

## MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties (prepared for Each American Dream)  
From: Luntz Global  
Date: June 18, 2014  
Re: Communicating Economic Freedom and Opportunity to Women

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Conservatives have screwed up just about every possible opportunity to effectively communicate their agenda with women – from wonky policy jargon to dismissive condescension to the utter catastrophes of Todd Akin and Richard Mourdock. If there is a blunder out there the right hasn't made, some candidate somewhere will make it.

What is so frustrating is that the answer is so simple. There is a common denominator for all voters – men and women alike – an agenda they all believe in:

***Everyone wants a good-paying job with more freedom, choice, and control over their economic and personal futures.***

The good news is, when it comes to women voters, we know what they want – specifically. And we now know the *exact* language to use to explain it. That's the great news.

The bad news, unfortunately, is that most conservatives don't know or understand the language – or worse yet, they refuse to use it. They'll say: "*It's not me. I just don't talk that way.*" Well, if they like repeatedly failing to connect with women, if they like facing embarrassing gaffes that make conservatives look like buffoons at best and knuckle-dragging Neanderthals at worst, they will get more of it if they don't change.

However, if they are interested in learning the words that work, in putting in the time and effort to master – and use – the right language, conservatives can relate to women voters, persuade them, and truly COMMUNICATE with them that economic freedom is a better approach than more government. Here are the six things we need to know:

- (1) **Women are "suffering, living paycheck-to-paycheck, trying to make ends meet"**. Their family budgets are getting tighter and tighter. When they or their spouse loses a job, it's women who feel the pressure. They bear the brunt when prices for gas and groceries go higher and higher. Conservatives need to meet them on their terms – and talk about their day-to-day concerns.
- (2) **Personalize. Humanize. Empathize.** Let's face it. Conservatives have an abysmal record of empathizing with anyone who isn't a CEO or a millionaire. That's why it's so important to understand where the majority of women are right now. But knowing that women are struggling isn't an end to itself – it's the means. ***Walk in their shoes before you speak.*** Then offer language that demonstrates you "*get it.*"

- (3) **Talk to women as AMERICANS – not as women.** Our female voters said this one loud and clear. Yes, they have unique characteristics. They think differently. They process information differently. But on the big issues we face as a country, they want to be engaged as Americans – equally – not necessarily as women.
- (4) **Even if you do all this – harsh language on social issues destroys any progress you make on economic freedom.** It's that simple. Women don't believe there really is a Republican "war on women" – *except when it comes to reproductive rights*. For every step forward you take on economic freedom, you take at least two steps back because of those who talk predominately and harshly about social issues. The credibility of the entire movement has been undercut by the Todd Akins and Richard Mourdock on the right. When they continue to hammer social issues, your message is drowned out – and then tied to the more extreme views on the right and exploited by those on the left.
- (5) **The most unreported issue for women: rising prices.** Nobody that we know of in America today is running a campaign on rising prices. That is our greatest untapped opportunity – provided we personalize it. It's not about inflation. As one woman told us to the head-nodding of everyone else: *"I go to the store and every week I walk out with less money in my purse and less groceries in my arms."*
- (6) **The greatest priority for women: their children, followed closely by their parents.** It's not news that moms are focused on their children. But what needs to be emphasized is how many women, at the same time, are also taking care of their parents. *"Trying to do it all,"* is how women react to this parallel challenge. It's called the Sandwich Generation, and women feel the pressure every single day. Republicans need to address these women directly.

If conservatives can stop talking about the differences they have with women and start talking about the values they share, women voters are reachable and persuadable ... because the conservative agenda of ***"effective, efficient, and accountable government"*** resonates. An agenda of economic opportunity and freedom resonates. A positive, hopeful agenda – one that that doesn't separate Americans, pitting young versus old, men versus women, and rich versus poor – resonates. Focusing on a positive agenda of what you're for rather than what you're against resonates.

