

Date: June 25, 2014

To: Friends of Democracy Corps and WWVAF

From: Stan Greenberg, James Carville, and Erica Seifert, Democracy Corps
Page Gardner, WWVAF

Women's Economic Agenda

Powerful impact on vote and turnout in 2014

This is a turning point in the 2014 off-year elections when parties, candidates and leaders can recognize how central are unmarried women and the Rising American Electorate to the Democrats' chances and how clear a path there is to get their votes and get them to vote.¹ This is the main finding of the most recent survey and focus groups from Democracy Corps and Women's Voices Women Vote Action Fund. This report should be a call to arms, a populist call to arms that sets up the stakes in these terms:

It's critical to vote in November. If Republicans win, big money will get its way, and even more hard-working women and men will be drowning. You can change that. We have an economic plan, including a women's economic agenda. When the middle class succeeds, America succeeds.

This populist set-up, along with the "in-your-shoes" narrative about people's economic struggles, and a policy agenda that includes equal pay and equal health insurance, help for working mothers and help with better jobs through raised minimum wage and more affordable college, shifts the race from one where Democrats trail by 1 point to one in which they are ahead by 3. It also dramatically increases the turnout and Democratic preference of unmarried voters.

Off-year elections usually break one way or the other in the final six months. Right now, the national congressional race is largely stable and tied, but Democrats are being held back by unmarried women, who now give Democrats just a 17-point advantage on the vote (compared to a 20-point margin in 2010 and a 34-point margin in 2012). There is no bigger factor.

¹ The survey of 950 2012 voters (950 weighted) and 827 likely 2014 voters nationwide was conducted from June 10-15, 2014. Unless otherwise noted, margin of error for the full sample= +/- 3.18 percentage points at 95% confidence. Margin of error for likely 2014 voters= +/-3.41.



There are big forces that could shift the race: lack of enthusiasm for the president is a risk for Democrats; increasing hostility towards Republicans in Congress is a risk for Republicans. Unmarried women are the opportunity for Democrats to take their fate in their hands.

Key findings:

- Unmarried women can make or break the election in 2014.
- When 2014 likely voters are exposed to empathetic “in your shoes” messaging and an economic agenda for working women and men, it shifts the vote from -1 to +3.
- When unmarried women are exposed to the same message framework, they shift from +17 Democratic margin to +31 and their turnout increases by 10 points.
- The economic agenda for working women and men includes a cluster of powerful policies on helping working mothers, equal pay and equal health insurance, raising the minimum wage and making college affordable to get to better jobs.
- GOP attitude toward equal pay has most turnout effect and GOP attacks on Obamacare and economic policies increase Democratic turnout.
- The national congressional race is tied and stable, with Democrats held back by modest vote among base RAE and unmarried women.
- Unmarried women are the main story because they are reporting modest turnout intentions and the vote among this group is now close to 2010 level. But they clearly can be moved and mobilized by “in your shoes” messaging.
- Two contextual factors: 1. Wrong track and modest job approval for the president, and 2. Increased hostility towards Republicans and Congress. Which will come to matter more will tell us how the race breaks.
- Powerful closing rationale: if Republicans win, the people with money win and more working men and women will be drowning.

