

NAME IT CHANGE IT

sexism & equality don't mix!

Name It. Change It.

Findings from an online dial survey of
800 likely voters nationwide

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Methodology

Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey which was conducted online. The survey reached a total of 800 likely voters nationwide. The sample was drawn from an online panel and respondents were screened to include only likely voters. The survey was conducted September 1 - 7, 2010.

Data in the sample were weighted slightly by age, party identification, and education to reflect the attributes of the actual population. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 3.5%.

The survey was divided into a systematic experiment with a hypothetical Congressional contest between female candidate Jane Smith and male candidate Dan Jones. Half the voters heard a back and forth with sexist characters, first “ice queen” and “mean girl” and then escalating to “prostitute.” The other half, a control group, heard an engaged debate without the sexist language, though still an attack.

Key Findings

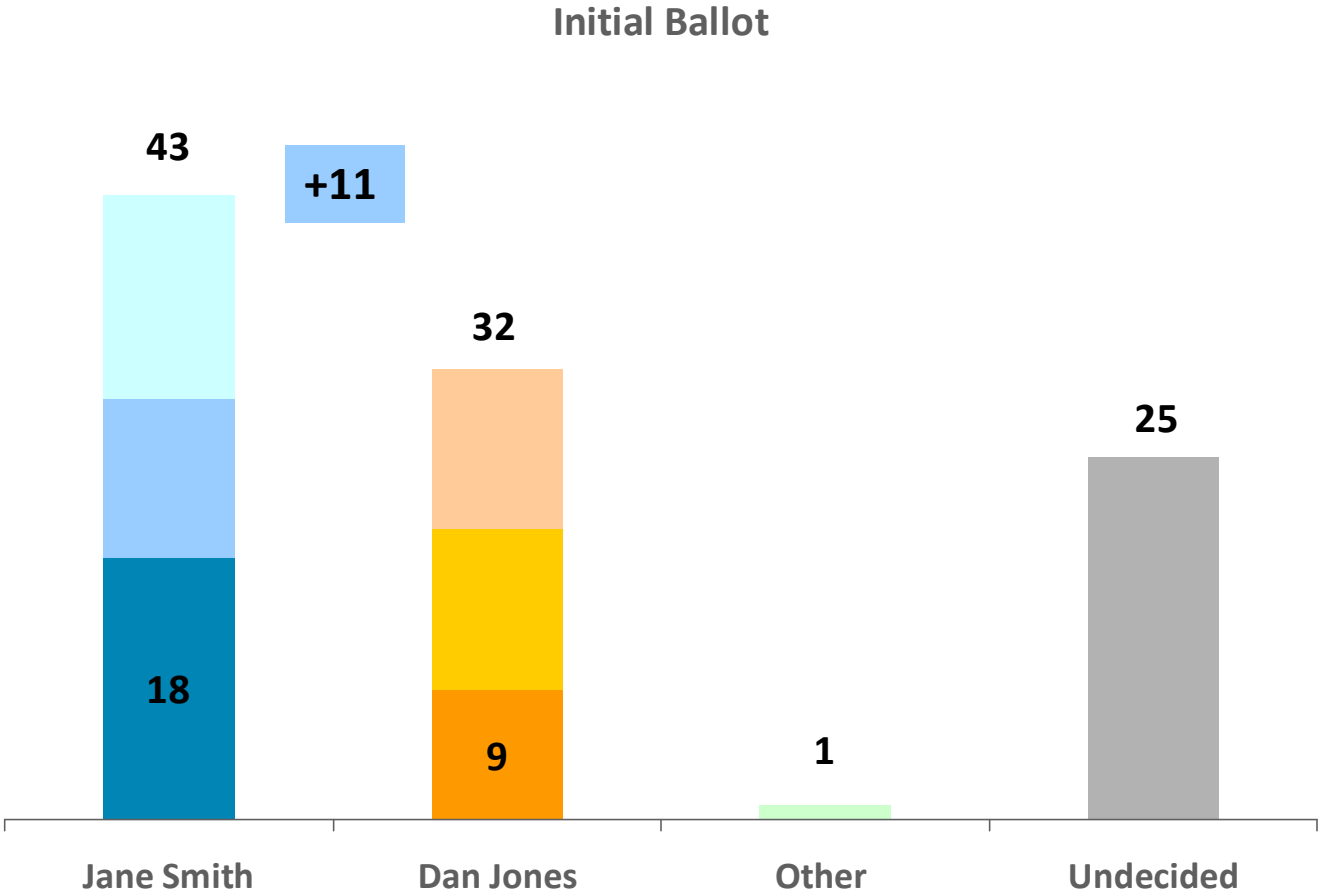
Key Findings—The Cost of Sexism

- Sexism, even mild sexist language, has an impact on voters' likelihood to vote for a female candidate and on how favorable they feel toward a woman seeking office. It also affects perceptions of trustworthiness, empathy, values, and effectiveness.
- Even when they are told the source of sexist attacks, voters assume the sexist language comes from the woman's opponent, Dan Jones, and he pays some price – or will – for this type of campaign. However, the race is even after sexism. The male candidate is behind without it, even after an engaged debate. The sexist language affects voters of all voting groups. The responses regain voters across the board.
- Acknowledging and responding to sexist mistreatment by the media helps repair damage inflicted on a female candidate. A pivot, validators, and calling out discrimination all work equally well.

