industrialized country that does not guarantee paid time off to care for a new child, and one of very few industrialized nations not to guarantee paid time off for other types of family care. The unpaid family and medical leave act that passed 21 years ago only covers about half of all employees, given various exemptions such as the employee's status and the size of the business. It is past time to give American workers the ability to care for their loved ones without economic hardship. And this isn't just political rhetoric. In my family-owned business, we provide paid maternity leave and treat our employees with the respect they deserve."<sup>8</sup>

- ▶ Successful House incumbent Grace Meng’s (N.Y.) website included the following: “Providing women with access to reproductive health care, passing legislation like the Paycheck Fairness Act to make sure that women are compensated at the same rate as their male counterparts in the workplace, and protecting women from sexual violence and domestic abuse are not Democratic or Republican priorities – they are American priorities.”<sup>9</sup>
- ▶ Successful Senate incumbent Jeanne Shaheen’s (N.H.) website states that: “Jeanne is a fierce advocate for women....She is cosponsoring legislation to stop employers from forcing pregnant women out of the workplace or denying them reasonable accommodations so they can continue working. She is a cosponsor of the Paycheck Fairness Act and cosponsored the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.” A detailed fact sheet lists her support for these policies and includes her co-sponsorship of a bill to guarantee workers the right to earn paid sick days.<sup>10</sup>
- ▶ Successful gubernatorial incumbent Mark Dayton’s (Minn.) website touts recently enacted state legislation: “Better Workplaces for Women – The new Women’s Economic Security Act will help ensure women receive equal pay for equal work. It includes protections for pregnant women in the workplace, expands family and sick leave for working families, and expands economic opportunity for women in high-wage, high-demand jobs.”<sup>11</sup>
- ▶ Successful gubernatorial incumbent Dan Malloy’s (Ct.) website says: “Thanks to Dan Malloy and Nancy Wyman, Connecticut leads the nation when it comes to protecting and empowering working and middle-class families.... Connecticut became the first state in the nation to mandate that its 400,000 workers who receive an hourly wage earn five paid sick days per year. No one should choose between seeking medical care or his or her job.”<sup>12</sup>

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1 For a list of bills that were introduced and enacted at the federal and state levels, visit the National Partnership’s work and family policy database at [www.NationalPartnership.org/WFDB](http://www.NationalPartnership.org/WFDB).

2 U.S. Department of Labor, Women’s Bureau. (2014, September 24). \$500K for studies on expanding paid family and medical leave provided by US Labor Department grants [Press Release]. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from <http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/wb/WB20141206.htm>

3 For example: A Showdown on the Pay Gap. [Editorial].(2014, September 12). *New York Times*. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/13/opinion/a-showdown-on-the-pay-gap.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/13/opinion/a-showdown-on-the-pay-gap.html?_r=0); Small Payroll Tax is the Best Way to Cover Maternity Leave. [Editorial]. (2014, July 14, 2014). *Boston Globe*. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from <http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/editorials/2014/07/14/small-payroll-tax-best-way-cover-paid-maternity-leave/ONon482mgHu0Z110DBI4CN/story.html>; Sick Leave Bill A Welcome Remedy for Low-Wage Workers. [Editorial]. (2014, January 30). *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from <http://articles.latimes.com/2014/jan/30/opinion/la-ed-sick-leave-ab-1522-20140129>

4 Voters in four locations – Massachusetts; Montclair and Trenton, New Jersey; and Oakland, California – all passed ballot initiatives guaranteeing workers the right to earn paid sick days. The Massachusetts ballot initiative passed with 59.4 percent of the vote: 2014 General Election Results. (2014, November). *Boston.com*. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from [http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/NJ/Mercer/53997/147061/Web01/en/summary.html](http://www.boston.com/news/politics/extra/election-results;Montclair's initiative passed with 74.4 percent of the vote: Essex County Clerk. (2014, November 4). Essex County – 2014 General Election – Unofficial Results. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from http://www.essexclerk.com/election/ElectionFrame.html; Trenton’s measure passed with 85.29 percent of the vote: Mercer County Clerk. (2014, November 4). 2014 General Election – Election Results – Unofficial. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from <a href=); And Oakland’s initiative passed with 81.36 percent of the vote: Alameda County, California, Registrar of Voters. (2014, November 4). *General Election – Unofficial Results – Measure FF – City of Oakland*. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from [http://www.acgov.org/rov/current\\_election/226/index.htm](http://www.acgov.org/rov/current_election/226/index.htm)

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5 “Competitive” seats in our analysis were those designated by the Cook Political Report as “toss-ups,” “leaning” toward a candidate of a particular political party or as “likely” to be won by a candidate of a particular political party. “Non-competitive” seats in our analysis were those designated by the Cook Political Report as “safe” or “solid” seats. All Cook Political Report ratings are from late October 2014.

6 Governor Dan Malloy of Connecticut is the exception here. He is the only candidate whose website mentions his accomplishments on paid sick days but does not mention fair pay or equal pay. Governor Malloy signed the nation’s first statewide paid sick days bill in June 2011.

In our complete logistic regression model with robust standard errors clustered by state, incumbency, party affiliation, race competitiveness and mentions of key issues were all statistically significant with a 90 percent confidence interval or higher. Incumbent status increased a candidate’s likelihood of winning by 43 percent; political party affiliation as a Republican increased a candidate’s likelihood of winning by 13 percent, and including a reference to equal pay plus paid sick days or paid family and medical leave increased a candidate’s likelihood of winning by eight percent. Being in a safe seat decreased a candidate’s likelihood of winning by five percent, taking these other more important factors into account.

7 Graham for U.S. Congress. (n.d.). Helping Middle Class Families. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from <https://www.gwengraham.com/helping-middle-class-families/>

8 Don Beyer for Congress. (n.d.). Issues: Creating Good Jobs. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from <http://friendsofdonbeyer.com/issues/>

9 Grace Democrat for Congress. (n.d.). Issues. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from <http://gracefornewyork.com/issues/>

10 Jeanne Shaheen U.S. Senate. (n.d.). Priorities: Women’s Rights. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from <http://jeannshaheen.org/priority/womens-rights/>; Jeanne Shaheen: U.S. Senate. (n.d.). *Senator Jeanne Shaheen: A Leading Advocate for Women*. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from <http://jeannshaheen.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Senator-Jeanne-Shaheen-A-Leading-Advocate-for-Women-20140708.pdf>

11 Mark Dayton. (n.d.). A Minnesota That Works for the Middle Class. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from <http://markdayton.org/issues/minnesota-works-middle-class/>

12 Malloy Wyman. (n.d.). Economy: Strengthening Connecticut. Retrieved 10 November 2014, from <http://www.danmalloy2014.com/progress-on-the-economy/>