

GREENBERG QUINLAN ROSNER RESEARCH

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To: Interested Parties
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Creating a New Economic Narrative

Engaging the Rising American Electorate for 2012

As the end of Congress's summer recess nears and Washington prepares to reengage on the debate over the economy, new research¹ makes clear how essential it is for progressives to engage the voters who put them in power in 2006 and 2008 using an economic narrative that connects with their current lives and motivates them.

The Rising American Electorate—unmarried women, people of color, and younger voters—comprises a rapidly growing majority of the eligible voting population in this country. These voters formed a strong base for progressive victories and drove change in 2006 and 2008; however, among some, their support for Democrats dropped in 2010. Regaining that support and motivating these voters to turn out is crucial for President Obama's reelection and congressional victories in 2012 among those who support an agenda for economic recovery for the middle class.

This is a real challenge. Dissatisfaction with Washington's inability to make any progress on economic issues, coupled with the fact that these voters are disproportionately feeling the brunt of the economic downturn, creates uncertainty about those currently in office and leaves RAE voters with little motivation to engage in political issues. Key groups including unmarried women and young voters continue to indicate strong support for Obama and the Democrats heading into next year, but a stronger economic rationale is needed to ensure they turn out and support traditional allies who support their public policy agenda.

Uncertainty About Progressive's Ability to Handle Economic Problems

Those in Congress who are concerned about the middle class and those most damaged by the current economic crisis have yet to make the case strongly enough that they can solve the economic problems facing Americans, particularly to unmarried and young voters. Despite the significant partisan advantage that Democrats enjoy among these groups, that advantage does not translate to confidence on handling the economy. Among RAE voters, a 27-point tilt in

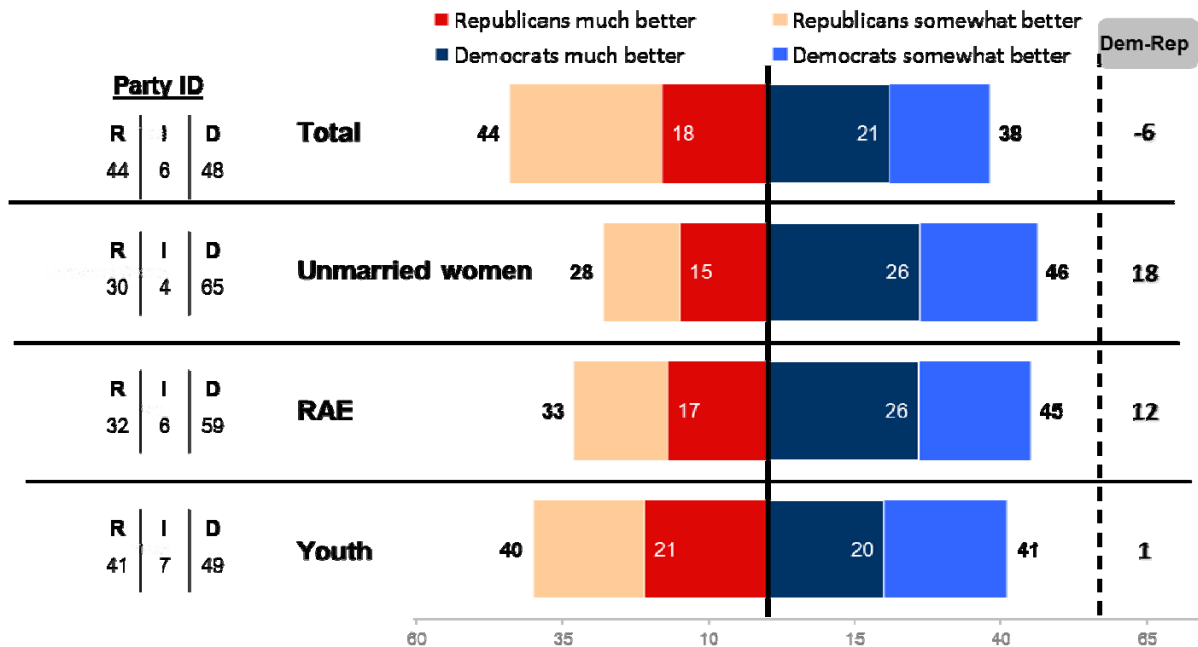
¹ This memo is based on a national survey of 1480 likely 2012 voters (1000 weighted) August 6-10, 2011 conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research for Democracy Corps and Women's Voices, Women Vote Action Fund. Unless otherwise noted, margin of error= +/- 2.5 percentage points at 95 percent confidence.



