

# Key Findings: 2016 Election Eve/Election Night Survey

NOVEMBER 2016

The following summarizes the results of a survey conducted for the National Partnership for Women & Families by Lake Research Partners and The Tarrance Group.<sup>i</sup>

## Working Families' Issues in the 2016 Elections

- ▶ **A record number of candidates campaigned on working families' issues this election cycle,<sup>1</sup> and nearly two-thirds of voters (64 percent) say they recall hearing something about them.** Nearly one-quarter of voters (23 percent) say they heard “a lot” from candidates running for office about issues of importance to women and working families, including equal pay, paid sick days and paid family and medical leave. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) say they heard either “a lot” or “some” about these issues. About one-quarter (27 percent) say they did not hear much about the issues, and 8 percent say they heard nothing at all about the issues.

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— **Voters heard some, but not enough about issues like equal pay, paid sick days and paid family and medical leave.**

— **Voters say it is important for the next president and Congress to address issues of importance to working families, such as paid sick days and paid family and medical leave.**

— **More than three-quarters of voters support a national paid family and medical leave fund and support extends across party lines.**

— **Voters say a member of Congress who champions national paid family and medical leave is more likely to get their support in the next election.**

— **71 percent of voters anticipate significant financial hardship in the wake of a serious personal or family medical issue.**

— **Voters say they are more willing to patronize companies that provide paid family and medical leave.**

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<sup>i</sup> Lake Research Partners and The Tarrance Group designed and administered this pre-election and election night omnibus survey, which was conducted by phone using professional interviewers from Nov. 6-8, 2016. The questionnaire with topline results is available [here](#). The Lake Research Partners memo on the results is available [here](#). The Tarrance Group memo on the results is available [here](#). The National Partnership for Women & Families purchased a set of “issue” questions about working families’ policies. Core questions about voting and the demographics reached a total of 2,400 likely voters nationwide who voted in the 2016 elections – 1,401 interviews among voters who were reached on cell phones and 999 interviews among voters who were reached on landlines. Issue questions, including the National Partnership’s questions, reached a total of 1,200 likely voters nationwide who voted in the 2016 elections (margin of error of +/-2.8%). The data were weighted to reflect the aggregated presidential vote as reported in the 2016 exit polls, as well as by gender, age, race, party identification, education, marital status, union household and Census region to reflect the actual proportions of the electorate. The survey has a margin of error of ±2.0% at the 95% confidence interval.

- ▶ More than six in 10 women (66 percent) and men (62 percent) report hearing about these issues, as did voters across all age groups and education levels.
- ▶ Democrats (74 percent) report hearing about these issues from candidates more than Republicans (62 percent) or independents (54 percent).

▶ **Candidates could have benefitted from talking more about their support for equal pay, paid sick days and paid family and medical leave.** More than half of voters (56 percent) say a candidate or elected official speaking in support of these issues makes them more likely to vote for that candidate or official, including 38 percent who say it makes them “much more” likely. Only 6 percent of voters say a candidate or elected official speaking in support of these issues makes them less likely to vote for that person. About one-third (36 percent) say it makes no difference.

- ▶ Democrats are especially likely to say they reward candidates and elected officials who speak in support of equal pay, paid sick days and paid family and medical leave (77 percent say it makes them more likely to vote for a candidate or official, including 57 percent who say it makes them “much more” likely).
- ▶ Both Republicans (39 percent) and independents (53 percent) say a candidate or elected official speaking in support of these issues makes them more likely to vote for that candidate or official – and less than one-tenth of these groups say it makes them *less* likely.
- ▶ Every voter demographic, regional and ideological group responds more positively than negatively to candidates who speak in support of these issues.

▶ **Key voter groups are especially receptive to policies that support working families’ economic security – and to vote based on a candidate’s or elected official’s support for them.** An examination of how much voters heard from candidates about equal pay, paid sick days and paid family and medical leave – and whether they are more likely to vote for candidates and elected officials who speak in support of them – reveals particular pockets of influence and areas for growth.

