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Celinda Lake
President

To: Women Thrive Worldwide and Family Violence Prevention Fund

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Partner

From: Lake Research Partners

Michael Perry
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Date: August 28, 2009

David Mermin
Partner

Re: Key Research Findings research¹

Robert G. Meadow,
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Partner

Violence against women and girls is a serious concern and a core values issue for voters, cutting across demographic groups. Voters want to see addressing violence as a priority for the U.S government with six out of ten voters saying reducing and ending violence against women and girls should be the top or one of the top priorities when it comes to policy and allocating funds. Despite strong messages, attitudes remain constant over the course of the survey and over half of voters remain solid in their view that reducing and ending violence against women and girls should be among the country's top priorities. Voters are looking for action on this issue and there is strong support for U.S. involvement -- voters prove overwhelmingly positive to the International Violence Against Women Act and this support holds up well even when fiscal impacts are presented. Voters almost universally agree that it is morally wrong, unfair, unjust, and a gross violation of fundamental human rights for women to be beaten and raped.

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The following memo outlines the key findings from this research.

¹ Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey which was conducted by telephone by professional interviewers. The survey reached a total of 1,200 registered voters nationwide, including a base sample of 1,000 voters and oversamples of 100 African American voters and 100 Latino voters. The survey was conducted July 14 - 21, 2009. Telephone numbers were drawn from a random digit dialing (RDD) sample. Data were weighted slightly by gender, region, party identification, age, and race to reflect the attributes of this universe. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 3.1%. Lake Research Partners conducted eleven focus groups in April and May 2009. Participants in all groups were screened to be registered voters. The groups included a mix of respondent ages, occupations, marital status, levels of education, and political orientations, among other demographic characteristics.

Issue Context

- **Majorities of voters feel that both violence against women and girls generally and violence against women and girls globally are serious problems** (roughly two-thirds of voters rate these issues between 8 and 10 on a 10-point scale).
- **Women being beaten and killed by their husbands, sex trafficking, and girls forced to trade sex for food are particularly salient concerns to voters** (59 percent, 57 percent, and 53 percent respectively rate as a 10 on a 10-point scale).
- Majorities also express concern around rape of women in war, legalization of rape within marriage, female genital mutilation, and sexual violence and rape against girls in school and in the workplace, however, intensity is somewhat lower than around the top tier concerns.
- **Reducing violence against women and girls is a high priority to voters when compared to other priorities like promoting democracy and trade, fighting corruption abroad, and reconstructing Iraq and Afghanistan.** Voters feel promoting health and education should be the country's top priority when giving international aid, followed by helping other countries deal with crises and reducing violence against women and girls. A third of voters select reducing violence as either their first or second choice.

Attitudes on U.S. Involvement in Global Violence Issues

- **Voters voice support for U.S. action on the issue.** The majority of voters (61 percent) feel addressing global violence should be one of the top priorities for the U.S. government, with one in four saying it should be THE top priority.
- Majorities across most demographic groups say reducing and ending violence against women and girls globally should be a top priority. Additionally, majorities of voters across partisan lines feel this issue should be among the country's top priorities.

Support for IVAWA

- **Support for the IVAWA is quite strong when voters are given a description of the legislation.**² Six in ten voters (62 percent) express intense support with 82 percent expressing support overall. There is considerable support across demographic groups. Majorities of Democrats, independents, and Republicans alike strongly support the legislation.

² Now, let me tell you a little bit about the International Violence Against Women Act, or IVAWA. The goal of the International Violence Against Women Act is to significantly reduce violence against women and girls around the world by helping people and organizations work to reduce it in their own countries and by making it a priority of the US government when it interacts with other governments. The bill would help women and girls who've been beaten and raped and help hold other governments accountable for addressing the issue. Based on this description of IVAWA, do you favor or oppose Congress passing this legislation?

Support for IVAWA by Party Identification		
% Favor Overall (% Strongly Favor)		
Democrats	Independents	Republicans
90% (70%)	80% (59%)	75% (56%)

- **Majorities continue to support the legislation when details on the fiscal impact of the legislation are given.** Support is maintained both when the program is described as costing "\$200 million per year, which is less than a dollar a person" and when it is described as costing "\$1 billion for 5 years." Majorities of voters across demographic groups, including Republicans, continue to support the legislation when either cost figure is cited, though intensity decreases across the board, especially when the focus is \$1 billion.