The Vote

While voters start out supporting Jane Smith over Dan Jones, sexist language damages her lead significantly more than standard attacks. The effect is pronounced with every demographic group. Direct responses help Jane Smith gain back lost ground.

Initially, voters favor Jane Smith by 11 points, with intense support for Smith twice as strong as that for Dan Jones. A quarter of voters are undecided.



Darker colors indicate intensity

Jane Smith Profile

Jane Smith enjoys a reputation as a bi-partisan reformer and is an advocate for small businesses and hardworking families. An economist by training, she graduated at the top of her class in law school. She grew up in a working class neighborhood where she learned the value of hard work and discipline. As the daughter of a police officer and a nurse, she believes in fiscal responsibility, cracking down on criminals, and getting this economy working again.

Before running for Congress, she served two terms on city council, one term as head of the Chamber of Commerce, and is in her third term in the state legislature. Currently she serves as a ranking member of the Appropriations and the Joint Economic committees. She believes in free markets and personal responsibility. She is also a strong and tireless advocate for families who are unable to make ends meet in these tough economic times.

Smith married her high-school sweet heart, Justin – a lawyer, and they have three grown children: Linda, Matt and Jordon.

Dan Jones Profile

Dan Jones is known in the state legislature for his consistent voting record on issues like immigration, energy independence, and economic development. He is a staunch advocate for cutting unnecessary government regulations and is a believer in more fiscal discipline and accountability from Washington. He also believes in investing in our priorities like public education and expanding access to affordable healthcare for small business. He believes world class education and affordable health care are key to our future economic competitiveness as a nation.

He successfully climbed the ranks of a Fortune 500 company before deciding to run for city comptroller and then was twice elected mayor of one of the largest cities in his state. Currently, he is serving his second term as state Senator and majority leader, where he serves on the Appropriations Committee and the Governor's Economic Task Force.

Jones met his wife Cecilia after college and they have two grown children: Christopher and Taylor.

Women, older voters and non-college graduates favor Jane Smith in the initial ballot while their counterparts are more evenly divided.

Initial Ballot				
	Jane Smith	Dan Jones	Other/Und.	Margin
Men	38%	36%	26%	+1
Women	48%	27%	25%	+20
Under 50	39%	32%	29%	+6
Over 50	46%	31%	22%	+15
Non-college grad	45%	27%	28%	+18
College grad	40%	38%	22%	+3

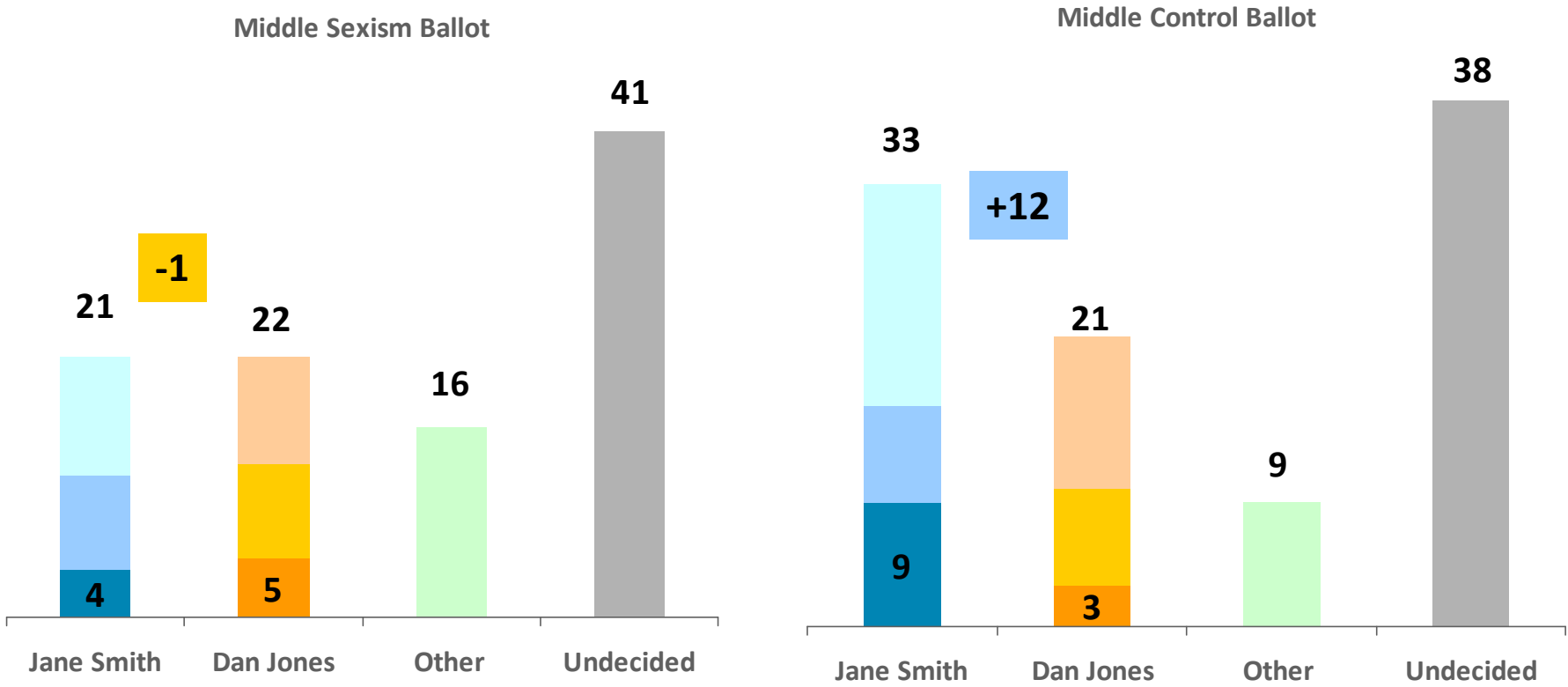
Text of middle sexist news story on Jane Smith and middle negative news story on Dan Jones

