Keynote with Celinda Lake

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Speaker: Presentation from Celinda Lake, Pollster, Political Strategist, Lake Research Partners

Problem: Recent polls show that the biggest political issue for women is the economy and COVID-19. Given that the coronavirus pandemic has been especially harmful for working women, this is not at all surprising. Women represent a disproportionate share of the population who work in low-wage jobs and were hit particularly hard as social distancing measures forced businesses and schools to close. Moreover, as women are the primary caregivers in their families, the pandemic's disruption in child care and school schedules placed an additional strain on women, forcing some to stay home to care for their children or manage online schooling. BIPOC women were hit notably harder. Having women at the decision-making table when it comes to addressing inequalities in healthcare is important for social and economic reform. Yet, despite reaching historic numbers, women are still largely underrepresented in state legislatures. By tying together how health reform reinforces economic stability, women state legislators stand to have an advantage with women voters as these voters believe women generally care more about healthcare and see it as an economic issue.

Our speaker had the following policy recommendations:

- **Emphasize the benefits of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).** The ACA is viewed more favorably, but it is still polarizing. Public opinion shows that people think the policy is good, but there is room for improvements in controlling the cost of prescription drugs and doctor's visits, and expanding affordable healthcare options.

- **Support federal policy that regulates the cost of prescription drugs.** The overwhelming opinion of the public is that the federal government should play a role in medical drug prices. As prescription costs continue to skyrocket, controlling the cost of medical drugs is good for rural and non-college educated constituents who don't usually have healthcare.

- **Keep explanations about health policy simple.** Define recognizable terms such as Medicare for All, single payer system, etc., in relatable ways so that it resonates with constituents. Explain how the policy will change prescription prices, how it impacts doctor's appointments etc.

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