The language of women voters is concrete, repeatable, and right here for the taking. In this memo we present the key findings, as well as specific words, phrases, and solutions that will promote economic freedom and inspire action this fall and beyond.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

Now more than ever, *people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care*. That's why personalizing, humanizing, and empathizing is so critically important to communicating your message.

This approach doesn't take much effort. You aren't learning the intricacies of a new policy domain or explaining the inner workings of the federal budget. You simply need the desire and discipline to use better – and proven – language.

- 1) **Demonstrate that you understand their daily lives.** You have to start here. Virtually no one feels like Washington gets them, but that's especially true of women. They don't even think *female* politicians get them: "They can afford nannies." Whether they're rushing to support an aging parent; their husband whose hours were cut; a daughter with her homework; a grandkid who needs to be babysat – maybe even all of the above – there is enormous pressure to "do it all." How many politicians genuinely understand this?

Bottom line: *You must get them before they can get you*. That starts with listening. You have to genuinely hear their struggles. That ensures that when you do start talking, you're starting where they are. Here's what we heard:

### **WORDS THAT WORK**

**Washington doesn't know how to walk in my shoes. Every day I work hard to provide for and support my family, to be there for my parents, my husband, and my kids, and every day it gets harder. Washington needs to work for hardworking taxpayers like me.**

**It's time for Washington's good old-boy network to be held accountable to what I do every day: work hard, do more with less, and fix what needs fixing.**

Now, turn that exact language around to make it about **THEM**. Show them that you understand their struggles. This type of opening puts you squarely on their side – and makes them more likely to actively listen to you later.

### WORDS THAT WORK

Washington doesn't know how to walk in YOUR shoes. Every day YOU work hard to provide for and support YOUR family, to be there for YOUR parents, husband, and kids – and every day it gets harder. Washington needs to work for hardworking taxpayers like YOU.

It's time for Washington's good old-boy network to be held accountable to what YOU do every day: work hard, fix what needs fixing, and do more with less.

- 2) **Focus on the rising costs of daily life and jobs.** You don't need to persuade them that the economy is struggling – they're living it, every day.

- **All of them said** that life is harder today than it was ten years ago.
- **Half said** they were struggling to save any money.
- **Nearly one-third said** they may still be paying *their own* student loans when their kids go to college.

Like most Americans, women worry the most about the rising cost of everyday life and the stability of the jobs they or their spouses hold. Many are living paycheck to paycheck. Sharing a car with their spouse to cut down on a car payment or gas. Skipping a little treat that used to bring them joy, like a night out at the movies.

You may not be able to walk in their shoes, but adding specific examples like these not only builds your credibility and authenticity – but more importantly, it sets you up to offer solutions to fix those specific problems.

- 3) **Show them that *their* priorities are *America's* priorities.** No one wants to be ostracized or made to feel as though their interests don't matter. Voters crave inclusion. They're tired of petty division, where politicians separate people into groups for political gain. We hear it over and over – can't they just work together to get something done?

So deliver a message that reflects that desire for inclusion. Women want equality – women deserve equality – so treat them equally by showing that their goals, hopes, and expectations are no different than anyone else's.

### WORDS THAT WORK

**The conservative agenda is pro-small business, pro-job creator, pro-family, pro-economic growth. And that's what makes it a pro-women agenda.**

**Just as my dad taught me years ago, women care about the same things that men do. They're worried about the security of their jobs, they're worried about their children's future, and they're worried about finding a job if they need one. We're worried about the excessive spending that this country is engaging in and the overwhelming debt that we're continuing to accumulate and that we're going to leave to our children and our grandchildren.**

- 4) **Don't lecture.** Imagine what a woman thinks when at the end of a long day – after getting up early to pack the kids' lunches, working all day, checking in on mom at her lunch break, fixing dinner, and putting the kids down for bed – she turns on the news and hears a Washington politician lecture her about why the economy isn't growing faster. Be honest: Do you think that woman will lean in to hear more or shake her head and change the channel?