- Today the state legislature passed sweeping health care legislation and our legislator Jane Smith voted for a health care reform bill that includes a substantial tax increase. She refused to answer questions and a number of people in the state have noted she has been acting like an ice queen, making it difficult for her to hold support. She has been a “mean girl” when anyone tried to get her to explain her vote. At her announcement, commentators remarked on her new hair style and designer shoes and dress.
- Dan Jones voted for the sweeping health care reform legislation that passed the State Legislature today. He did not vote the right way on health care and it is not the vote we expected from him. This was a bad vote and clearly shows he supports the government taking over our lives. Additionally, when we was asked about his foreign policy experience, he evaded the question.

Text of middle non-sexist news story on Jane Smith and middle negative news story on Dan Jones

- Today the State Legislature passed sweeping health care legislation and our legislator Jane Smith voted for a health care reform bill that includes a substantial tax increase. She refused to answer questions about her vote and support for her campaign has been eroding as she comes under pressure on the campaign trail. At her announcement, commentators remarked on the excitement her campaign generated and the quality of her vision.
- Dan Jones voted for the sweeping health care legislation that passed the State Legislature today. He did not vote the right way on health care and it is not the vote we expected from him. This was a bad vote and clearly shows he supports the government taking over our lives. Additionally, when he was asked about his foreign policy experience, he evaded the question.

Negative attacks about both candidates work. However, Jane Smith maintains her margin when simply attacked in a back and forth, but loses with mild sexist attacks.



Darker colors indicate intensity
Split sample questions

Sexism reduces Jane’s support among both men and women. Every single group is affected by sexism.

Middle Ballot (Smith minus Jones)			
	Initial	Sexist attacks	Non-sexist attacks
Men	+1	-8	+9
Women	+20	+6	+15
Under 50	+6	-6	+7
Over 50	+15	+4	+16
Non-college grad	+18	+4	+17
College grad	+3	-6	+5

Split sample question

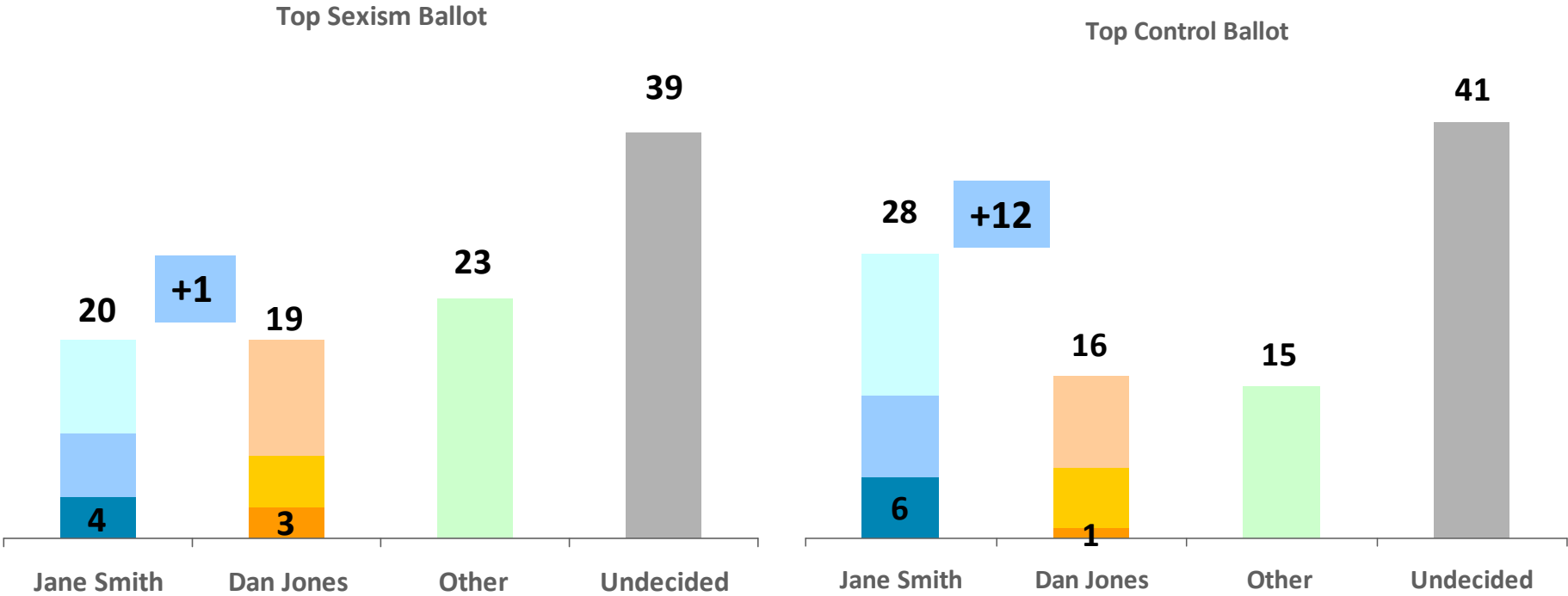
Text of top sexist news story on Jane Smith and top negative news story on Dan Jones

