

February 16, 2012

Anzalone Liszt Research National Polling Summary

Friends,

Below you will find the weekly Anzalone Liszt Research National Polling Summary, which provides a pollster's take on data and trends that affect political campaigns.

This week, we turn our attention to the controversy over contraception, and how the public feels about this important issue.

Following our analysis are additional news items and data we thought you'd enjoy.

John Anzalone and Jeff Liszt

STORY THIS WEEK: Every Sperm is Sacred

The Republican nominating process has taken several bad turns for Mitt Romney, including an unexpected loss in Colorado and 30-point losses in Minnesota and Missouri. Yet the most troubling development for Romney has to be the unexpected explosion of social issues like contraception in the campaign.

The seamless shift to social issues is explained in part by the 2011 [Pew Political Typology Study](#), which noted, "The most visible shift in the political landscape since Pew Research's previous political typology in early 2005 is the emergence of a single bloc of across-the-board conservatives. The long-standing divide between economic, pro-business conservatives and social conservatives has blurred." In 2010 the Tea Party did a good job of keeping the focus on fiscal conservatism. That election and the debt ceiling debate have obscured a significant realignment on the right. Among the new "staunch conservatives" (11% of the total electorate), 90% agree that, "religion is a very important part of my life," which is just as high as the 90% who say "government is almost always wasteful and inefficient." In other words, there doesn't have to be a shift in who's deciding Republican primaries for social issues to come to the fore.

As turnout starts to decline (Republican turnout plummeted 57% in Missouri, 20% in Minnesota and 6% in Colorado), primaries will increasingly be decided by a bloc of highly socially *and* fiscally conservative voters. Yet this week's debate over contraception is not just bad for Mitt Romney. Republicans' move to the right on fiscal issues isn't readily apparent to the average voter (few could tell you that Reagan reduced the deficit mostly with added taxes). Contraception is a different story. Americans have near-universal

experience with contraception and family planning, which makes it hugely problematic for Republicans to run to the right on the issue.

Covering Contraception

According to the [Guttmacher Institute](#), 90% of private employer health plans currently offer birth control (though usually with a co-pay). So it's not surprising that Americans want insurance companies to cover contraception free of charge, and support the provisions of the Affordable Care Act that require them to. The most recent Fox News [poll](#) is noteworthy because it tests this issue as a requirement of Obama's healthcare reform - not in a vacuum. According to their data, 61% approve of the requirement, while just 34% disapprove. Among women, 67% approve, and among independents 58% approve. Those numbers are similar to the most recent CBS/NYT [poll](#) in which 66% support a federal requirement to cover birth control and just 26% are opposed. According to [PPP](#), a majority of Catholics (53%) and 62% of Catholic independents support requiring insurers to cover contraception. In ALR's polling for the Herndon Alliance and Know Your Care, 79% of likely Hispanic voters say free preventive care (including free contraception) makes them more likely to support the ACA.

The current CBS/NYT poll found that 61% favor a requirement to cover contraception for religiously affiliated employers such as hospitals and universities, with 31% opposed. The numbers in a recent Public Religion Research Institute poll were slightly more mixed - 55% agreed that "all employers should be required to provide their employees with healthcare plans that cover contraception or birth control at no cost," while 40% disagreed. They also found that while a slight plurality favor requiring religiously affiliated colleges and hospitals to cover contraception, a majority of 57% opposed requiring churches and places of worship to cover them. A lot depends on whether the focus is placed on the church or on the woman. In PPP's poll a majority of 57% say that women employed by Catholic hospitals and Universities should have the same rights to contraception as other women. Just 39% think there should be exemptions.

The mixed numbers in the context of churches partly explain why the fight over contraceptives has gotten so much traction on the right, even though so many Americans use contraception and support an insurance mandate to cover it.

Everybody's Doing It

According to the CDC's 2008 [National Study of Family Growth](#), 99% of sexually experienced women aged 15-44 have used birth control. That includes 93% who have used condoms, and 82% who have used the pill, and 22% who have used an injected method like Depo-Provera. Among white women, 89% have used the pill at some time, compared with 68% of Hispanic women, 78% of African-Americans, and 56% of Asians. As of 2008, 62% of all women 15-44 were using contraception while only 38% were not (including women who were pregnant or trying to get pregnant as well as those not having sex).

In their first pre-marital sexual encounter, 84% of women aged 15-44 reported using

contraception, including 72% who used a condom. The percentage who reported using a condom in their first sexual encounter increased from 34% before 1985 to 72% between 2005-2008.

The most vocal opposition to covering birth control has come from the Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Catholic Church prohibits all forms of artificial birth control (including condoms and the pill). Yet among sexually active Catholic women over 18, [almost all](#) (98%) have used a method of contraception banned by the Vatican. Fewer than 2% of sexually active Catholic women rely primarily on church-approved birth control methods.