## **GROUPS WHO WERE ATTENTIVE TO THE ISSUES SAY SUPPORTIVE CANDIDATES ARE MORE LIKELY TO GET THEIR VOTES**

- ▶ **Younger voters.** Voters under 30 are more likely to report hearing from candidates about these issues (75 percent heard at least some) and say they are

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### **Congressional Democrats would be wise to continue speaking about equal pay, paid sick days and paid family and medical leave:**

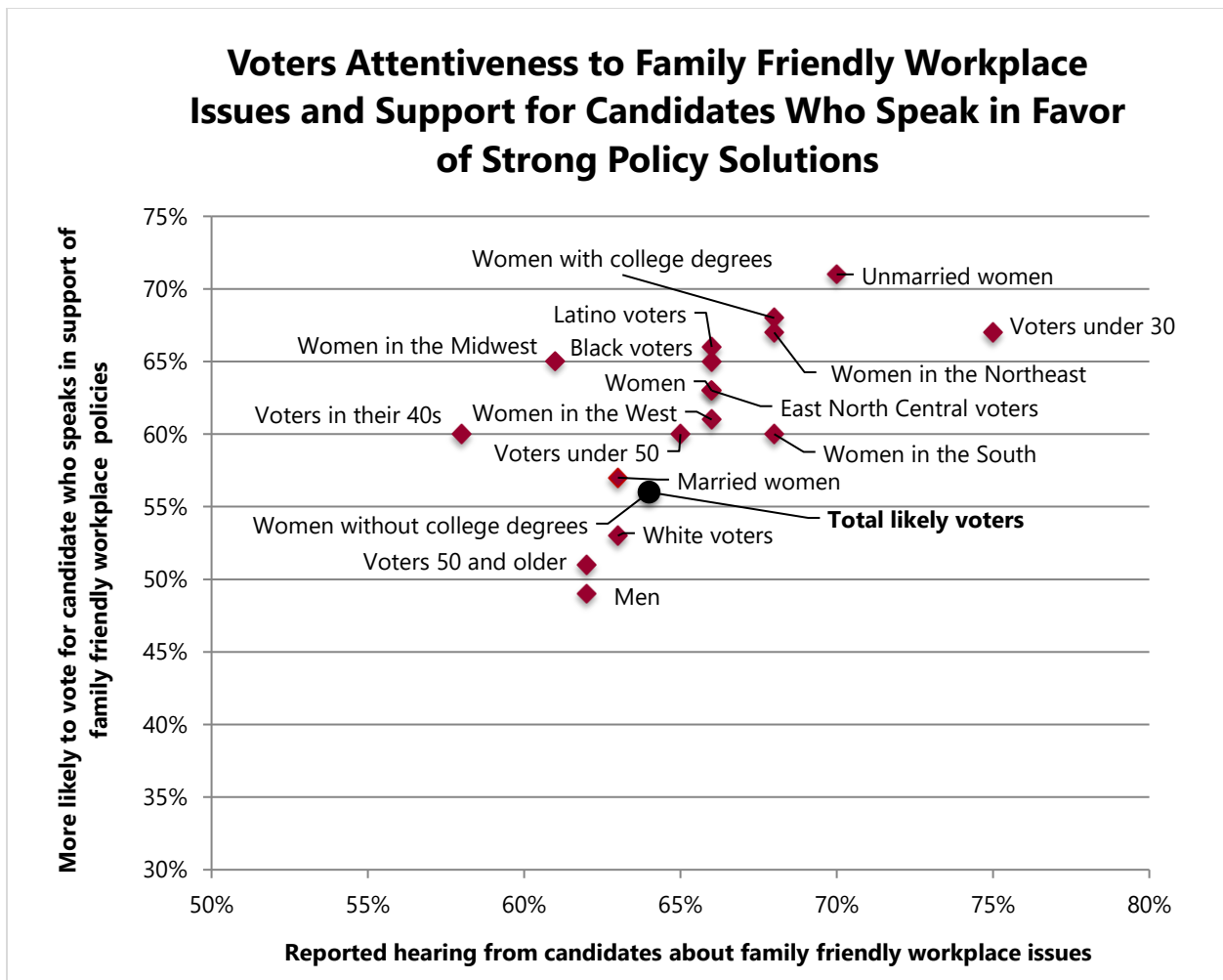
**Compared to voters overall, a smaller share of voters who split their tickets – voted for a Democrat for Congress in 2016, but not for president – say they heard candidates speak about these issues (58 percent). But a higher share (63 percent) say they are more likely to vote for candidates or elected who speak in support of them, compared to voters overall.**

**Speaking supportively about these issues is also a net positive to voters who did not vote for Democrats for president or Congress this year, although they say they are less inclined to vote based on it.**

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more likely to vote for candidates or elected officials who speak in support of them (67 percent say it makes them more likely to vote for a person).