partisanship is cut to 12 points on whether Democrats or Republicans would do a better job on the economy. This gap exists among a number of key groups, including unmarried women and youth.

RAE Uncertain on Progressive’s Handling of the Economy

Now I am going to ask you something different. I am going to read a list of issues and I want you to tell me whether, overall, you think the Democrats or the Republicans would do a better job with this issue. If you do not know, just tell me and we will move on to the next item. (Ranked by the economy)



While RAE voters believe that Democrats are more likely than Republicans to look out for the interests of women, they are uncertain that their interests are currently being served on economic issues. The debt ceiling debate led to a less favorable view of Democrats (39 percent more favorable, 45 percent less favorable) among RAE voters and a majority (52 percent) of RAE voters thinks the debt agreement will have a significant and negative impact on them.

Women’s Economic Concerns Center on Wages and Cuts to Benefits and State Workers

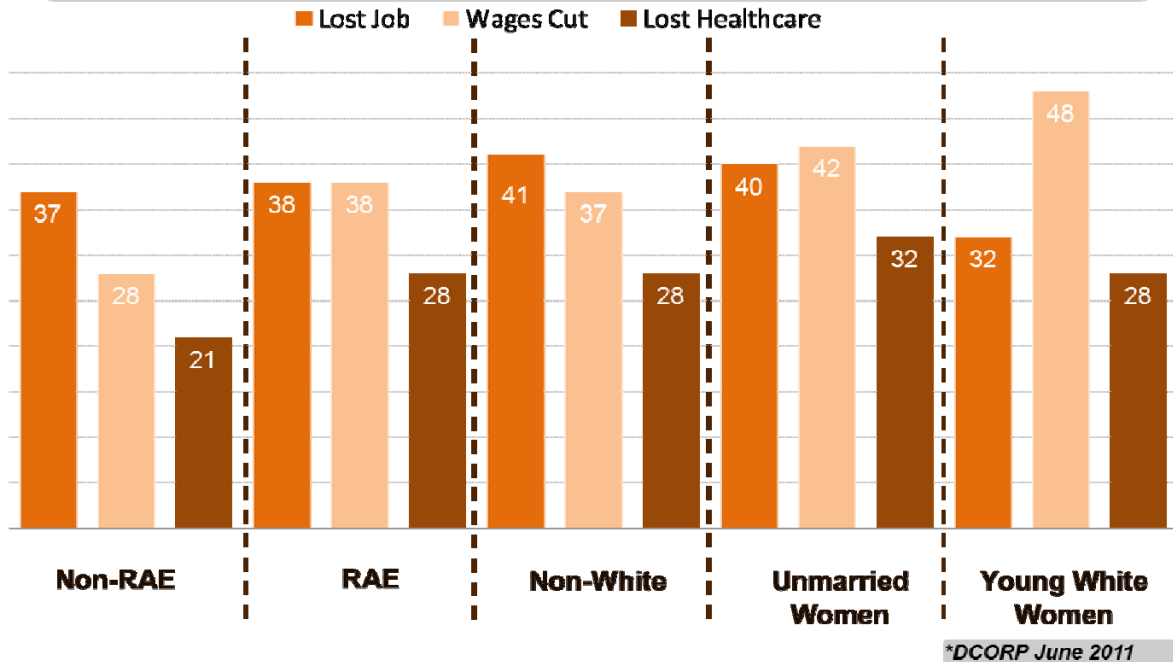
At this point, economic concerns consume RAE voters. Voters in the RAE—particularly unmarried women, voters of color, and white women under the age of 50—have been hard hit by the economy. These voters are more likely than the overall electorate to have themselves or a family member experience a significant reduction in economic well-being over the past year; nearly half of younger white women have seen their own wages or those of an immediate family



member cut, while one third of unmarried women or their immediate families have lost health insurance.²