- Further exploring her votes on health care and taxes, Jane Smith supported an article in the health care bill that said that any state that declared an emergency would get a \$300 million grant. A talk radio host commented, she may be the most expensive prostitute in the history of prostitution. She may be easy, but she's not cheap. Another noted radio host said Stupid Girl describes her vote pretty well.
- Further exploring the deal that Jones cut to vote yes on health care, a talk radio host reported that Dan Jones supported an article in the health care bill that said that any state that declared an emergency would get a \$300 million grant. He added that this is clearly a blatant bribe and he is unfairly using a state of emergency to get money to his state.

Text of top non-sexist news story on Jane Smith and top negative news story on Dan Jones

- Further exploring her votes on health care and taxes, Jane Smith supported an article in the health care bill that said that any state that declared an emergency would get a \$300 million grant. A talk radio host called her a tax and spend liberal who has supported every major spending program this year despite the state's deficit. Another talk radio host added that these votes don't make sense and are not smart in this economy.
- Further exploring the deal that Jones cut to vote yes on health care, a talk radio host reported that Dan Jones supported an article in the health care bill that said that any state that declared an emergency would get a \$300 million grant. He added that this is clearly a blatant bribe and he is unfairly using a state of emergency to get money to his state.

The ballot remains static after mild sexism--the damage has already been done. Going more negative cuts the vote for both candidates more in the control group, but still leaves Jane ahead of where she was with sexism.



Darker colors indicate intensity
Split sample questions

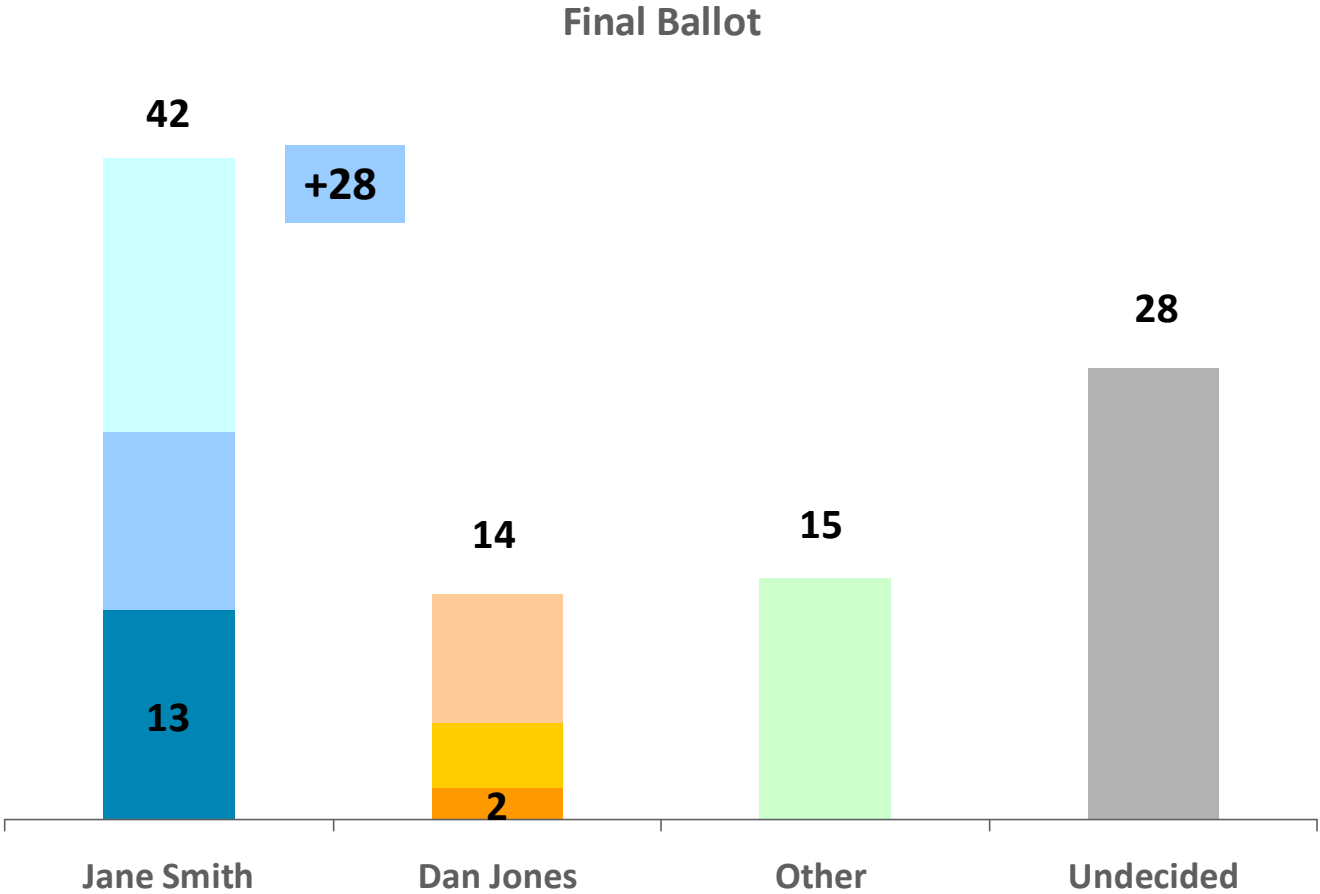
Over-the-top sexism leaves the woman candidate further behind among every subgroup except men. Over the top language from talk radio hosts does get some push back from men and younger voters, but not enough to make up for the initial losses.