Congressional vote and state of the nation

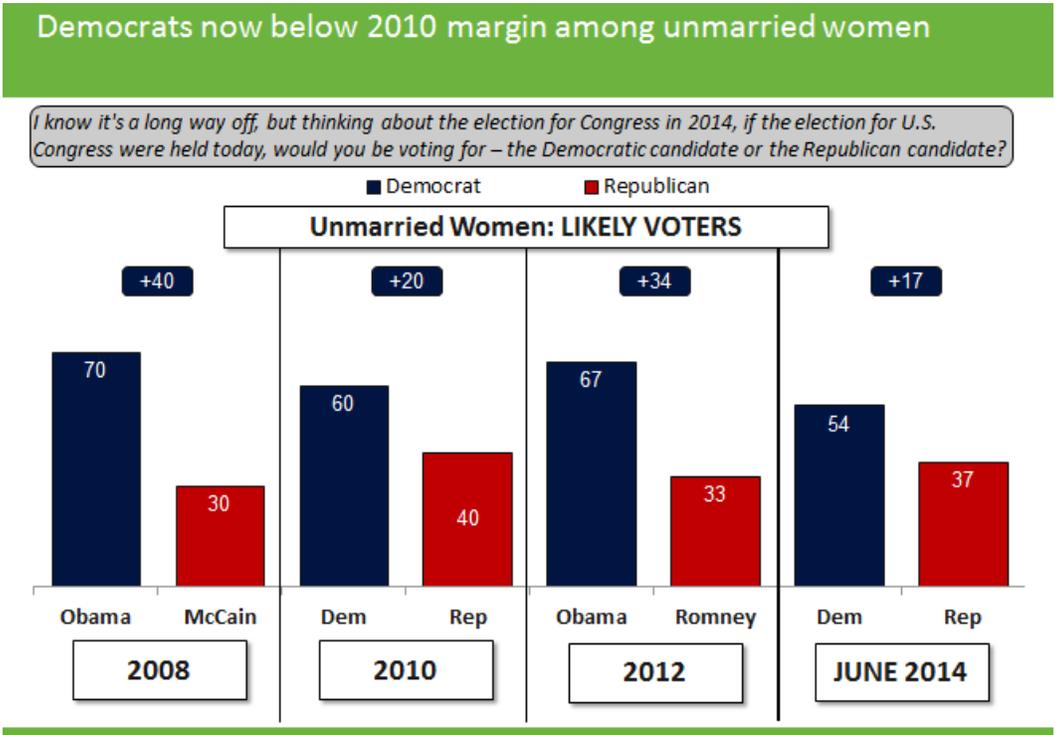
The race is dead even, and we are getting bored reporting that. This report offers decisive advice to change this. Among voters likely to vote in 2014, the vote is even at 45 percent to 46 percent.

The race has not been able to break for Democrats because the Rising American Electorate, particularly unmarried women, are underperforming even 2010 margins, which was a terrible year. And among unmarried women likely to vote in 2014, Democrats are winning by just 17 points—17 points below the margin they gave President Obama in 2012 and 3 points below their margin for Democrats in 2010.

Unless progressives engage these voters and make politics matter to them, this is likely to be a repeat of 2010. A sizeable 85 percent of non-RAE voters, say they are “almost certain” to vote in November. By contrast, two-thirds (68 percent) of RAE voters who voted in 2012 report that

