



Celinda Lake
President

Alysia Snell
Partner

David Mermin
Partner

Robert G. Meadow, Ph.D.
Partner

Daniel R. Gotoff
Partner

Joshua E. Ulibarri
Partner

Robert X. Hillman
Chief Financial Officer

Shannon Marshall
Chief Operating Officer

Rick A. Johnson
Senior Vice President

To: Page Gardner and Gail Kitch, Voter Participation Center

From: Celinda Lake and Cornelia Treptow

Re: Anticipating 2014 Unmarried Women Voter Drop-Off

Date: October 7, 2013

A recent report released by the Voter Participation Center (VPC) looking ahead to the 2014 election highlights the potential drop-off in unmarried women voter turnout. VPC, a non-profit, non-partisan organization, is dedicated to increasing the share of unmarried women and other historically under-represented groups in the electorate. The report prepared by Lake Research Partners looks closely at the potential drop-off among unmarried women. Drop-off numbers are the share, or number of voters, who voted in November 2012 but are predicted not to turn out to vote in November 2014.

Unmarried women, who are part of the Rising American Electorate (RAE), make up 25.6% of the vote eligible population, or VEP (U.S. citizens who are over age 18 and eligible to vote), in this country. In real terms, there are 55.2 million unmarried women in the VEP. Moreover, the RAE – made up of unmarried women, people of color, and those aged 18-29 – tends to drop off more than their non-RAE counterparts, with far fewer of them voting in non-presidential year elections.

Nationally, in 2012, unmarried women made up 44.6% of women who voted (Census Bureau Current Population Survey Data, November update). Using a predictive methodology for population growth and likely turnout patterns (full methodology below) it is predicted that unmarried women will comprise just 41.2% of women who will vote in November 2014. This means that almost one-in-three unmarried women voters who turned out in 2012 will NOT turnout in 2014 (32.9% of unmarried women who voted in 2012, or 10.5 million unmarried women, will stay home). The predicted drop-off among all other women voters is only 21.4% or 8.4 million voters. In fact, of the 19 million women predicted to drop-off from 2012, over half will be women.

The report also looked at the eight so-called “Toss Up States,” as identified by the Rothenberg Political Report’s Senate Ratings (as of August 9, 2013). The eight states are Alaska, Arkansas, Iowa, Louisiana, Montana, North Carolina, South Dakota, and West Virginia. These states are projected to have a total

estimated female voter drop-off of 1.8 million voters, 57.2%, or 1 million, of whom are unmarried women. This means that registering and turning out the unmarried women in these states could play a significant role in defining the make up of the U.S. Senate.

Methodology

2012 Data - The November 2012 election data comes from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012 November Supplement.

2014 Population Estimates - CPS counts of the VEP were pulled for each month going back to August 2010. Data was divided by state, and then into demographic subgroups of married and unmarried women. A rolling average was calculated, such that each month's data was represented by an average of that month and the 11 preceding months; this was done to smooth out random fluctuates in the data that were the result of sampling error. From these rolling averages, the monthly increase in population was estimated and multiplied by 24 to give an estimate of the increase in population between November 2012 and November 2014. Data was then summed by state and by demographic subgroup to produce total national estimates.

Drop-Off - refers to the loss of voters from 2012 to 2014. The average of turnout in 2002, 2006, and 2010 was applied to 2014 population estimates to calculate 2014 turnout. Percentage drop-off is the difference between 2012 and 2014 turnout as a percentage of 2012 turnout. Number drop-off is that percentage of the 2012 electorate.