Top Sexism Ballot (Smith minus Jones)				
	Mild Sexism	Top Sexism	Non- Sexist Mild Attack	Non-Sexist Top Attack
Men	-8	-1	+9	+6
Women	+6	+2	+15	+17
Under 50	-6	+2	+7	+10
Over 50	+4	--	+16	+13
Non-college grad	+4	+5	+17	+17
College grad	-6	-5	+5	+5

Split sample question



Responding matters. After voters hear two responses from Smith on the sexist coverage and a response from the Media Accountability Project, she regains a clear lead in the race.



Darker colors indicate intensity

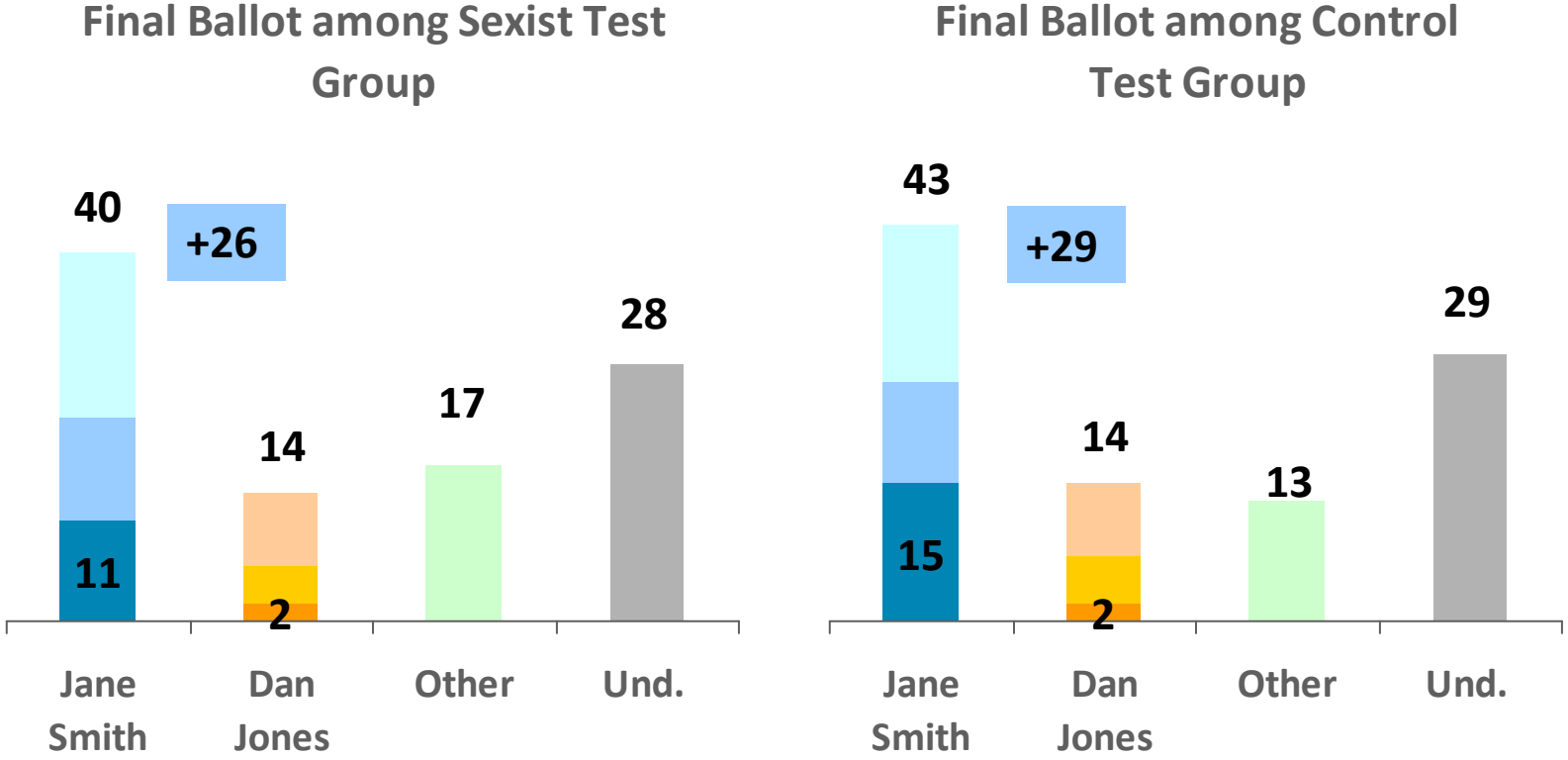
Text of responses from Jane Smith

- **Inappropriate/Pivot:** This is an inappropriate discussion that has nothing to do with my qualifications or merits. I care about the voters in my state and I want to discuss the issues that will impact them and that will move our state forward in these tough times. Instead of focusing on meritless statements, we should be focusing our attention on getting people back to work, getting affordable health care to our hardworking families, and guaranteeing all children a quality education. This is an inappropriate discussion that has nothing to do with my qualifications or merits. I care about the voters in my state and I want to discuss the issues that will impact them and that will move our state forward in these tough times. Instead of focusing on meritless statements, we should be focusing our attention on getting people back to work, getting affordable health care to our hardworking families, and guaranteeing all children a quality education.
- **Take on Discrimination:** Sexist, divisive rhetoric has no place in the media coverage of our elected races. However, apparently having a different opinion means you get attacked, not for your views, but for your gender. I'm not saying that no one dare ever disagree with me for my policy or votes, but if you're going to, at least do it in an intelligent and respectful way. Don't insult me for being a woman and use name calling. This kind of harmful sexism damages our political debate and our democracy and ultimately it hurts how woman and young girls see themselves in our society.