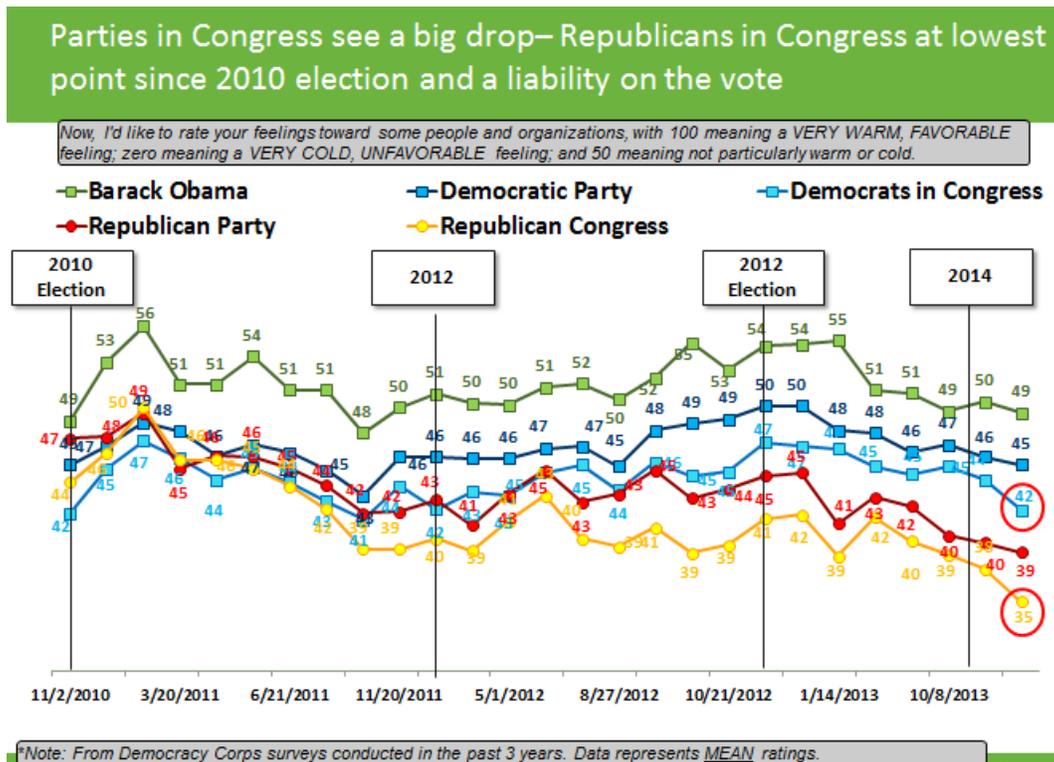


they are “almost certain” to vote in 2014. The Congressional race is dead even--however, among those who voted in 2012 but are unlikely to vote in November, Democrats enjoy a 33-point margin on the vote.



The mood of the country has grown increasingly pessimistic since the start of 2014. This is apparent in voters’ deep frustration with their political leaders, and about 40 percent of RAE and unmarried women disapprove of the president’s performance. That is the context.

But just as big and part of the uncertainty is the sinking public view of leaders and parties – with the Republicans in the House leading the pack.



The Democrats’ in-your-shoes populist message

The WWVAF focus groups developed the “in-your-shoes” language that is a precondition to being heard on the economy. Candidates have to get what is happening to peoples’ lives, how “people are drowning because jobs don’t pay enough to live on. We need leaders who can live a day in our lives and make a change for us...” That sets up a big choice between Republicans who represent the interests of the wealthiest and Democrats with policies for working women and men.

The Democratic message was more favorable among all voters, but especially among the RAE and unmarried women. Furthermore, regression analysis shows that both messages produced an effect on turnout.

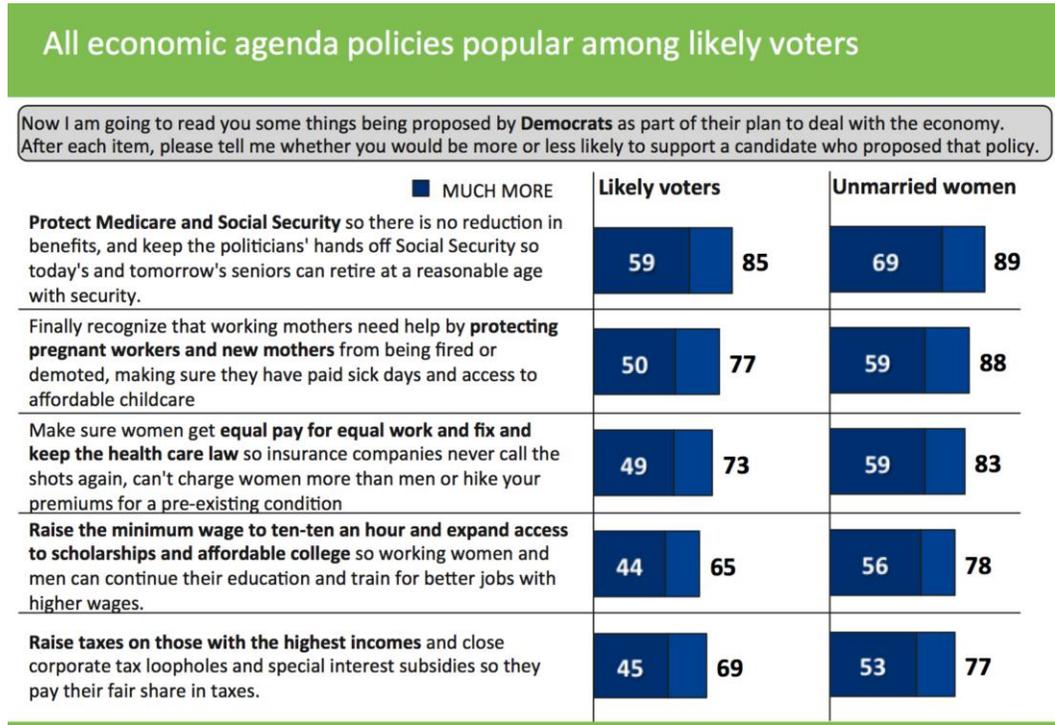
But what gives the narrative power is the economic agenda for working women and men – that includes a disproportionate number of policies. The strongest for unmarried women and most impactful on vote and turnout are those that form a ‘women’s economic agenda’. The agenda includes policies that are tied to the narrative:

1. Equal pay and equal health insurance which are key to equity, including women’s pay and their ability to grapple with the rising cost of living.