- ▶ **Women with college degrees and unmarried women.** Women with college degrees are more likely to say they heard about the issues (68 percent) and that a candidate or elected official speaking in support of them makes them more likely to vote for that person (68 percent). Unmarried women are also more likely to say they heard about the issues (70 percent) and that a candidate or elected official who speaks in support of them makes them more likely to vote for that person (71 percent).
- ▶ **Black, Latino and younger white voters.** Black and Latino voters are equally likely to report hearing about these issues (66 percent of each group) and more likely than voters overall to say a candidate or elected official who speaks in support of them is more likely to get their vote (65 percent of black voters and 66 percent of Latino voters). White voters under 35 are also particularly attuned to these issues (70 percent say they heard at least some about them, and 62 percent say they are more likely to vote for candidates or elected officials who speak in support of them).



## GROUPS WITH GROWTH POTENTIAL

- ▶ **The sandwich generation.** A smaller share of voters in their 40s (58 percent) compared to voters overall say they recall candidates speaking about these issues, but voters in their 40s are more likely than voters overall to say that hearing candidates or elected officials speak about the issues makes them more likely to vote for those candidates (60 percent more likely to vote for).
- ▶ **Voters in the “Rust Belt.”** In East North Central states (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin), voters are about as likely as voters overall to report hearing about these issues (66 percent), but they are much more likely than voters overall to say they are more likely to vote for candidates or elected officials who speak in support of them (63 percent).
- ▶ **Women in the Midwest.** A slightly smaller share of women in the Midwest (61 percent) report hearing about these issues than women in every other region (66 percent in the West and 68 percent in the Northeast and South). But they are more likely than women in every region other than the Northeast to say that hearing a candidate or elected official speak in support of these issues affects their vote. Nearly two-thirds of women in the Midwest (65 percent) say they are more likely to vote for a candidate or elected official who speaks in support of the issues (close to the 67 percent of Northeastern women who say so), compared to 61 percent of women in the South and 60 percent of women in the West.

## Voters’ Concerns and Priorities for the Next President and Congress

- ▶ **Voters across virtually every subgroup agree that it is important for elected officials to consider new laws that help keep working families economically secure.** More than eight in 10 voters (82 percent) say it is important – including 58 percent who say it is “very important” – for the next president and Congress to consider new laws that would ensure workers the right to earn paid sick days and create a paid family and medical leave insurance program. Only 15 percent say consideration of paid sick days and paid family and medical leave laws is not important.
  - ▶ **Voters of all partisan affiliations agree that it is important for the next president and Congress to consider paid sick days and paid family and medical leave laws.** Virtually all Democrats (95 percent, including 76 percent “very important”) and most independents (84 percent, including 58 percent “very important”) and Republicans (70 percent, including 40 percent “very important”) say it is important for paid sick days and paid family and medical leave laws to be considered. Among non-Democrats, support is particularly broad and strong among Republican women (81 percent important, including 47 percent “very important”), independent women (85 percent important, including 61 percent “very important”) and independents under 50 (86 percent important, including 62 percent “very important”).

- ▶ **There are great upsides and no downsides for lawmakers who prioritize these laws.** Women, including women with children, younger voters, voters without a college education, black voters and Latino voters place outsized importance on lawmakers' consideration of these policies. Notably, a majority of voters in every subgroup, including the most ideologically conservative men who voted for President-elect Trump, say it is important for the next president and Congress to consider laws that would ensure access to paid sick days and create a paid family and medical leave program.

- ▶ **Voters' support for a national paid family and medical leave fund is broad and intense.**

More than three-quarters of voters (78 percent) say they would favor – including nearly two-thirds (64 percent) who say they would “strongly favor” – establishing a national law that would create a fund that offers *all* workers 12 weeks of family and medical leave with some pay when they need to care for a new baby or adopted child, have a serious illness or need to care for a seriously ill family member. Just 16 percent of voters say they would oppose such a law.<sup>ii</sup>

- ▶ **Super-majorities of voters across party lines say they would favor a comprehensive, 12-week national paid family and medical leave law**, including 93 percent of Democrats (83 percent “strongly favor”), 77 percent of independents (61 percent “strongly favor”) and 66 percent of Republicans (46 percent “strongly favor”).
- ▶ **Women – especially women under 50, women with children, women with and without college degrees, and unmarried women – are particularly supportive, as are voters under 30, black voters and Latino voters.** Seventy percent or more of voters in each of these subgroups say they would “strongly favor” a law that creates a national paid family and medical leave