Text of response from the Media Accountability Project

- **Validators:** Across America a broad array of organizations and leaders, including The Media Accountability Project rallied in outrage over the sexist remarks made about Jane Smith in her race. One prominent leader of the Media Accountability Project said “these are not acceptable statements in a civilized political debate in today’s America. Often, female candidates are judged based on their appearance, wardrobe, and personality, rather than their qualifications.” We must erase the sexism against women candidates in order to move our nation forward. When you attack one woman in this way, you attack all women.

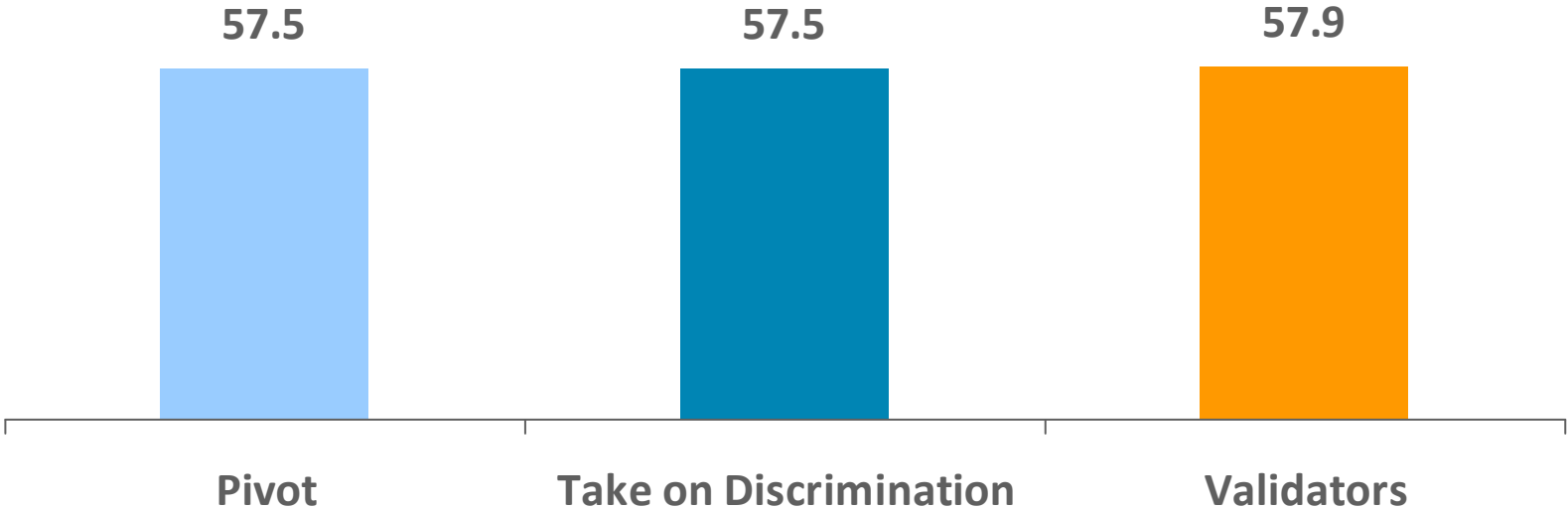
The responses effectively neutralize the erosion of Smith’s support caused by the sexist media treatment. In fact, the responses regain voters for both the sexist attack and the control group.



Darker colors indicate intensity

A pivot, validators, and calling out discrimination, all perform similarly in the dial test. All the responses work across demographic groups and are stronger for women than men.

Average Dial Ratings of Response Messages



*As you listen to the audio, use the slider to show how you feel about what you're hearing, where 0 is very cool, unfavorable feelings toward Jane Smith and 100 is very warm, favorable feelings toward Jane Smith, and 50 is neutral. Your slider starts at 50.

Jane Smith moves further ahead after the responses among every demographic group and is particularly strong with women, older voters, and non-college voters.

