How to Engage and Motivate Voters in the Rising American Electorate

Introduction

Historically, there is always a drop off in the number of voters between a presidential election and the midterm elections. But 2010 is especially challenging, given the state of the economy, the fact the United States is engaged in two wars, and approval ratings for Congress are at an all-time low. Recent surveys show Republicans with a seven to ten point advantage among likely voters. Swing voters like independents and blue-collar whites have moved to the Republicans. Clearly, progressives need to find support elsewhere.

The answer is to engage the progressive base, to learn how to talk again to voters who helped progressives win in 2006 and 2008 and to convince them they have a stake in this election. This communications guide was designed to help you do that.

A New Majority

Unmarried women, people of color and young people under thirty are now the majority of eligible voters in America. Their numbers and their political power are growing and they have the demographic strength to change the outcome of elections in 2010. In 2006, these overwhelmingly progressive, hard-to-reach voters who make up the Rising American Electorate (RAE) changed a Congress. In 2008, they changed the country. They turned out to vote in unprecedented numbers in the last election, continuing a long-term trend of improving participation in our democracy. But that progress is at risk this year.

Based on historic patterns and census data, Women’s Voices. Women Vote Action Fund’s (WVWVAF) sister organization Women’s Voices. Women Vote (WVWV) – the nonpartisan nonprofit that first identified the RAE and the marriage gap – projects the 2010 drop off rate of unmarried women and the other groups in the RAE will be double the rate of other voters (37 percent to 18.5 percent).

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1 Women’s Voices. Women Vote Action Fund has prepared this guide in furtherance of its 501(c)(4) mission of urging those under-represented segments of the American electorate to vote and to support policies that will improve their lives. WVWV Action Fund shares its research and guidance with groups that will help achieve this goal, regardless of partisan label.
Bridging the Enthusiasm Gap

RAE voters are significantly less engaged than other voters this year. In addition, the margins they provided candidates who shared their values in 2008 and even in 2006 are depressed, too. So despite the fact they continue to support Democratic candidates with impressive margins, particularly given the anti-Democratic climate, they are the least likely to vote. Clearly, the challenge in this election -- which will be contested in the trenches, race-by-race and voter by voter -- must be to maximize the support and participation of RAE voters.

Research done and programs run by WVWVAF confirm that RAE voters can be reached and motivated and turned out by candidates and organizations who know how to connect to their lives and understand the unique challenges they face in today’s America and today’s economy.

To help you understand the pivotal role these voters will play in 2010 -- when even marginal differences in who does and does not turn out in 2010 are more important than ever -- and what issues and language will re-engage and re-invest them in these elections, WVWVAF has prepared this communications guide based on focus group and survey research conducted by Greenberg, Quinlan, Rosner Research. ²

Your outreach to, and the continued and increasing participation of, the RAE in our democracy this year and beyond are essential to building an infrastructure of reliable voters and ensuring our government actually represents the values and needs of the majority of our citizens.

²This research commissioned by Women's Voices. Women Vote represents both qualitative (focus group) research, as well as qualitative findings from a recent Democracy Corps survey. The groups were conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research in three different cities (Cleveland, OH, Albuquerque, NM, and Philadelphia, PA). These groups were conducted between July 20-26, 2010. The Democracy Corps survey was taken from August 30 – September 2, 2010.
Who is the Rising American Electorate?

For the first time in American history the democratic majority is made up of traditionally underrepresented groups. Unmarried women, people of color (including African Americans and Latinos), and young people (aged 18 through 29) now constitute the majority, 52 percent, of all adults who can vote, and 62 percent of people eligible but still not registered to vote. These groups make up the Rising American Electorate (RAE), and even though they represent the majority, their low levels of participation in our political process leaves them underrepresented in our democracy. Collectively, they represented only 47 percent of the electorate in 2008.

