



To: Interested Parties

From: Celinda Lake, David Mermin, and Brittany L. Stalsburg; Lake Research Partners and Anat Shenker Osorio; ASOCommunications

Celinda Lake
President

Alysia Snell
Partner

Re: Speaking to women on immigration issues

Date: March 25, 2013

David Mermin
Partner

Robert G. Meadow, Ph.D.
Partner

Daniel R. Gotoff
Partner

Joshua E. Ulibarri
Partner

Highlights from recent immigration research conducted among women voters by Lake Research Partners¹ and ASOCommunications on behalf of the We Belong Together campaign, a campaign to engage U.S.-born and immigrant women across the country in pushing for immigration reform (www.webelongtogether.org), are presented below. Our goal for this project has been to find language and frames that speak to women voters—that engage and persuade them on immigration—as well as look at answers on enforcement.

Robert X. Hillman
Chief Financial Officer

Shannon Marshall
Chief Operating Officer

Rick A. Johnson
Senior Vice President

The messages we found have the potential to dramatically shift women voters' views of immigrants—**persuadable women voters shift 30% in a positive direction toward immigrants** after hearing an opposition message and several pro-immigration messages. These messages were also delivered with a **woman's voice, which we found persuades women voters** more than a male voice.

The best messages tap into core values of **freedom** and **opportunity** while connecting those values to the need for a **common sense** immigration process. Women have very positive responses to **values of community, commitment, contribution to our culture, responsibility to others, and protecting families**. Language about strengthening communities is powerful and shifts attitudes in a positive direction toward immigrants.

¹ Lake Research Partners conducted a national online dial survey of 800 likely women voters, February 20-26, 2013. The margin of error is +/-3.5%.

Message #1—Define American

The top testing language taps into core American values and identity. Defining “American” as what you do and how you live your life scores high. It also refers to equality for men and women.

As Americans, we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men and women were created equal. We believe that families should stick together, that we should look out for each other, and that hard work should be rewarded. It’s not about what you look like or where you were born that makes you American - it’s how you live your life and what you do that defines you here in this country. That’s why all Americans who love this country deserve a common sense immigration process that includes a roadmap for people who aspire to be citizens.

- A gendered version of this message also tested well :
 - “**As women**, we believe that families should stick together, that we have a responsibility to help our neighbors.”
- This message is the top message across key demographic groups, including Democrats and persuadable Republicans.

Message #2—Strengthen Communities

Language that stresses safety, children, and strong communities is popular with all women. Talking about how we all do our part to contribute is strong.

We are all better off when our communities are healthy and strong, we feel safe and our children can thrive. As women and mothers, we know the importance of working to build strong communities and families, and being good neighbors who help each other. As Americans, we all do our part to contribute, and we're all the better for having hardworking new immigrants as members of our communities [by being customers in our stores, giving to local churches and charities, and participating as parents in our schools]. That’s why we need an immigration process that strengthens, not divides, our communities.

- This message was the most powerful predictor of a positive shift in favorability towards immigrants. Persuadable Republicans also respond well to this message.
- In general, using lists to describe immigrants and giving examples should be avoided. Let people fill in for themselves the ways in which immigrants contribute to the community.

Message #3—Equality and Opportunity

Appealing to the idea of women helping women alienates the Opposition while strongly engaging the Base, Persuadables, and Shifters. Language that connects America's commitment to providing freedom and opportunity to women and girls to the need for an immigration process that lives up to those values creates a good contrast. The Opposition is particularly alienated by a reference to the need for an immigration process and the language of women supporting each other.

Americans are at our best when we help one another. Women especially know the importance of coming together and wouldn't be where we are today without the help and support of the women in our lives – [our mothers, sisters, daughters, and friends]. As Americans, we honor and celebrate our unique commitment to protecting families, and giving equal opportunities and respect to women and girls, and many immigrants come here to share in this commitment. That's why we need an immigration process that reflects this commitment and provides freedom and opportunity to everyone, especially mothers, daughters and families.

- This message resonated particularly for non-college educated voters and Democrats.

Message #4—Women Move

Women Move connects to the core, fundamental American value of freedom. Language that defines freedom as being who you want to be alienates the Opposition from the Base, while Persuadables respond well to having the freedom to say what you want to say, and go where you want to go.

Women move here to make life better for themselves and their families. It's hard to move and it takes courage, but you do it to put food on the table or send your kids to a decent school. New Americans move here seeking the freedom and opportunity often denied in other places. Here, man or woman, you have the freedom to be who you want to be, say what you want to say, and go where you want to go. America is supposed to be the land of the free and home of the brave; we need an immigration process that honors these ideals.

- This message was very strong among women with immigrant parents.

Language Do's and Don'ts

You say...	People hear...	Say instead...
Nation of immigrants	Vague platitude, not my experience	Immigrants remind us who we are and make our country stronger
Immigrants do pay taxes	I should assess source of your facts; issue not about values but what immigrants can do for us	New Americans realize the value of participating in our communities
Fix the broken immigration system	The movement of people into our nation is a big, intractable, problem	Create a common sense immigration process
Came here through no fault of their own	Immigrant children may be fine but their parents aren't	Circumstances of birth don't dictate limits of potential
[Problems with] enforcement	Ameliorating harm, not creating good	Put laws into practice
Unjust laws	Elimination of harm, not creation of good; potential for chaos	Freedom and opportunity
Secure the borders	Border currently not secure	Freedom and security for all
Deal with future flows	Immigrants are a giant mass and a problem to manage	Welcome New Americans
People prey upon/hunt down/lure immigrants	Immigrants are helpless animals	Hard work should be rewarded
Families are separated, parents are deported	Deliberate manipulation; no agent responsible for actions	Families should stick together
People who create business, care for our kids...	Dull list of descriptors, immigrants not real life people but categories	We all deserve recognition for the work that we do
No human is illegal	Immigrants aren't like "us"	All our children deserve a brighter future

For more information about this research, e-mail Celinda Lake (clake@lakeresearch.com), David Mermin (dmermin@lakeresearch.com), or Anat Shenker (anatshenker@gmail.com).