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**Among voters in states with U.S. Senate elections in 2018:**

— **83 percent of voters say it is important for the next president and Congress to consider new laws to keep working families economically secure, including 58 percent who say it is “very important.”**

— **79 percent say they favor a national law that would establish a paid family and medical leave fund that provides workers with up to 12 weeks of time away from their jobs with some pay to care for a new child or deal with a personal or family illness, including 65 percent who “strongly favor” such a law.**

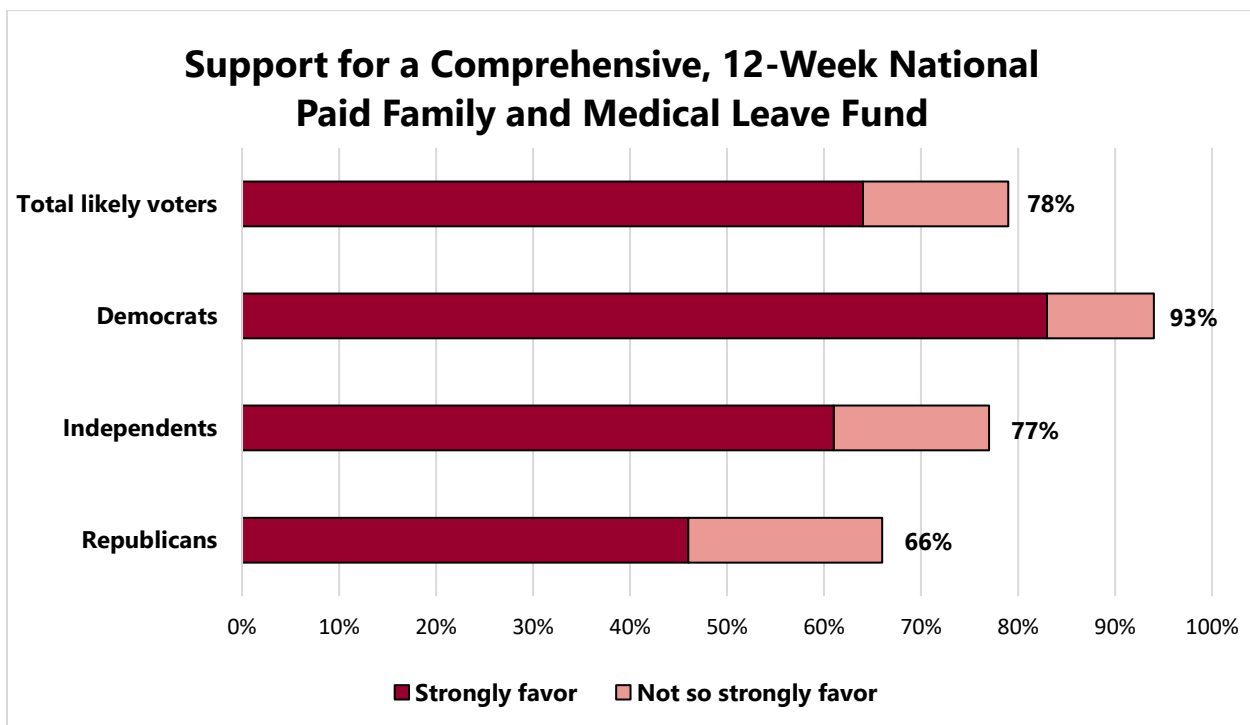
— **Six in 10 voters (60 percent) say they would be more likely to vote for their member of Congress or senator if that lawmaker co-sponsored and voted for a national paid family and medical leave proposal, including close to half (47 percent) who say they would be “much more” likely to do so. Only 7 percent say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who supports paid leave.**

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<sup>ii</sup> The National Partnership asked an identical question of voters in February 2016 and these results are consistent overall and among partisan subgroups. Among all the subgroups, Republicans' views changed the most – rising from 57 percent who said they favored a national paid family and medical leave law in February to 66 percent in this election eve/election night survey. The earlier results are described [here](#).

fund. Overall, more than eight in 10 voters in these subgroups say they would favor such a law.