Unmarried Women and the Marriage Gap

Unmarried women are the key to the Rising American Electorate. There has been a little-noted, but enormous demographic change in America since 1960. Fifty years ago, America was a nation of married couples. Just a generation ago, the most common kind of family was a male breadwinner and a stay-at-home mom. No more, according to Census data:

- Today, that description applies to only one-in-five families
- Unmarried women now account for a quarter of all adults.
- Today, almost half of all women are unmarried – widowed, divorced, separated, or never married.

Economically, many unmarried women live on the margins:

- Unmarried women earn 56 cents for each dollar earned by married men.
- Among all unemployed women – 64 percent are unmarried. Their 11.9 percent unemployment rate is nearly double the rate for married women (6.6 percent). ³
- One in five unmarried women is a single mother.

The Great Recession hit unmarried women especially hard and changed their lives and prospects:

- As unemployment has risen for unmarried women, employment has fallen. While 56.9 percent of all unmarried women were employed on average in 2007, that figure had fallen to 53.5 percent by April 2010.
- In April, 2010 more than four in ten unmarried women (age 16 and over) who were unemployed had been looking for a job for at least six months.⁴

³ August 2010 Bureau of Labor Statistics Data
These changing demographics have also changed the make-up of the electorate and that has had major political implications. Marital status is not just defining economically or culturally. The “marriage gap” between unmarried women and married women is an important determinant of both voter participation and preference.

- Traditionally, unmarried women are less likely to register and vote than married women. They also support progressive candidates by enormous margins.
- In fact, in 2008, the marriage gap was 44 points, with unmarried women giving President Obama a 41-percentage point margin and married women supporting Senator McCain by three points.
- The marriage gap holds true across all demographics - young, old, with children or without, of color or white. This marriage gap also holds true across geographic regions – urban, rural, exurban.

In addition to being the fastest growing large demographic group in America, unmarried women are the key to reaching other politically under-participating, underrepresented groups.

They are the largest segment and the primary driver of the Rising American Electorate (RAE). Unmarried women make up a disproportionate percentage of each of these constituencies. And where they overlap, which is substantial, is also where they outperform. For example:

- Of the 2.3 million new young voters in 2008, 46 percent of them were unmarried women, even though they make up only 38 percent of all young people between the ages of 18-29.
- Of the two million new African American voters, 40 percent of them were unmarried women, even though they make up just 39 percent of the African American population.
- And of the 2.2 new Latino voters in 2008, 30 percent of them were unmarried women despite being 27 percent of the overall Latino population.
What Makes RAE Voters So Important in 2010?

RAE voters turned out in historic proportions in 2008:

- 61 million members of the Rising American Electorate turned out—many of them voting for the first time.
- The RAE accounted for 47 percent of all ballots cast.
- Unmarried women accounted for close to half --48 percent--of the overall increase in turnout in 2008 over 2004.
- In the 2008 presidential election, over 2.6 million more women voted than in 2004 and 7 million more than in 2000.

But this year, when even an extremely small change in participation levels could affect control of Congress and state legislatures that will redraw congressional districts for the next decade, these voters are projected to stay home in the millions:

- Unmarried women make up nearly 25 percent of the voting eligible population. In 2008, they made up 23.22 percent of the electorate. Projections have 35.33 percent, or an estimated 10,758,899, of unmarried women who showed up in 2008 at home on Election Day 2010.

- Youth make up 22.3 percent of the voter eligible population. In 2008, they made up 17 percent of the electorate; in 2010 they are expected to make up 11 percent. The youth vote is expected to drop off 52.77 percent between 2008 and 2010—meaning 11,812,739 fewer youth voters showing up in November this year.
• Latinos comprise almost 9.5 percent of the voting eligible population but in 2010 they are projected to comprise only 7.34 percent of the electorate. In 2010, Latino voters are expected to drop-off 34.5 percent, or by 3,360,724 voters.

• African Americans make up 12.1 percent of the voting eligible population. They are expected to experience a 36.7 percent drop-off (5,920,011) between 2008 and 2010.