RAE Voters are Suffering

I'm going to read you a list of economic experiences some people have recently had. For each one, please tell me if you have directly experienced this in the last year, if your family has directly experienced this in the last year, or if someone you know well, like a friend, neighbor or co-worker, has experienced this or if no one you know well has experienced it. (Ranked by personally /family member affected)



While progressives are appropriately focusing on jobs and lowering unemployment, RAE voters face just as much struggle with the cost of living—made more difficult because of reduced wages. It is not surprising, therefore, that RAE voters have the strongest reaction to making changes that specifically affect women’s standing in the economy as it relates to wages. Nearly half of RAE voters want to see changes made to pay inequities between men and women, including 52 percent of unmarried women who are most likely to be the sole breadwinner in their households.

Focusing on an economic agenda that lowers the cost of living also resonates with RAE voters—particularly older unmarried women—in the context of protecting seniors. These voters say that preventing cuts to Medicare and Social Security benefits that help the elderly poor—two-thirds of whom are women—is also among the most important actions on economic changes that impact women.

² Data from Democracy Corps June 2011 Poll



RAE Voters React to Changes that Impact Women’s Economic Standing

	All	Women	Unmarried Women	Unmarried women ages 18-49	Unmarried Women Ages 50+
Due to the recession, women are increasingly the sole breadwinner in many families. Yet women are still getting paid less than men doing the same job.	43	47	52	51	52
More than two-thirds of poor people over 65 are women, who face potential cuts in Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.	37	40	40	34	46
Women are the majority in state worker positions such as nurses and teachers and these jobs are being cut at much greater rates across the country.	34	34	35	39	29
Millions of dollars have been cut from college loans and job training programs that allow women to get ahead.	21	19	19	21	16
Only 10 percent of the new jobs created in the last 12 months went to women compared to 90 percent to men.	21	20	22	30	13
<i>Now for something a little different. I am going to read you some facts about women and the economy. After I read this list, please tell me which TWO you believe are the most important to change.</i>					

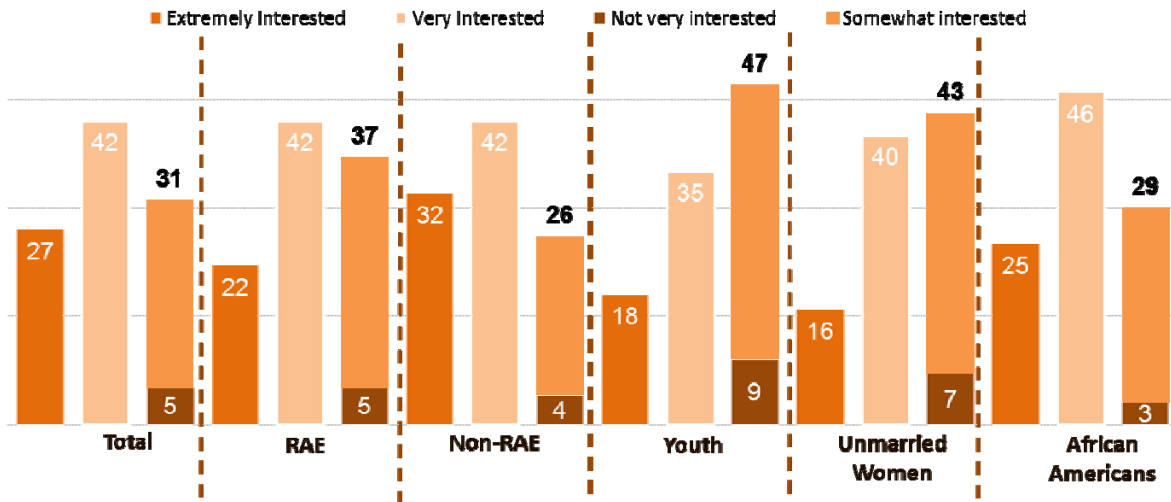
RAE Voters Less Motivated to Vote than RAE Voters

