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To: Interested Parties

From: Celinda Lake

Re: Catholics and Birth Control Coverage¹

Date: February 7, 2012

In an effort to examine voters' attitudes toward provisions around women's health in the Affordable Care Act, the Communications Consortium Media Center (CCMC) and the Herndon Alliance commissioned Lake Research Partners to test voters' reactions to including birth control or contraception in insurance coverage. We found that Catholic voters tend to mirror voters overall when it comes to reproductive health care services that the Affordable Care Act will cover. Not only are Catholics favorable to including birth control or contraception in insurance coverage, these inclusions also make them more favorable toward the Affordable Care Act. Moreover, a majority of Catholics say that the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' criticism of the requirement to cover contraception and birth control with no co-pay or deductible makes no difference in how they view the Affordable Care Act.

- Catholics respond most favorably toward including birth control and contraception at no cost², with a third (33%) rating the inclusion as part of insurance coverage a 10 on a scale that goes from 0 to 10, where 0 means you are much less favorable and a 10 means you are much more favorable toward the new health reform law. Four in ten Catholics (40%) rate this provision 8, 9, or 10 on the scale, and half (51%) rate it a 6-10, giving this a mean rating of 5.9. Similarly, 34% of voters overall rate including birth control and contraception at no cost a 10 on the scale, with 47%

¹ These results are based on a telephone survey of 1,000 likely voters nationwide. The survey was comprised of a base sample of 800 likely voters with an oversample of 200 female voters nationwide. In the combined totals, respondents in the female oversample were weighted down to reflect their actual proportion among the population. The survey was conducted August 4 through 10, 2011. There is a sample of error of +/- 3.1%.

² Split sample question

rating it 8-10, and 57% falling in the more favorable 6-10 range, for a mean score of 6.2.

- About a quarter (27%) of Catholics feel more favorable toward the health care law when it includes birth control and contraception at no additional cost³ and they react very similarly to voters overall. Among Catholics, 43% fall within the 8-10 range, and 55% are in the more favorable 6-10 range, for a mean score of 6.0. Voters overall agree, with 31% rating it a 10, 46% rating this provision 8-10, and 56% rating it 6-10, for a mean score of 6.0.
- The majority of Catholics (53%), like the majority of voters overall (57%), say the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' sharp criticism of the new rule requiring private health plans to cover contraception and birth control with no co-pays or deductibles does not make a difference in their views of the Affordable Care Act. Among Catholics, 21% say this makes them feel more favorable toward the Affordable Care Act (10% much more favorable), while 20% says this makes them feel less favorable (12% much less favorable).

Contrary to conventional wisdom, Catholics tend to respond positively toward the Affordable Care Act when they learn that it will cover key aspects of women's health care and do not side with the criticism of the Bishops.

³ Split sample question