To put these numbers in perspective, in 2006, the last mid-term election, the four closest Senate races were decided by an average of 20,000 votes, and the four closest gubernatorial races were decided by an average of about 15,000 votes. The 15 closest House races were decided by an average of about 2,000 votes each.

Clearly, the old adage, every vote counts, has rarely been truer. And our research indicates these voters can be engaged and mobilized -- once their stake in this election is understood.

Supersizing the RAE Margin

The RAE is a unique constituency. They are not angry voters, they are anxious voters. And they remain overwhelming supportive of Democrats:

That said, there is still room to grow Democratic support in the RAE, particularly when comparing current preferences to 2006 and 2008.
Democracy Corps, along with Women’s Voices. Women Vote Action Fund, has also tracked alarmingly low levels of vote intention among RAE voters this year. There is now a 22-point difference in the percentage of voters who say they are “almost certain” to vote in 2010 between the RAE and non-RAE voters, the largest margin to date. Among unmarried women, the percentage of 2008 voters who say they are almost certain to vote drops to 63 percent, again the lowest score in 2010.
Lower enthusiasm among the RAE

Voters respond similarly when probed about their enthusiasm for voting in 2010. Among all 2008 voters, less than half (48 percent) of the RAE describe their enthusiasm for voting as an 8 or higher, compared to 65 percent among non-RAE voters—and this is not a purely partisan response. Within the RAE, Democrats (47 percent rating their enthusiasm 8-10) do not look that much different than Republicans (53 percent) or Independents (44 percent). Rather, it reflects a group of voters who do not yet see their issues and priorities discussed in the election.

The right, however, has a clear agenda in this election and their voters understand it fully. They aim to take control of Congress, repeal health care reform, cut government spending, and lower taxes and regulations on big corporations. Moreover, they exude real confidence in their success, a belief that further amplifies their turnout advantage. Conversely, voters on the progressive side do not have the same clear mission statement and certainly do not have the same confidence in the outcome of the 2010 election.

The good news is there is room in the RAE base to improve both participation and margins. The research showed voters’ interest and intensity deepened once their stake in this election became apparent. Using a Voter Choice Scale that breaks voters into groups ranging from Democratic Party loyalist on one extreme to unreachable on the other, it can be determined that one in five voters in the RAE are still persuadable in this election.

The RAE is still persuadable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RAE</th>
<th>Non-RAE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conditional/Vulnerable</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable/Winnable</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnable/In Reach</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Persuadable</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
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What Matters and How to Talk to the RAE

In many ways, voters in the RAE are having a different conversation this election than swing voters, political independents or Tea Party Supporters. They are not angry and their interest in this election is less political or partisan in nature. It is not about who runs what committee or what happens in Washington, D.C. It is not about the deficit. Rather, it is about things that happen directly in their lives like unemployment extensions, pre-existing conditions, raising the minimum wage and job training.

Reaching these voters means meeting them where they live. It means translating policy and political messages into terms they can see, touch, and feel. For example, an “economic stimulus” package does not register with these voters; many do not recall the stimulus even being passed. But they do remember taking advantage of the tax credits for buying energy efficient appliances. Similarly, participants who did not recognize candidates running for Senate knew that, on the day of the groups, the Senate passed an unemployment extension.

A major step in improving both participation and the margin among these voters is injecting this election cycle with real consequences, not rhetorical or political terms and phrases. More than anything else, they need to see a visible, tangible stake or consequence in the outcome of the 2010 election. Voting can protect and promote an agenda that improves their lives. Not voting can mean an end to the progress that has or could be enacted to help them. When these stakes are made plain, their interest and intensity increases. Their participation and their margin for progressive candidates depend on it.

Overarching frame: Times are tough and people need help

The most successful framework for these voters employs a very straightforward premise: Times are tough and people need help.

For a population that is struggling disproportionately, the truth of this premise is hard to dispute. And these are voters who believe in the role of government. Unlike many other voting blocs, they do not have the cushion of a second family income.