RAE voters need to be re-engaged and motivated if they are going to turnout and provide the type of support needed for progressive victories. Just one in five voters in the RAE say they are extremely interested in elections and debates in Washington, compared to nearly one-third of non-RAE voters. The lack of engagement is even more pronounced among young voters and points to the need to provide a compelling narrative to engage these crucial voters.



RAE Less Engaged

How interested would you say you are in national issues, like elections and legislative debates in Washington or in your state capitol -- extremely interested, very interested, somewhat interested, or not very interested?



RAE Voters' Support for Progressive Candidates Remains Below 2008 Levels

The RAE helped drive the progressive victories in 2006 and 2008, and regaining that level of support is essential to progressive wins in 2012. In 2008, Barack Obama won 69 percent of the vote among RAE voters, including 70 percent among unmarried women and 66 percent among youth. In 2010, support for Democrats dropped to 57 percent among both unmarried women and youth and 60 percent among RAE voters overall.

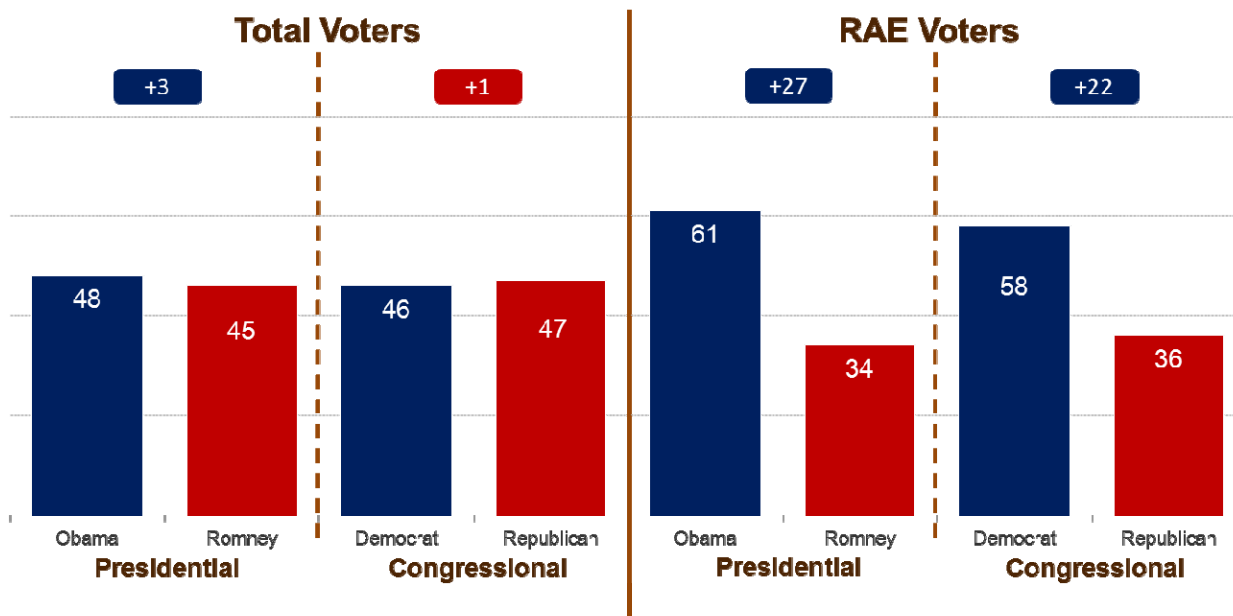
Heading into the 2012 presidential election year, RAE voters' support for Democrats still far outpaces non-RAE voters. In the presidential race, 61 percent of RAE voters are supporting Obama, compared to just 36 percent among non-RAE voters; in the congressional contest, 58 percent of voters indicate a preference for a Democratic candidate while 36 percent of non-RAE voters support the Democrat.