2. Finally recognizing the challenges of working mothers with policies that help.
3. Raising the minimum wage and increasing access to affordable college so women can get better pay.

The agenda also included Medicare and raising taxes on the wealthiest individuals and corporations. These policies are popular among all voters, but particularly among unmarried women.

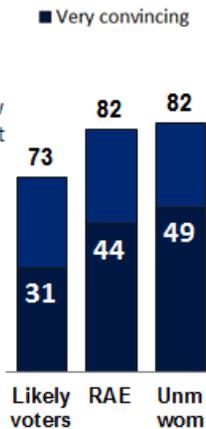




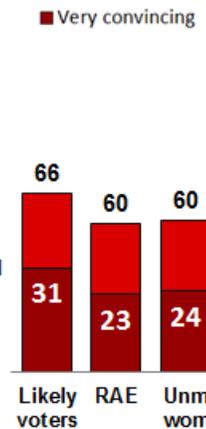
“In your shoes” economic message stronger than “Obama failed on economy” message and big impact on turnout; GOP message bigger impact on vote

Now I am going to read you some things a Democrat/Republican is saying about the economy and what needs to be done to make things better. Please tell me whether you find it a very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing, or a not at all convincing statement about the economy and how to make it better.

(IN YOUR SHOES) People are drowning because jobs don't pay enough to live on. We need leaders who can live a day of our lives and make change for us, not for the richest who show up with the big money. We must help people here with affordable college, job training, and childcare. We must raise the minimum wage and make sure women get equal pay so working women and families can keep up with the cost of living. We need an economy here that works for working people and the middle class again, not just those with the big money.