The issues that motivate them are aspirational, not ideological. They are not interested in promoting an activist government for its own sake, but in a government that gives the most economically vulnerable people in the country the tools they need to survive and to build a better life.

Again this message, as the focus groups and survey results below confirm, needs real-life examples (e.g., minimum wage, job training, or cracking down on credit card companies) that relate to the reality of the lives of these voters.

When focus group participants were asked what would motivate them to vote this November, the following two statements topped the list:

*Under current law, it is illegal for insurance companies to drop someone when they get sick or fail to provide coverage to someone with a pre-existing condition. Unless we make our voices heard, these protections will be at risk.*
Times are tough and people need help. Next year, federal and state government will be deciding on things that help struggling families, like extending unemployment benefits, pay equity for women, the minimum wage and access to quality daycare. The outcome of these decisions hinges on who is elected in 2010.

**Top pro-Democratic arguments among RAE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>Much More Likely</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(HEALTH CARE) Because of Democratic changes, for the first time, insurance companies will not be allowed to drop coverage for those with pre-existing conditions, kick people off their plan when they get sick or charge women higher premiums than men for the same coverage.</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(HELPING PEOPLE) Times are tough and Democrats have fought to help average people. They raised the minimum wage for low-income workers and extended unemployment benefits for people struggling to find work, providing funding for job training for people who need to learn a new trade or career, and cracked down on credit card companies who were charging hidden fees and excessive interest rates.</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(POPULIST) Democrats have taken on big corporations on behalf of average people. They have cracked down on insurance companies and made it illegal to drop someone when they get sick, made Wall Street more accountable by making sure big banks pay back all the bailout money they took, and are now requiring BP to pay every penny of the cost of the oil cleanup.</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Making RAE voters aware of the real world consequences of electing a new Congress that does not share their progressive values can also be a powerful motivator. In the focus groups, participants ranked their concerns:

*The new Congress will overturn the law that requires insurance companies to provide coverage for those with pre-existing conditions, prevents insurance companies from kicking people off their plan when they get sick and stops them from charging women higher premiums than men with the same coverage.*

*The new Congress will go back to the policies of George W. Bush, the same policies that led us to record deficits, a collapsing economy and two wars without end.*

As a comparative message, the fact that the Republicans oppose helping average people in these troubled times as the most successful message tested. Among unmarried women, it is a twice as powerful as the next message tested. And this message spells out in real-life terms what the Republicans oppose and what is at stake in this election.
Talking to the RAE about Heath Care

Properly presented, the health care issue is an extremely powerful motivator driving both RAE participation and preference. These voters indicate a favorable impression of health care reform overall (42 percent favorable, 36 percent unfavorable, compared to 61 percent unfavorable among non-RAE voters) and health care emerges as the strongest positive argument tested in the September Democracy Corps survey. Not surprising considering RAE voters in this survey are more than twice as likely as other voters to have lost their health insurance in the last year.

Health care reform has real traction among these voters when it is broken down in terms these voters can understand -- and that’s by focusing on specific provisions, namely preventing insurance companies from dropping coverage for people with pre-existing conditions, kicking people off their plan when they get sick, or charging women higher premiums than men for the same coverage. RAE voters also like the fact that children could now be covered under their parents’ plan until age 26.

The specific provisions in health care tested powerfully as a positive and a negative – these are advances the RAE does not want the next Congress to reverse.
Talking to RAE about the Economy

There is a unique economic narrative that RAE voters need to hear on the economy. There is a stark and clear contrast: Democrats fought for changes that would help average people weather the economy; Republicans blocked them.

Like many other groups of voters, these respondents are struggling in the current economy. But the RAE is suffering disproportionately – in the April Democracy Corps tracking survey, RAE voters were twice as likely as other voters to report a job loss within the last year. And unlike other people, many voters in the RAE are on their own – and for many of them, the government is the only place where they can turn for help.

