



MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: MATT GAMMON, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
SUBJECT: SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE 2016 ELECTION
DATE: NOVEMBER 11, 2016

A recent study conducted by WPA Research shows that while registered voters continue to be divided on social issues, especially abortion and same-sex marriage, they remain major drivers in successful Republican coalitions. The data is clear that social issue voters played a key role in President-elect Trump's victory on Election Day. The results also show that strong positions on social issues played an important role in bringing Hispanic and African American voters to support Trump.

Trump's Social Issue Voter Coalition

With Trump's recent victory comes an understanding that social issue voters formed a critical piece of his winning coalition. In a victory that was settled by less than 300,000 votes nationwide, support from conservative social issue voters was especially important.

Regarding same sex marriage, a majority of registered voters (53%) agree with the statement that "...marriage should be defined only as a union between one man and one woman," while only two-fifths (37%) say they disagree with the statement.

When asked if they agree or disagree with marriage being defined as between a man and a woman, nearly three-fourths of Trump voters (72%) agreed with that point of view, compared to just over half overall.

	Overall	Trump	Clinton
Agree	53%	72%	39%
Disagree	37%	20%	52%
Don't Know/Refused	10%	9%	7%

WPA tested opinions on the importance of having social issues in the Republican party platform, asking: "As you may know, the Republican party platform includes strong positions on unborn human life and religious liberty. How did this impact your presidential vote?"

A majority of registered voters said the social issues in the Republican platform impacted their vote (51%), and nearly six-in-ten Trump voters (59%) said that this impacted their presidential vote, compared to just 48% of Clinton supporters.

	Overall	Trump	Clinton
Total Impacted	51%	59%	48%
Total Did Not Impact	38%	34%	41%
Strongly impacted my vote	31%	41%	25%
Somewhat impacted my vote	20%	18%	23%
Don't know/Refused	11%	7%	11%

The Importance of Social Issues in Gaining Hispanic and African American Support

Trump's support was not solely concentrated among white voters, with nearly one-in-three Hispanic voters voting for Trump, and a significant number of African American voters forming a critical piece of his coalition.

	White	African-American	Hispanic
Total Trump	49%	14%	32%
Total Clinton	36%	73%	56%

Church attendance is high among both African Americans and Hispanics, even registering higher church attendance than White voters.

Church Attendance	White	African-American	Hispanic
Once a week or more	45%	56%	72%
Less than once a week	55%	44%	28%

More than half of African American voters agree with the statement that marriage should be defined only as a union between one man and one woman.

	White	African-American	Hispanic
Total Agree	54%	59%	39%
Total Disagree	37%	33%	40%

When asked if they believe the government should leave people free to follow their beliefs

about marriage between one man and one woman in their daily lives at work and in how they run their businesses there was a broad consensus across racial lines that the government should not involve itself.

	Total	White	African-American	Hispanic
Total Agree	66%	69%	59%	65%
Total Disagree	17%	15%	23%	14%

Conclusion

It is clear that, despite some elements of the media and other interest groups trying to declare victory in the “culture war”, social issues remain an area of deep division. Furthermore, conservative positions on social issues mattered strongly to critical elements of the Trump coalition, stretching across racial lines. These issues, far from settled, will continue to resonate, as extreme positions from the left clearly turn away significant elements of critical voter coalitions.

Methodology

The study was conducted of n=1,046 registered voters from a randomized sample of 800,000 registered voters nationwide. Registration based sampling (RBS) helps to ensure accuracy and ease in achieving representative quotas of demographic groups to ensure the study is representative of the United States. This allows us to avoid over-weighting any key demographic groups post data collection. Slight weights were applied to gender, age, ethnicity, and the Presidential ballot, which had little actual effect on survey results, but ensures accuracy in delivery. Data was collected the day after the election (November 9, 2016) allowing to control for response bias post-Donald Trump’s victory Tuesday night. With many polls recently showing inaccurate results, it is important to note that extra precautions were taken from sampling to weighting to avoid any credulous results.

About Wilson Perkins Allen Opinion Research

Since 1998, WPA Opinion Research has been a leading provider of political polling for campaigns from President to Governor and U.S. Senate to Mayor and City Council in all 50 states and several foreign countries. In the 2013-2014 election cycle, 83% of WPA clients won. WPA clients' win ratio has exceeded the standard by double digits for four straight political cycles.

In addition to our political and policy research, WPA has conducted market research for more than 110 fortune 500 corporations, donor research for more than 200 of the largest and most successful not-for-profit organizations around the country, and alumni research for dozens of colleges and universities.