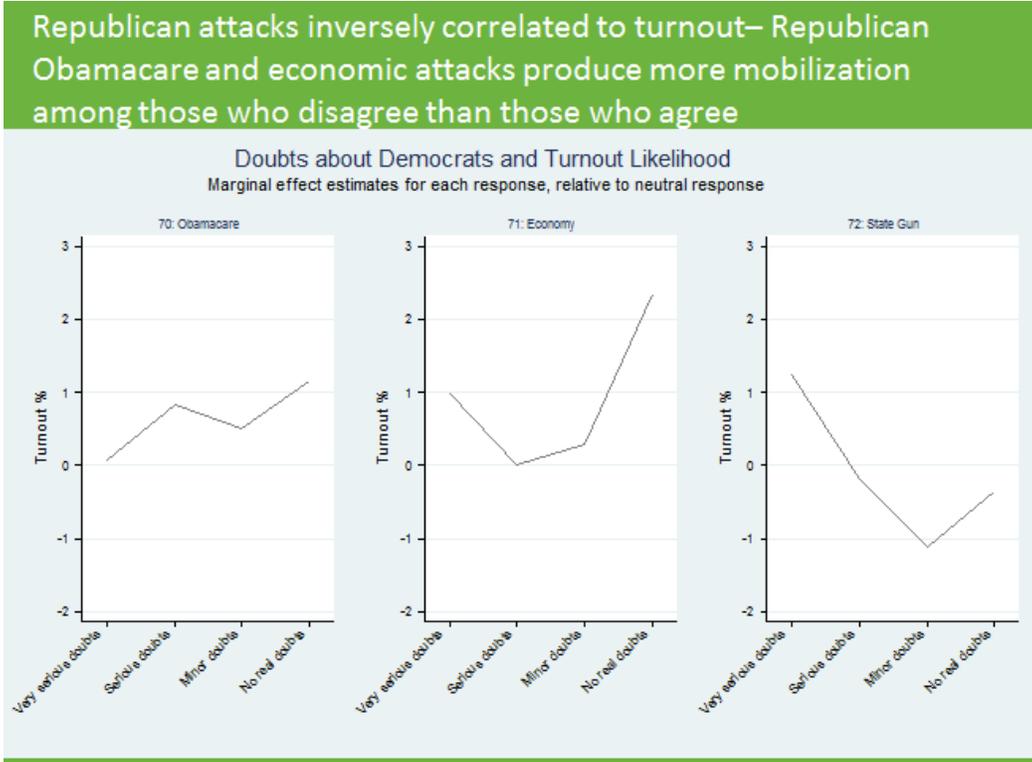


(OBAMA FAILED ON ECONOMY) President Obama has failed on the economy. The middle class is struggling with declining paychecks, high unemployment, and the rising costs of healthcare, college, and even a tank of gas. Bigger government, higher spending, and never ending deficits are not the answer. We need to repeal Obamacare, cut regulations, and lower taxes. We need to build the Keystone Pipeline and use our energy to create jobs and lower gas prices. We can bring back opportunity, balance the budget, and spark an economic recovery if we get big government out of the way.



The battle between the parties raises the risks for Republicans and effects turnout. There are two big levers apparent in the data.

1. **Republican policies and attitudes on equal pay for women.** Democrats get a bump in turnout when attacking Republicans for failing to believe that there is a pay gap and failing to support paycheck fairness legislation. In regression analyses, this had the strongest impact on mobilizing voters against Republicans.
2. **Turnout backlash against Republicans.** Republicans also have a strong agenda, and their emphasis on cutting spending and taxes is popular. But when they attack Democrats on the economy and Obamacare, those that disagree are more mobilized to vote. In sum, these debates produce a net benefit for Democrats.



Framing the choice for the election shifts vote and turnout

The closing Republican argument is a call for voters to send a message at the polls in November.

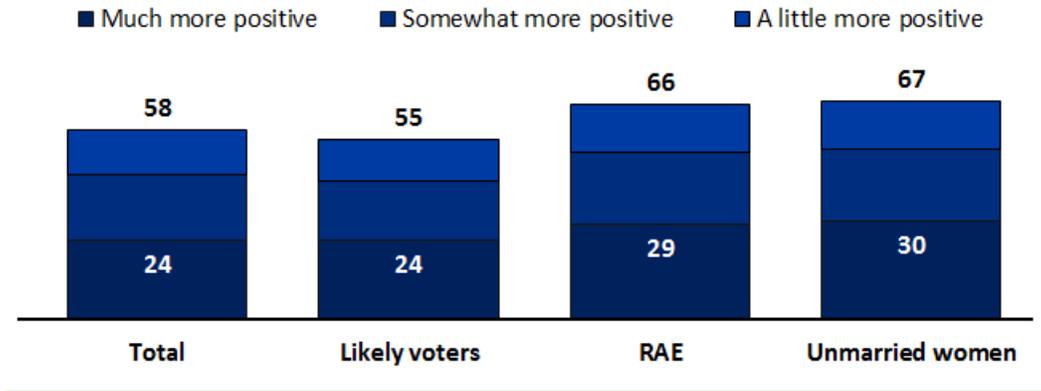
The Democratic one summarizes the “in-your-shoes” and populist message and policies and changes the race pretty dramatically. The Democrat says: “It’s critical to vote in November. If Republicans win, big money will get its way and it will be even harder; working men and women will be drowning. You can change that. We have an economic plan. When the middle class succeeds, America succeeds.” Two-thirds of unmarried women say this makes them more likely to vote Democratic – back up to 2012 levels.



Strongest closing argument focuses on hard working women and men who are drowning and economic plan for the middle class

Now I am going to read you something Democrats are saying about this year's election. Please tell me whether it makes you feel much more positive, somewhat more, a little more, no more positive or more negative about Democrats.

It's critical to vote in November. If Republicans win, big money will get its way, and even more hard working women and men will be drowning. You can change that. We have an economic plan. When the middle class succeeds, America succeeds.