In the April Democracy Corps poll, the survey found the economic vision of RAE voters to be significantly more progressive and activist than other voters:

**RAE voters seek different solutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>RAE</th>
<th>Other Voters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cut taxes for the middle class</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make college more affordable</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgage relief</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government jobs for the unemployed</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure equal pay</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the minimum wage</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend unemployment benefits</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide more affordable child care</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(All)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(None/Other/Refused)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similarly, unlike other voters, RAE voters approach to the tax current debate keys in on the impact extending the Bush-era tax cut will have on investments. In the September Democracy Corps survey, RAE voters were much more focused on investments than other voters.

And which of the following comes closest to your view about what should be done:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Option</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>RAE</th>
<th>Non-RAE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All the tax cuts should remain in place because raising taxes in a recession will kill the economy and any hope of jobs.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend the middle class tax cuts in place for those making under 250 thousand dollars, but not for those making above so that money can be invested in new skills and industries to create jobs.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the tax cuts should be allowed to expire.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Don’t know/Refused)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

The deficit is less of an issue for them. In the focus groups, this rarely came up, while in groups among swing voters this was a driving issue.

Moreover, RAE voters are for more focused on investments right now than deficit reduction. Consider reactions to two statements in a July Democracy Corps survey.

Rising American Electorate Less Focused on the Deficit

Now I’m going to read you some pairs of statements. After I read each pair, please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.

**First Statement:** To get our country back on track, we must invest in education, science, technology, and in new industries like renewable energy that will create new jobs, while also working to reduce the federal deficit each year.

**Second Statement:** To get our country back on track, we must cut the federal deficit by cutting spending and taxes so businesses can prosper and the private sector can start creating jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>RAE</th>
<th>Non-RAE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invest</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut Taxes</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Again, the elements of economic progress test better than large scale programs like the Stimulus Package. To be heard, deconstruct economic programs to connect with their daily lives and talk in terms
of raising the minimum wage, extending unemployment benefits, providing funding for job training and cracking down on credit card companies who were charging hidden fees and excessive rates.

When asked to name two things that have been done to improve the economy that have had the greatest impact in their lives, the August focus group participants ranked:

- **Tax cuts for the middle class**
- **Cracking down on abuses by credit card companies**
- **More money for education and job training**
- **Making student loans more affordable**
- **Extended unemployment benefits**
- **Tax credits for first time homebuyers**

**Talking to the RAE about Education and Job Training**

RAE voters see education and job training as more important than other voters. To them, education is not a matter of good public policy but the surest way they know to improve their lives and the futures of their children. RAE voters are more likely to believe a college degree is necessary to be financially comfortable these days and more likely to believe federal investments in education are important to improve the economy in the long-term. They are motivated by a progressive platform that calls for job training and money for job training, and more accessible and affordable college and college loans.

**Do’s and Don’ts**

**DO:** Deconstruct major issues and arguments to demonstrate the impact on their lives. “Defending health care reform” is not the same as “defending people with pre-existing conditions.”

**DO:** Stress health care. Reaction to this issue is mixed elsewhere. Among these voters it can be a major driver of progressive voting behavior.

**DO:** Remind voters about some things they have done to improve their lives in concrete terms (examples: extending unemployment, credit card reform, student aid and job training, cash for clunkers and tax breaks for energy efficient improvements).

**DO:** Focus on vote by mail and other non-traditional means of voting.

**DO:** Focus on local issues where possible. They are more direct, more visible and have more traction.

**DO:** Above all, give them a stake in the outcome of the 2010 election cycle. The most powerful message in these groups, at least, was around “protecting the law that requires insurance companies to cover people with pre-existing conditions.”

**DON’T:** Use overly rhetorical or overly partisan language. While progressive in ideology, these voters are also not politically engaged or attuned.