When a father-figure tells them “here are the facts,” when a husband-figure tells them “this is the way things should be,” they WILL have a knee-jerk, emotional reaction. You won't have a chance.

Take the clip we showed of Paul Ryan. Women tuned him out, not because of his appearance or his intellect but because they feel he lectured them about government, poverty, and “*marginal tax rates.*” That's not what women want to hear.

On the other hand, think back to the 2012 campaign when he talked about Medicare and Social Security. He talked about how Social Security was there for him after his dad died. How Medicare had been there for his grandmother with Alzheimer's and is now there for his mom. Voters leaned in to hear more. By personalizing and humanizing, he gave the audience the chance to picture themselves in his story.

Your job is not to tell them how to run their life or to explain the intricacies of your latest policy proposal. Your job is to lead them to picture a better life because of your solutions. **The highest priority for women is to feel in control of their lives. Remember that every time you address them.**

5) **Denial, followed by attacking the other side will fail.** Listen to what our women voters said to each other during the session:

- *“I really like what you’re saying, and...”*
- *“We all have similar experiences, and...”*
- *“I want to agree with what she said...”*

The language they use is warmer and softer. They don’t attack each other – they build on each other’s thoughts. They are more sensitive to bullying. And they do **NOT** want to come across to others as judgmental, or dismissive of other peoples’ views. One of the worst clips of the night violated every one of these rules:

**WORDS THAT DON’T WORK**

**And now we’re going to have a fight over women’s health. Give me a break. This latest plank in the so-called “war on women.” Entirely created by my colleagues across the aisle for political gain.**

**Let’s review the facts. The President in his budget called for reductions in spending in this slush fund that’s given to the secretary of HHS. So to accuse us of wanting to gut women’s health is absolutely not true.**

Badmouthing the president or lobbing personal attacks will fail every time. Using phrases like “*give me a break*” in public comes across as childish and domineering. Again, at the end of a long day, would you want to hear one politician ranting and raving about another politician? Women are TIRED of it. Remember: you can and should *disagree* but do so without being *disagreeable*.

- 6) **Be honest, open, and up front.** Women know discrimination still exists. They know inequality is out there. Don't try to hide from the facts. Acknowledge the problems so you can move on to how to fix them.

**WORDS THAT WORK**

**I'll be honest with you. There is discrimination out there. You see it. You've probably felt it. There are bad actors who don't treat people well. And where there is discrimination, those bad actors need to be held accountable. They're breaking the law, but they're also breaking the spirit of what makes America so great ... justice, fairness, where everyone who works hard and plays by the rules has a chance to succeed.**

**What we don't need are more ineffective government regulations that layer more paperwork and more process on small businesses. We need the exact opposite. We need solutions that create jobs and opportunity for every American – not more regulation.**

This builds your credibility. You affirm what every women has felt at some point in her life: the deck is stacked against me. The left will belabor the point, paint women as victims, and propose a government solution. That will fall on deaf ears. Again, women want to be seen as equals – not as a targeted sub-group to pity and protect.

- 7) **Solutions that are positive, inclusive, and empowering will beat those that are negative, divisive, and grow government.** Once you set the stage with empathy and an acknowledgement of reality, you can move onto your solutions. The key is to keep with the theme of inclusiveness and position your solutions as benefitting everyone.

**WORDS THAT WORK**

**Arguing over how much more men earn misses the point. Instead of pitting men against women, let's focus on what's important to everyone: creating more opportunities so that every American – no matter their gender, no matter their background or income – can succeed. It's time for solutions that create real economic opportunity for families to get ahead, not just get by.**

The specific policy proposals that you tee up are up to you ... tax reform, job training, reforming welfare programs ... but there are broad-based solutions that resonate, not just with women but with all voters: Balancing the budget, ending wasteful Washington spending, making government more effective, efficient, and accountable.