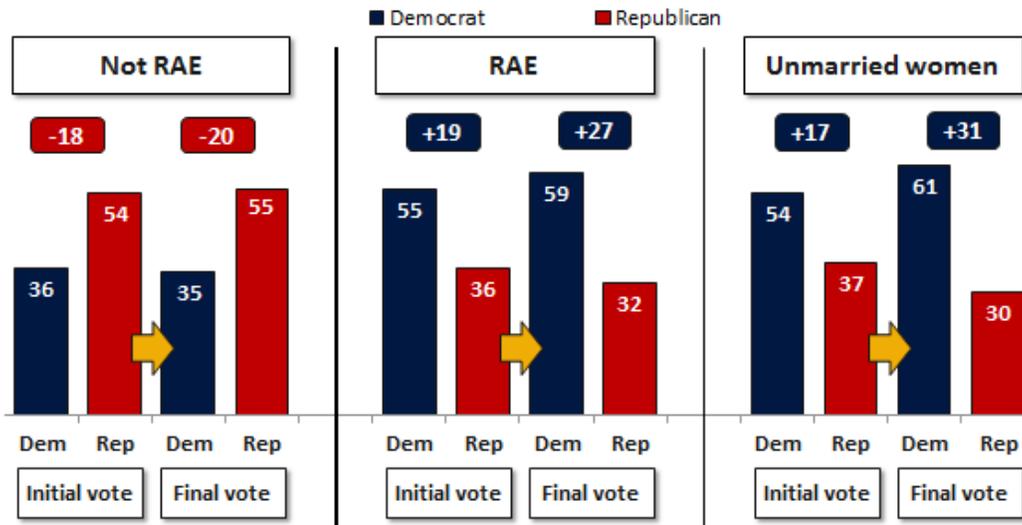
At the conclusion of the survey—after respondents heard an equal number of messages and policies from both sides—the net vote shifts 4 points—from a margin of -1 to a margin of +3.

The effect is particularly significant among the RAE and unmarried women. Indeed, we find no significant shift among those who are not RAE—this result is totally produced by the RAE and unmarried women. Among the RAE, Democrats’ margins increase from +19 to +27. And among unmarried women, Democrats’ vote margin increases from +17 to +31—net 11 points better than the margin they gave Democrats in 2010 and nearing their support for Democrats in 2012.



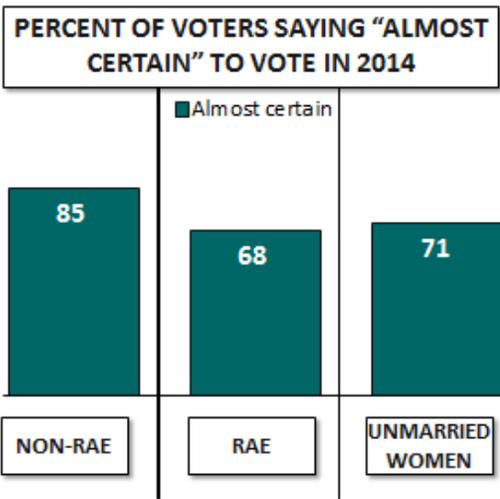
Vote shift comes from RAE, especially unmarried women

I know it's a long way off, but thinking about the election for Congress in 2014, if the election for U.S. Congress were held today, would you be voting for – the Democratic candidate or the Republican candidate?

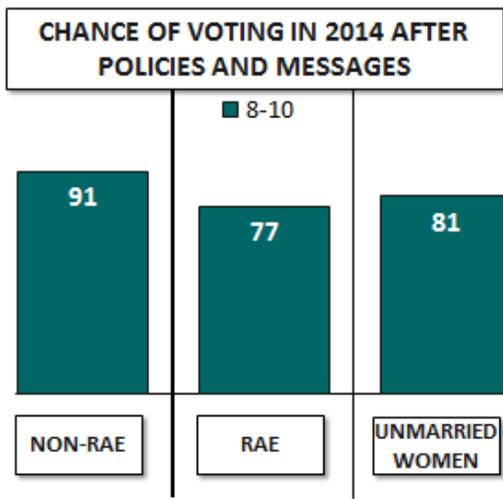


After hearing economic plan dominated by women's economic agenda and message, unmarried women more energized

I know it's a long way off, but what are the chances of your voting in the election for Congress in November: are you almost certain to vote, will you probably vote, are the chances 50-50, or don't you think you will vote?



And thinking again about this year's election. Many people vote in Presidential elections, but not in elections like the one this year for Congress and other offices. What would you say is the likelihood of you voting in the November election for Congress and other offices on a 0-10 scale.





Critically, these messages and policies also produce higher levels of enthusiasm among unmarried women and the RAE, who currently report lower levels of turnout in the off-year election. The non-RAE respondents increase their turnout by 6 points but the unmarried women and RAE show turnout increases near 10 percent.

We think this narrative, policy, and choice can change this stable race and increase turnout. After a year-long series of projects by WVWV and Democracy Corps, it is ready for prime time.