RAE Voters Still Heavily Democratic

I know it's a long way off, but thinking about the presidential election in 2012, if the election for president were held today and the candidates were Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney, for whom would you vote?

I know it is a long way off, but thinking about the elections for Congress in 2012, if the election for U.S. Congress were held today, would you be voting for (DEMOCRATIC HOUSE CANDIDATE) or (REPUBLICAN HOUSE CANDIDATE)?

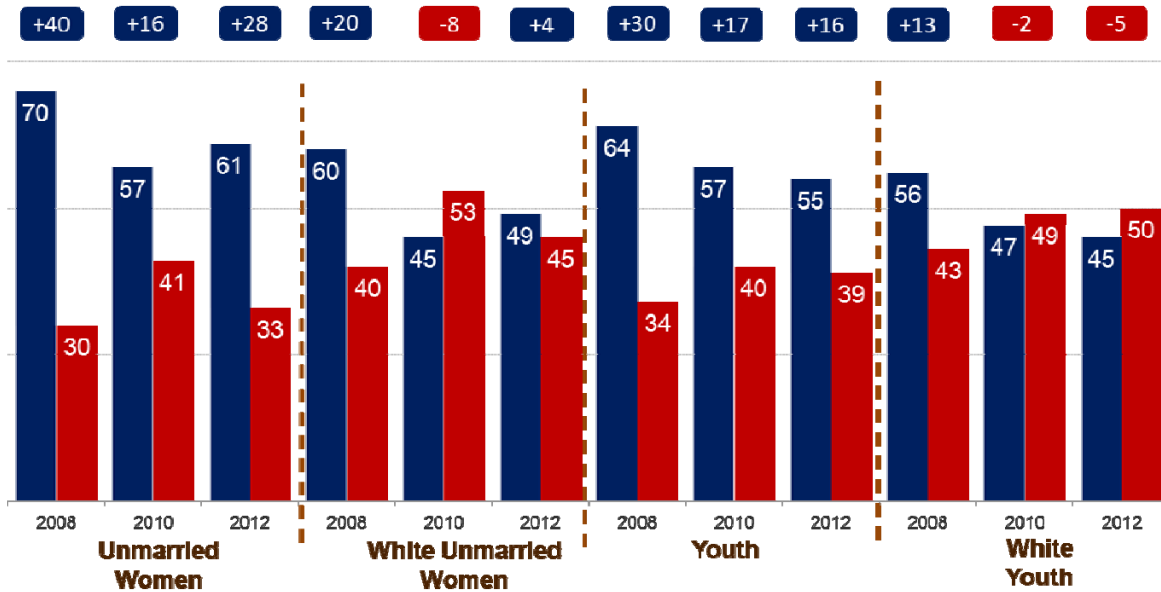


Support for Obama among unmarried women is now 5 points higher than 2010 Democratic support, but well below the level achieved in 2008. Youth voters also continue to perform slightly below 2010 levels. These trends hold among white unmarried women and white youth. Only among Hispanic and African American voters does support reach 2008 levels.



Support for Democrats Remains Well Below 2008 Levels

*I know it's a long way off, but thinking about the presidential election in 2012, if the election for president were held today and the candidates were Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Mitt Romney, for whom would you vote?**



** Note: 2008 represents Presidential Results; 2010 represents Congressional Results; 2012 represents results from the August 2011 DCORP Survey*

Conclusion

RAE voters are not hearing an economic narrative that speaks to their problems and concerns or convinces them that their leaders have the ability to solve those problems. There is a risk that these base voters – an ever increasing share of the voting eligible population and one that heralded the stunning changes of 2006 and 2008 – will lack engagement and motivation. If this is true, progressives will miss opportunities to achieve the levels of support they need to meet the challenges of 2012. Developing a strong economic framework that addresses the concerns of RAE voters is an important moment in building a winning coalition in 2012.