**WORDS THAT WORK**

**It's time for Washington to be held accountable to what Americans do every day: Balance a budget. Your government has a responsibility to spend your tax dollars as carefully as you would. It's *your* money. It's time Washington was held accountable to cut the waste and spend responsibly.**

**It's time to put aside the partisanship and find real, common-sense solutions to enact policies that will help create jobs for hardworking families. We need more efficient and more effective programs that won't bankrupt our government, but instead shift the focus from empty promises and handouts to education, job training, entrepreneurship, and hard work.**

Notice how this starts with broader priorities of responsible spending and good government before moving onto more specific solutions, like job training. All this is designed to continually build support as you lead them to your policy solutions – and away from those of your opponents.

- 8) ***“We’ve heard it all before. It’s just more of the same. That’s what got us into this mess, and it won’t get us out of it.”*** Women are tired of government programs that don’t work. They’re tired of more and more spending. They don’t support slash and burn tactics that seek to punish one group on behalf of another. Take advantage of those beliefs to show that that’s all the left has to offer.

**WORDS THAT WORK**

**Hardworking taxpayers don’t want to punish success. They want to celebrate it. Washington needs to focus more on creating opportunity for everyone, not dividing Americans against each other. We need common-sense solutions – not endless lecturing and political pot-shots.**

**The answer to creating jobs and building a healthy economy is not higher taxes or raising the minimum wage. Saddling**



**women-owned small businesses with more costs, more taxes, and more mandates will cost jobs, not create them.**

Remember: Paint your opponent's ideas in a way that does not turn voters off. Instead of anger, show your disappointment. Instead of fear mongering, explain why they're wrong ... and then explain why your solutions are right

- 9) **Put it all together with "Why ... Therefore ... So that."** This is a simple language formula you can follow to clearly communicate your message. It allows you to explain your ideas matter in a way that resonates with women. You avoid getting bogged down in unnecessary numbers or policy details because you are focusing more on connecting with the audience and explaining the end result – not on policy implications and party politics. Here's how it works:

- **WHY?** The *why* is the explanation of the problem. This should be about 40% of the message. Open with empathy, by explaining why an issue matters to them (not to you), and that you understand how they're affected. The more time you spend connecting and relating, the more credible the next part of the message becomes. The Left has a built-in empathy advantage. Now that you've read this memo, that advantage should disappear.

*"I see Americans are hurting. Families are struggling. Many are living paycheck-to-paycheck ... or trying to stretch one paycheck to feel like two. Too often you have to choose between bills to pay. And when the everyday costs of gas, groceries, and electricity go higher and higher, even though your paycheck doesn't you start to feel like something has got to give. I get it."*

- **THEREFORE...** The *therefore* is the solution. This should be about 20% of the message – yes, ONLY 20%. Explain the solution clearly and convincingly.

*"If families have to balance their budgets every month at the kitchen table, if hardworking taxpayers have to do more with less ... then why shouldn't Congress do the same?"*

*Some will call for more taxes and more government spending. But let's face it ... those are not the answers. The answer is making government more efficient, effective, and accountable. We need to rein in spending, not spend even more. And forcing the wealthy to pay even more is a Band-Aid that won't solve our critical long-term needs: ending wasteful Washington spending, shrinking our debt, and creating good-paying jobs. That's what we should be focusing on.*

*And we can do that by encouraging hard work, rewarding entrepreneurship, and reforming our assistance programs – we must do everything we can to create a healthy economy."*

- **SO THAT...** The *so that* is the result. It connects everything together. This part should be the remaining 40% of the message. Here, use language that *empowers them*. Illustrate with specific examples that resonate.