- ▶ **Even some “unusual suspects” report strong levels of support for a 12-week national paid family and medical leave law**, including adults 65 and older, men under 50, non-college graduate men, unmarried men and voters who identify as Christians, particularly born-again and evangelical Christians. About six in 10 voters in each of these subgroups say they would “strongly favor” a national paid family and medical leave law, and three-quarters or more overall say they would favor such a law.



- ▶ **Voters say they will reward members of Congress who support paid family and medical leave at the ballot box; some will punish those who oppose it.** Asked to think specifically about the member of Congress or senator they voted for in the 2016 election, nearly six in 10 voters (58 percent) say they would be more likely – including 44 percent who say they would be “much more likely” – to vote for that lawmaker again in the next election if that lawmaker supported a national paid family and medical leave law by co-sponsoring it and voting for it. Only 8 percent say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who supports paid family and medical leave in the next election. Conversely, a plurality of voters (41 percent) say they would be less likely to vote for a lawmaker who opposed a national paid family and medical leave proposal and voted against it; only one-quarter (25 percent) say they would be more likely to vote for a lawmaker who voted against paid leave.
  - ▶ **Democrats** are particularly likely to say they would support lawmakers who co-sponsored and voted for a national paid family and medical leave proposal (81



percent) and to say they would turn against lawmakers who opposed paid family and medical leave (59 percent less likely to vote for).

- ▶ **Independents and Republicans** are more inclined than not to say that lawmakers' support for a national paid family and medical leave proposal is a positive factor and opposition is a slight negative factor, but the issue makes less of a difference for these voters than for Democrats.
- ▶ **Voters' support for a national paid family and medical leave law mirrors their perceptions of their own financial vulnerability in the face of a serious family or medical issue.** Seven in 10 voters (71 percent) say it is likely – and 43 percent say it is “very likely” – that they or their family would face significant financial hardship if they had a serious illness, had a new child or had to care for a parent, spouse or child with a serious illness. Only 25 percent say significant financial hardship would be unlikely to occur if they were faced with serious family or medical needs.
  - ▶ **Super-majorities of both women (77 percent) and men (65 percent) say they or their families would likely face significant financial hardship in the event of a serious family or medical issue.** However, women appear to feel the concern more acutely, with a full half (50 percent) saying that it is “very likely” that their families would face significant financial hardship, compared to 35 percent of men.
    - ▶ Substantially higher shares of women under 50, women without college degrees, mothers and working women express concerns about financial hardship, relative to voters overall. More than half of each of these subgroups of women say that significant financial hardship would be “very likely” and more than eight in 10 say significant financial hardship would be at least somewhat likely.
  - ▶ **Voters of all ages are concerned about financial hardship, but voters in their 40s appear to be more sensitive to concerns than other voters.** Nearly three-quarters of voters in their 40s (74 percent) say they would likely face significant financial hardship, including 48 percent who say they would be “very likely” to do so.
  - ▶ **Black and Latino voters are more likely than white voters to express concerns about financial hardship in the face of serious family or medical issues.** Nearly two-thirds of black voters and more than half of Latino voters say significant financial hardship would be “very likely” and about eight in 10 of each group (83 percent of blacks and 78 percent of Latinos) say it is at least somewhat likely that they would face significant financial hardship. Among white voters, 69 percent say significant financial hardship is at least somewhat likely, including 38 percent who say hardship would be “very likely.”

## Voters' Views of Businesses That Support These Policies

- ▶ **Businesses could benefit from having – and publicly announcing – paid family and medical leave policies.** Nearly six in 10 voters (58 percent) say they would be more

likely to spend money at a company that offers a product or service they need if they knew that company offered a generous paid family and medical leave benefit to their employees; four in 10 (41 percent) say they would be “much more” likely to spend money at that company. Just one-third (36 percent) say a company’s policy would make no difference.

- ▶ Adults 65 and older, women 50 and older, unmarried women, voters with graduate degrees, black voters and current and retired union members report particular interest in spending money at companies with generous paid family and medical leave policies. About half or more of each group say they would be “much more likely” to buy services or goods from such companies.

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1 National Partnership for Women & Families. (2016, December). *Election Analysis Suggests Voters Reward Candidates Who Advocate for Family Friendly Workplace Policies*. Retrieved 5 December 2016, from <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/research-library/work-family/memo-election-analysis-suggests-voters-reward-candidates-who-advocate-for-family-friendly-workplace-policies.pdf>

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The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, access to quality health care and policies that help women and men meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at [NationalPartnership.org](http://NationalPartnership.org).

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