Strong familiarity and comfort with contraception is part of the reason Americans support an "all of the above" approach to teaching sex education in schools. According to a December 2010 Hart Research [poll](#) for Planned Parenthood, "74% *disagree* that teens should only receive abstinence-only education, not information about contraception or STDs (including 68% of voters who voted for the Republican candidate for Congress in 2010)."

Planned Parenthood

About 35% of the services provided to women by Planned Parenthood are contraceptive (more than [10 times](#) the percentage of abortion-related services). While there have been repeated attempts by the new Republican House majority to roll back reproductive rights, the most visible was the attempt to de-fund Planned Parenthood in 2011. Public sentiment at the time was firmly with Planned Parenthood - according to a CNN/Opinion Research poll last April ([link](#)), 65% of adults wanted to continue funding for Planned Parenthood, while just 34% wanted to eliminate it.

That's extremely similar to Hart Research's internal polling for Planned Parenthood, which found 64% opposed to ending funding for Planned Parenthood. Independents opposed de-funding Planned Parenthood by a 64% to 29% margin. That poll showed a majority Americans with a favorable opinion of Planned Parenthood (55% positive / 25% negative).

Planned Parenthood's popularity and the publicity surrounding the House fight over de-funding laid the foundation for their battle with Komen for the Cure. When Komen attempted to de-fund breast cancer screenings from Planned Parenthood they found themselves as far on the wrong side of public opinion as Congress did. According to [SurveyUSA](#) just 30% thought Komen was right to stop funding, and 63% thought they were wrong. Just 13% said that politics "was not a part" of the decision, while 67% said it was the only reason (30%) or a major reason (37%). A PPP [poll](#) for DailyKos found a majority opposed to Komen's decision (53%) with just 39% in support - a 14-point margin siding with Planned Parenthood.

Part of the reason for Planned Parenthood's popularity may be that so many women plan their parenthood. According to CDC, the vast majority of women who intend to have

children (or more children) use contraception to delay pregnancy or space births, including 48% using the pill and 27% using condoms.

OTHER NEWS FROM THE POLLING AND POLITICAL WORLD

Obama approval [rises](#), lead over Romney grows.

[Independents](#) sour on Romney.

[Nate Silver](#) on the spread of Santorum's support in Michigan.

[Poll](#) showing Obama up 47-43 in Virginia and Kaine "up" 45-44.

Interesting U. of Chicago [study](#) compares the new temptations of Twitter and Facebook to older ones like cigarettes and alcohol.

Thought the VA amendment in response to the Sonogram bill was funny? You'll love [this](#).

Missed a past newsletter? They can be found on our website, [here](#).



PUBLIC POLLING

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
<i>Gallup</i>	2/11 – 2/13	Adults	45%	47%
<i>Rasmussen</i>	2/10 – 2/13	Likely Voters	51%	47%
<i>PPP</i>	2/9 – 2/12	Registered Voters	46%	50%

OBAMA VS ROMNEY GENERAL ELECTION

Polling Firm	Date	Sample
<i>Rasmussen</i>	2/11 – 2/13	<i>Likely Voters</i>
Obama	49%	
Romney	42%	

PARTY SELF ID

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep	Ind / other
<i>Pollster.com</i>	2/15/12	Adults	30.5%	25.2%	40.6%
<i>Trend</i>					

GOP NATIONWIDE PRIMARY

Polling Firm	Date	Sample
<i>CBS / NY Times</i>	2/8 – 2/13	<i>Likely Primary Voters</i>
Santorum	30%	
Romney	27%	
Paul	12%	
Gingrich	10%	

GOP CAUCUSES AND PRIMARIES

	Arizona	Michigan
Polling Firm	<i>Rasmussen</i>	<i>Mitchell Research</i>
Date	2/1	2/14
Sample	Likely Voters	Likely Voters
Romney	48%	25%
Gingrich	24%	5%
Santorum	13%	34%
Paul	6%	11%

GENERIC HOUSE BALLOT

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep
<i>Rasmussen</i>	2/6 – 2/12	Likely Voters	41%	43%
<i>Reuters/Ipsos</i>	2/2 – 2/6	Registered Voters	46%	44%

OBAMA POPULAR VOTE SHARE

Polling Firm	Date	Polly Vote	Polls	Iowa Electronic Markets	Econometric Models	Index Models
<i>PollyVote</i>	2/15/12	51.2%	50.0%	50.7%	49.8%	54.2%

DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Right Direction	Wrong Track
<i>CBS/New York Times</i>	2/8 – 2/13	Adults	35%	59%
<i>Reuters/Ipsos</i>	2/2 – 2/6	Adults	32%	62%
<i>Rasmussen</i>	1/30 – 2/5	Likely Voters	29%	63%