Support for IVAWA with Costs Included		
% Favor Overall (% Strongly Favor)		
	\$200 million per year	\$1 billion for 5 years
Total	72% (52%)	68% (45%)
Democrats	81% (63%)	80% (56%)
Independents	68% (48%)	66% (39%)
Republicans	66% (46%)	58% (37%)

Types of U.S. Involvement

- Voters feel a range of U.S. actions would be effective in combating violence experienced by women and girls in other countries.
- Roughly four in ten voters see significant efficacy in the U.S. funding local organizations that work on issues of violence against women and girls, having Hillary Clinton raise the issue with heads of state, establishing sanctions and penalties against foreign governments and not supporting foreign leaders who support laws that permit violence against women and girls. Majorities of voters across demographic groups feel each of these actions would be effective.
- The U.S. acting through our foreign assistance to combat violence receives the least intensity, but still more than 70 percent of voters feel this could be a very or somewhat effective strategy.

Types of U.S. Involvement	
% Very/Somewhat Effective (% Very)	
The U.S. could fund local, on the ground organizations that are working on the issue of violence against women and girls in their own communities	76% (39%)
Secretary of State Hillary Clinton could raise the issue of violence against women and girls with heads of state	73% (39%)
The U.S. could NOT support foreign leaders who support laws that permit violence against women and girls	71% (38%)
The U.S. government could place sanctions or other penalties against governments that don't address violence against women and girls in their countries	71% (37%)
The U.S. could act with peace keeping forces to prevent violence against women and girls in extreme cases	69% (34%)
President Obama could raise the issue of violence against women and girls with heads of state	73% (33%)
The U.S. could use diplomacy, talking to leaders of other governments and tell them what the US thinks is important in addressing violence against women/girls	71% (31%)
The U.S. should use its funding for leverage on this issue... we can influence their behavior by tying it to the foreign aid we provide	68% (31%)
The U.S. government could include policies that address violence against women and girls in our international treaties	74% (30%)
The U.S. government could act through our foreign assistance to address, combat violence experienced by women/girls in other countries	72% (25%)

Reasons for U.S. Involvement

- **Morality and human rights are the most salient reasons for U.S. involvement in global violence against women and girls.** This frame is a strong motivator for U.S. action to voters of all ages, races, and political orientations. This frame is significantly ahead of others and varies by subgroup. It is in a league of its own in terms of the interest it invokes.

"Just as being a human being – you have every right to feel safe and you know unharmed." (Middle Eastern Woman, Southfield)

"Well I think that's what this country is supposed to represent – fundamental rights of humans, and if this supports that, then I think that would be important for that reason." (Black Male, Southfield)

"Well it makes a difference to me because it's a human being, it's a moral issue...it's not them and us. They are people just like we are." (African American woman, Birmingham)

"It's just a human rights...it's a morally wrong issue to be beaten and raped and no one's rights should be violated like that." (Middle Eastern Woman, Southfield)

"It's all just wrong. All of it. And all of it leads to morality I think." (Latina, Sunnyvale)

- Focus group participants also cite morality and human rights as the top rationale for the U.S. taking an active role in helping to reduce violence against women and girls.

Reasons for U.S. Involvement	
% Strongly/Not So Strongly Agree (% Strongly Agree)	
<i>Question: Now let me read you some reasons other people have given for the United States to get involved in combating violence against women and girls globally. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each one.</i>	
It is just morally wrong, unfair, unjust, and a gross violation of fundamental human rights for women to be beaten and raped.	96% (86%)
Violence leads to instability that leads to insecurity, if we empower women and address violence...it will be beneficial to U.S. security, will create more just, stable societies*	83% (61%)
Violence results in keeping women poor, puts women in situations of violence/sexual violence. Poverty is both a cause and consequence of violence.	84% (59%)
This is a public health crisis – women are dying in childbirth, child survival rates are low, women and girls	

are dying of HIV/AIDS, and from complications from injuries sustained through violence.	85% (58%)
Violence against women/girls causes inequality of women, U.S. should be involved in ending violence against women because it is essential to women's equality worldwide.	83% (58%)
Violence leads to instability that leads to insecurity, if we empower women and address violence...it will be beneficial to U.S. security, will create more just, stable societies and reduce extremism*	84% (55%)
<i>*Split sampled questions</i>	

In summary, violence against women and girls globally is an issue that is a priority to voters across the nation and one on which they would like to see the U.S. government take action. The IVAWA receives strong support and despite messages against U.S. involvement voters remain favorable toward its passage. Voters feel a range of U.S. actions would be effective in combating violence experienced by women and girls in other countries. Again, voters show almost unanimous agreement that it is morally wrong, unfair, unjust, and a gross violation of fundamental human rights for women to be beaten and raped.