

To: Interested Parties  
Fr: Celinda Lake, Alysia Snell, and Cate Gormley  
Re: Public Opinion on Birth Control and Family Planning among California Voters  
Date: April 16, 2019

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Recent polling<sup>1</sup> conducted by Essential Access Health revealed broad and deep support for access to birth control and family planning. Voters are concerned by recent changes to the Title X federal family planning program for low income people and believe these changes will make it harder for women to access birth control. Voters across gender, age, region, and religious affiliation agree on these issues. Moreover, voters share these attitudes regardless of their views on abortion.

- California voters strongly favor and believe it is very important access to birth control for everyone who wants it or needs it – regardless of their ability to pay.
  - Solid majorities of voters say this access to birth control is important: 87% say this is important, 72% say very important.
  - On a scale that goes from 0 to 10, where 10 means and 0 means, about eight-in-ten (80%) favor access to birth control for everyone who wants it or needs it; 60% strongly favor/rate a 10.
- This support for access to birth control for everyone who wants it or needs it crosses demographic and attitudinal subgroups:
  - Men (76% favor, 84% important), Independents (76% favor, 83% important), and Republicans (62% favor, 73% important) all favor access to birth control and believe it is important for there to be access for everyone who wants it or needs it.
  - Millennials are particularly likely to favor and believe access to birth control is important (85% favor, 93% important).
  - At least two-thirds of voters in every region of the state favor and believe access to birth control is important: LA County (84% favor, 93% important), Inland Empire (72% favor, 79% important), San Diego<sup>1</sup> (81% favor, 87% important), Central Valley (77% favor, 86% important), Sacramento (67% favor, 80% important), Bay Area (86% favor, 91% important).
  - Even voters who believe abortion is wrong and should be illegal favor (53%) access to birth control and believe it is important (62%). Nearly universally, those who personally support abortion and believe it should be legal and available favor (92%) and believe access is important (96%). Three-quarters (74%) of voters who are personally against abortion, but do not believe government should prevent a woman from making that decision for herself favor access to birth control, and 85% believe it is important.
  - Both Protestant (77% favor, 84% important) and Catholic (81% favor, 88% important) voters favor access to birth control and believe it is important.

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<sup>1</sup> Note small sample size

- Two-thirds (65%) of voters think currently low-income women may have a lot or some difficulty getting access to their preferred birth control method.
  - Three-in-five men (60%) and 56% of Independents believe low-income women may have a lot or some difficulty.
  - Republicans split: 45% say low-income women may have a lot or some difficulty, while 43% say a little or not much.
  - Three-quarters of Millennials (74%) believe low-income women may have a lot or some difficulty.
  - Across regions, over half of voters believe low-income women may have a lot or some difficulty: LA County (69%), Orange County (54%), Inland Empire (63%), San Diego (58%), Central Valley (61%), Fresno (59%) Sacramento (58%), Bay Area (73%).
  - More pro-choice voters are more likely than anti-choice voters to think low-income women face difficulty: support/legal (77%), against government interference (57%), wrong/illegal (39%).
  - Protestant (64%) and Catholic (58%) voters believe low-income women may have a lot or some difficulty.
  
- Voters are very concerned about the Title X policy changes recently released by the Department of Health and Human Services. Specifically, 64% of California voters are very concerned and 78% are concerned that the policy changes would eliminate the requirement to give women information about all of their pregnancy options, even if they ask for this information.
  - A majority of men (71% concerned), Independents (72%), and Republicans (63%) are concerned about this policy change.
  - Over four-in-five Millennials (85%) are concerned.
  - At least two-thirds of voters across regions are concerned: LA County (80%), Inland Empire (82%), San Diego<sup>2</sup> (85%), Central Valley (76%), Fresno<sup>3</sup> (79%) Sacramento (64%), Bay Area (82%)
  - Voters' views on abortion do not impact their concerns about this policy change. Voters who believe abortion is wrong and should be illegal (61%), voters who are personally against abortion but do not believe government should prevent a woman from making that decision for herself (71%), and those who personally support abortion and believe it should be legal and available (87%) are all concerned.
  - Both Protestant (73%) and Catholic (80%) voters are concerned.
  
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of voters believe the proposed policy changes to birth control and family planning services will make it harder for women to access their preferred birth control method, including low-income women.
  - Men (57%) and Independents (61%) believe the policy changes will make it harder for women to access their preferred birth control method.

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<sup>2</sup> Note small sample size

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

- Republicans (39%) say it will make it harder for women, although 36% say they don't know or the changes will make no difference.
- A solid majority of Millennials (61%) believe the policy changes will make it harder for women.
- Voters across regions think these changes will make it harder: LA County (65%), Orange County (59%), Inland Empire (55%), San Diego (71%), Central Valley (63%), Fresno (63%) Sacramento (49%), Bay Area (70%)
- Over a third (36%) of voters who believe abortion is wrong and should be illegal think this will make it harder, while a solid majority of those who support abortion and believe it should be legal and available (72%) and voters who are personally against abortion but do not believe government should prevent a woman from making that decision for herself (63%) think these changes will make it harder.
- Three-in-five Protestant (60%) and Catholic (60%) voters believe it will be harder.

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#### <sup>i</sup> Methodology

Survey Methodology: Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey that was conducted by telephone and online from March 28 – April 8, 2019. The survey reached a total of 1,000 likely voters in California with oversamples of 100 African American women under age 50 in low income zip codes, 100 Latina women under age 50 in low income zip codes, and 100 Asian American/Pacific Islander women under age 50 in low income zip codes, 100 Millennial women, 100 Central Valley and 100 Inland Empire residents. The oversamples were pulled from a file of low-income zip codes. The phone survey reached 500 completes and the online survey reached 500 completes.

The base sample was weighted by gender, region, age, race, party identification, and educational attainment. The millennial women sample was weighted by region, age, race, and party identification. The African American women under age 50 from low income zip codes oversample was weighted by age and educational attainment.

The Latina women under age 50 from low income zip codes oversample was weighted by age. The Asian American/Pacific Islander women under age 50 from low income zip codes oversample was weighted by age and educational attainment. The Central Valley oversample was weighted by gender, age, and party identification. The Inland Empire oversample was weighted by gender, age, race, and educational attainment. The oversamples were weighted down into the base to reflect their proportion of the actual population.

The margin of error for the total sample is +/-3.1%.