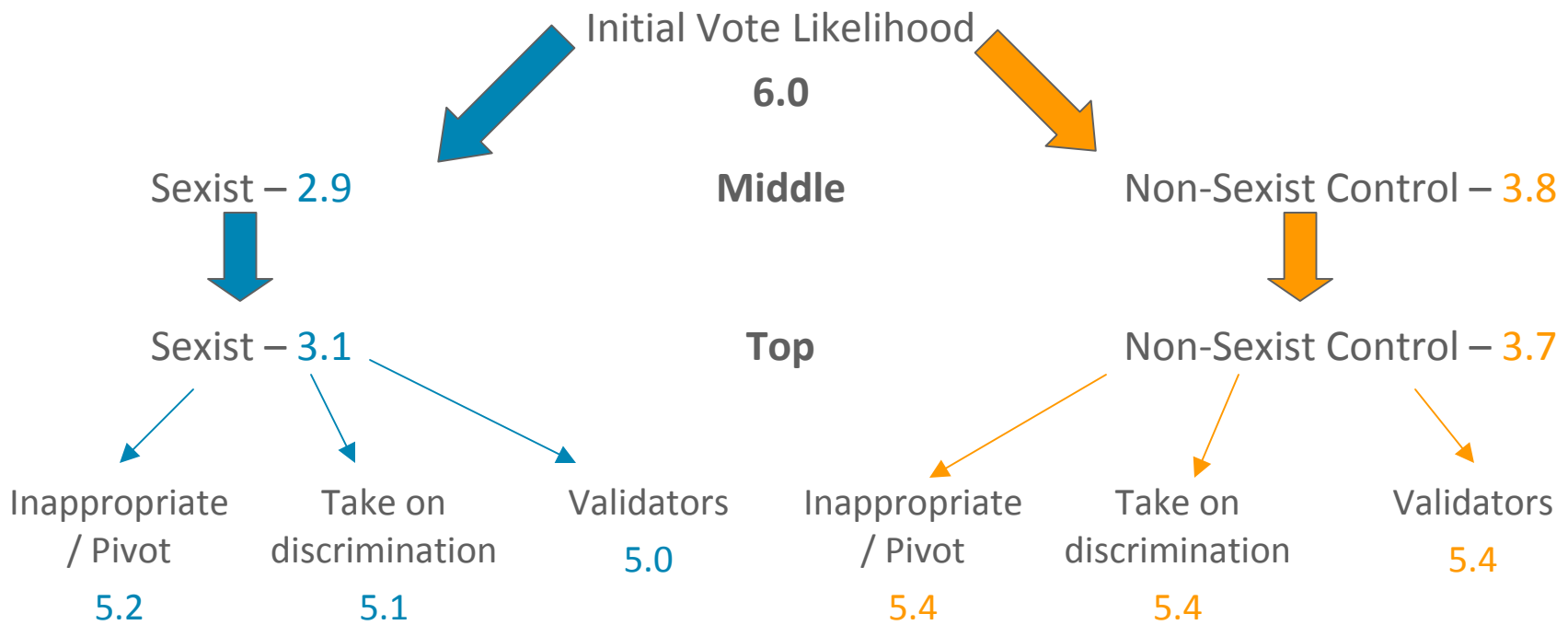
	Final Ballot			Margin	
	Jane Smith	Dan Jones	Other/Und	Initial	Final
Men	36%	18%	45%	+1	+18
Women	47%	11%	43%	+20	+36
Under 50	38%	17%	45%	+6	+21
Over 50	45%	12%	43%	+15	+33
Non-college grad	44%	12%	44%	+18	+33
College grad	38%	18%	44%	+3	+21

Vote Likelihood

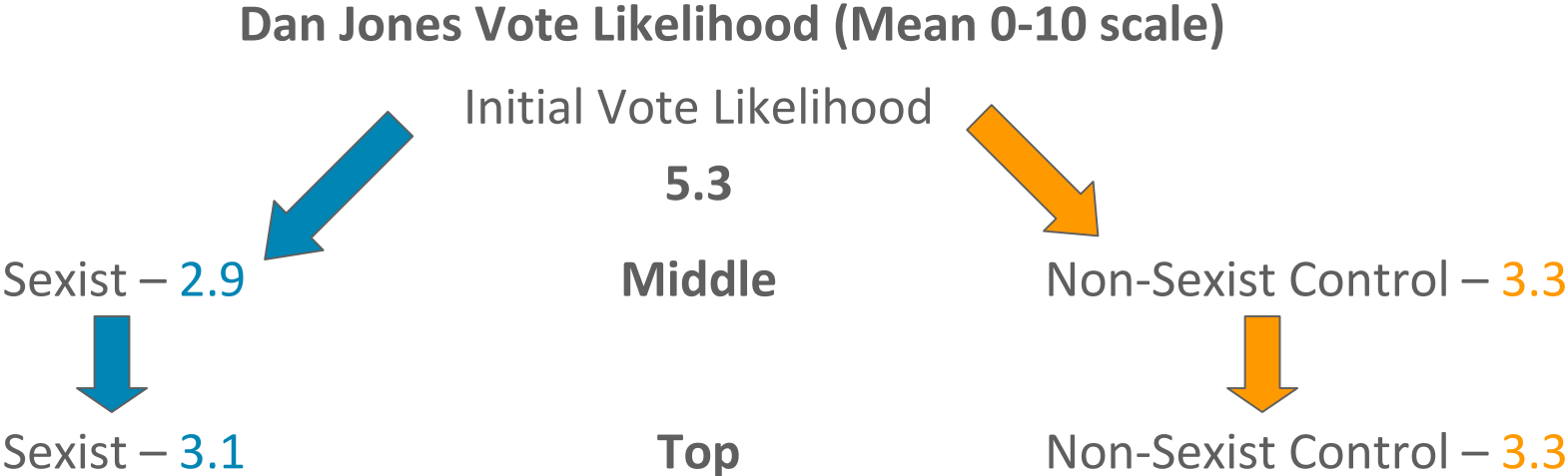
Sexist coverage of Smith puts a damper on voters' likelihood to vote for her, but a direct response makes up for lost ground.