*“We can’t do that without freedom. With freedom and good government – together – we can deliver genuine opportunity for EVERY AMERICAN.*

*Real opportunities so that everyone can get ahead and create a better life for their kids and grandkids.*

*Ending wasteful Washington spending so that we control our future – not countries like China who own our debt.*

*Lowering taxes so that businesses can hire, expand into new markets, invest in our neighborhoods.*

*We need to solve these problems with effective, common-sense solutions that bring out the best in America – so that we can grow and prosper together.”*

## APPENDIX A — Say This / Instead of This

<i>Say this...</i>	<i>...Instead of this:</i>
<i>Living paycheck-to-paycheck Trying to do it all</i>	Harder to get by
<i>Building a healthy economy</i>	Growing the economy/economic growth
<i>Good old-boy's network</i>	Under-representation
<i>Healthy economy</i>	Powerful economy
<i>Struggling Americans</i>	Income inequality
<i>Opportunity</i>	Wealth
<i>Careers</i>	Employment
<i>Prosperity</i>	Hope
<i>Commitment</i>	Promise
<i>Accountability</i>	Transparency
<i>Inefficient, ineffective regulations</i>	Anti-business regulations
<i>Divided by class and income</i>	Winners and losers
<i>Common-sense solutions</i>	Reforms
<i>Efficient and effective reforms</i>	Proposals
<i>Long-term results</i>	Positive changes
<i>Inefficient and ineffective</i>	Overbearing and burdensome
<i>Confusing and bureaucratic</i>	Bloated

## APPENDIX B — Tough Attacks & Best Responses

Tough Attacks ...	... Best Responses
<p><b>Equal pay is not just an economic issue, but a family issue. When women make less money, it means less money for gas, less money for groceries, and less money for childcare.</b></p>	<p><b>Equal pay is about more than a paycheck. It's about equal opportunity. We need to create more opportunities so that everyone – no matter their gender – can succeed.</b></p>
<p><b>The other side won't increase the minimum wage, won't extend unemployment insurance, won't establish paid family leave, won't support equal pay for equal work, and has a bad record on women's reproductive choice. I don't think the choice could be any clearer.</b></p>	<p><b>Instead of pitting men against women, let's focus on what's important to everyone: A good-paying job; more freedom, choice, and control of our healthcare; and the promise of the American Dream. Those are the priorities of every American, regardless of gender.</b></p>
<p><b>We need to steer clear of this poverty of ambition, where people want to drive fancy cars and wear nice clothes but don't want to work hard for them. Everyone should try to realize their full potential.</b></p>	<p><b>America values, respects, and rewards responsibility and hard work. Those are essential elements why America has succeeded. Here, if you work hard and play by the rules, you have the opportunity to get ahead.</b></p>
<p><b>Over the last 30 years, upward mobility in this country – the idea that if you work hard, you can get ahead – has slipped out of reach for too many Americans.</b></p>	<p><b>There are fewer opportunities today than there were five years ago. Every day hard-working families struggle to put food on the table, to fill the gas tank. It's time for solutions that create real economic opportunity for families to get ahead, not just get by.</b></p>
<p><b>Their budget takes us too far into the past, contrasted with ours, which is about the future: investments in growth, education and science. It's about growth, and growth will take us to balance.</b></p>	<p><b>Your government has a responsibility to spend your tax dollars as carefully as you would. It's your money. It's time Washington was held accountable to cut the waste and spend responsibly. Hardworking taxpayers deserve nothing less.</b></p>

<p><b>In 2012 alone, 500,000 children were kept out of poverty by unemployment benefits. Allowing these benefits to lapse – which help tens of millions of American families with millions of children get by each year – is unconscionable.</b></p>	<p><b>It's time for a new approach to ending poverty in America. We need more efficient and more effective programs that won't bankrupt our government, but instead shift the focus from empty promises and handouts to education, job training, entrepreneurship, and hard work.</b></p>
<p><b>Their budget takes us too far into the past, contrasted with ours, which is about the future: investments in growth, education and science. It's about growth, and growth will take us to balance.</b></p>	<p><b>Your government has a responsibility to spend your tax dollars as carefully as you would. It's your money. It's time Washington was held accountable to cut the waste and spend responsibly. Hardworking taxpayers deserve nothing less.</b></p>