**DON’T:** Assume voters follow the debate in Washington. Unless it affects them directly, they tune it out.

**DON’T:** Use Washington language or idioms. Words like “Cap and Trade,” and “Economic Stimulus” have little real meaning to these voters.
• Don’t talk to them in big picture terms about the passage of Health Care, Financial Reform, or the Stimulus

• Do deconstruct issues and arguments to demonstrate the impact on their lives. “Defending health care reform” is not the same as “defending people with pre-existing conditions.”
  o Health care is about getting rid of pre-existing conditions and disallowing gender bias in pricing.
  o The Stimulus Package is about cash for clunkers and tax credits for new windows
  o The Financial Reform bill is about preventing credit card companies from increasing your interest rates if you are an hour late in making a payment.
  o

• Do connect to them where they live. Did they get unemployment extensions? Did their father, sister or brother lose a job, is someone helping?

• These voters are not sold on slick presentations of the case. “Just the facts, ma’am” approach – and source everything.

Give them a stake in the outcome of the 2010 election. When these stakes are made plain and the arguments connected to their daily lives, the research makes it clear more of these voters are likely to turn out. But first, you must make the effort to reach out and connect to them.

How to Reach Unmarried Women

• One in seven unmarried women does not have a landline and are not listed in any phonebook. According to the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 16.4 percent unmarried women rely entirely on a cell phone.

• When it comes to acquiring information on campaigns, unmarried women, like the rest of the electorate, depend on television.
  o Unmarried women got their campaign information from:
    o Television 79%
    o Newspapers 50%
    o Radio 42%
    o Internet 40%
    o Magazines 34%

• Seven out of ten unmarried women subscribe to cable and unmarried women are easier target through cable than other communications media.
  o These cable channels are popular with unmarried women (not in rank order): MSNBC, CNN, USA, Lifetime, Bravo, the History Channel, the Comedy Channel, MTV, VHI, CW, Travel, Golf (believe it or not, a lot of women like the Golf Channel); ESPN 1 and 2, Nickelodeon, True, the Family Channel, A&E, Spike TV, E!; add BET for African-American viewers.
If you are getting your message out on cable, you need to buy a variety of spots on a variety of channels, in order to get good "frequency." Cable viewers are channel surfers, so you need to be present a lot of different places. Focus on two specific sets of time slots: (1) Early morning time slots, like 5-7, 6-9, or 7-10 time slots. These time slots are organized differently in each part of the country, but stay within that 5 - 10 am range. And (2) Evening / late night time slots, from 5 - midnight. This applies to all demographics.

- The internet is a fast-growing medium for political communication, but unmarried women are less likely than any other gender and marital status group to have internet access at home:
  - 66% of unmarried women have internet access at home
  - 82.1% of married women have internet access at home

- While internet access at home is more limited for unmarried women, they are more than twice as likely to have a profile on a social networking site such as Facebook of MySpace:
  - 47.7% of unmarried women have a profile on a social networking site
  - 19.2% of married women have a profile on a social networking site

- Unmarried women are movers. About one in six unmarried women has lived in their current address less than a year; four in ten have moved in the last four years.

- Unmarried women are responsive to direct mail and want the time and opportunity to study the issues and the candidates that mail provides.

About Women’s Voices. Women Vote Action Fund

Women’s Voices. Women Vote Action Fund (WVWVAF) informs and mobilizes the Rising American Electorate (RAE)—unmarried women, people of color and youth—to participate in our government and make their voices heard in our democracy. Together, the RAE makes up 52% of all voting age Americans, yet they participate and vote less than other members of the electorate.

WVWVAF is dedicated to encouraging unmarried women to bring their voices to our nation's political conversation and to advocate for policies important to them. The Action Fund seeks to empower women on their own with the facts they need to make their own informed choices about ballot measures, candidates and issues.

WVWVAF is a leader in advocating for issues important to unmarried women. Through research-driven and results-affirmed programs, WVWVAF effectively increases the presence of the RAE at the polls and in our democracy.