Non-sexist attacks cost Jane Smith some votes, but voters report that they are least likely to vote for Smith after they hear sexist stories about her. Once again, the responses help substantially regain ground, though the gains do not completely make up for the loss.

Jane Smith Vote Likelihood (Mean 0-10 scale)



Attacks cost Jones some vote likelihood and there seems to be a slight backlash for engaging in a sexist campaign.



Nearly seven in ten voters report being less likely to vote for Jane Smith after they hear her being called an ice queen and a mean girl; as well as more strongly sexist language. Non-sexist language about Smith also erodes voters' likelihood of voting for her, but not to the degree of the sexist attacks.

Vote Likelihood				
	Jane Smith		Dan Jones	
	Less likely (0-4)	More likely (6-10)	Less likely (0-4)	More likely (6-10)
Initial	22%	54%	30%	42%
Mild Sexist*	69%	17%	66%	16%
Mild Control*	57%	23%	60%	19%
Top Sexist*	66%	18%	64%	18%
Top Control*	57%	23%	63%	19%

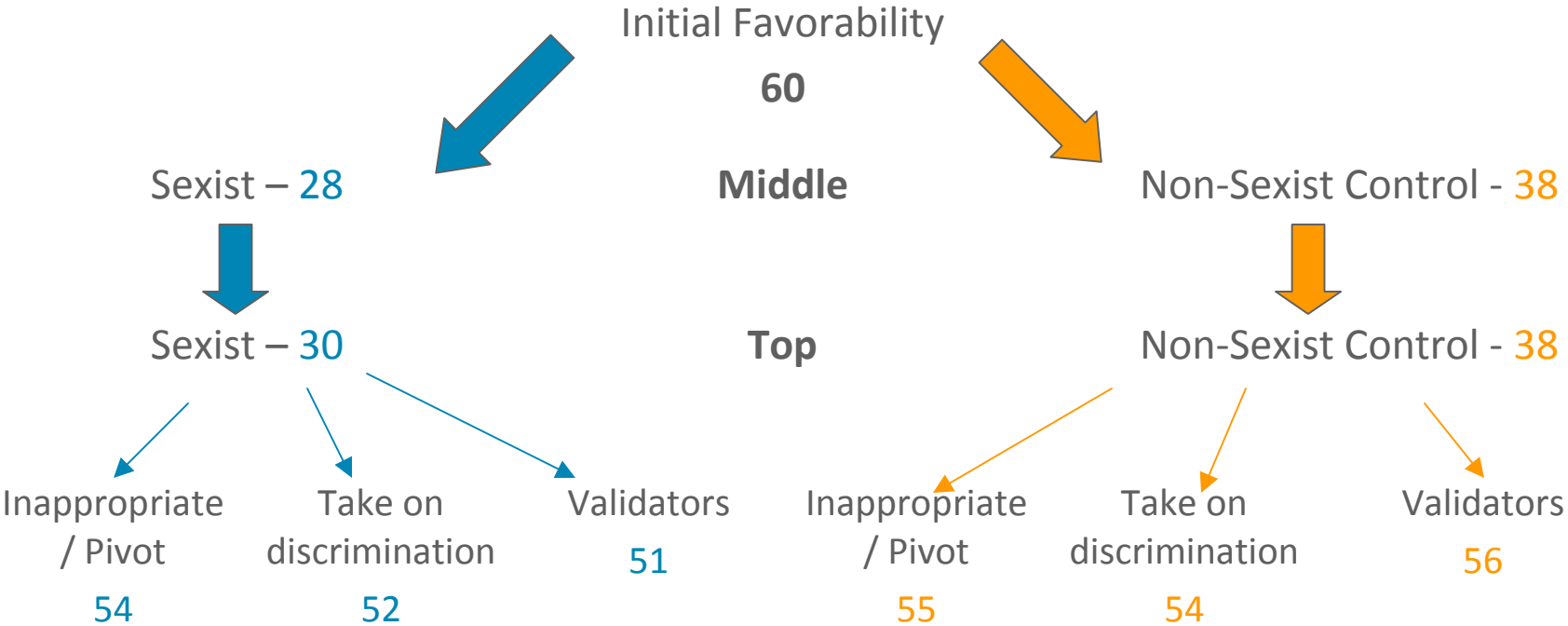
*Split sample question

Images of the Candidates--Favorability

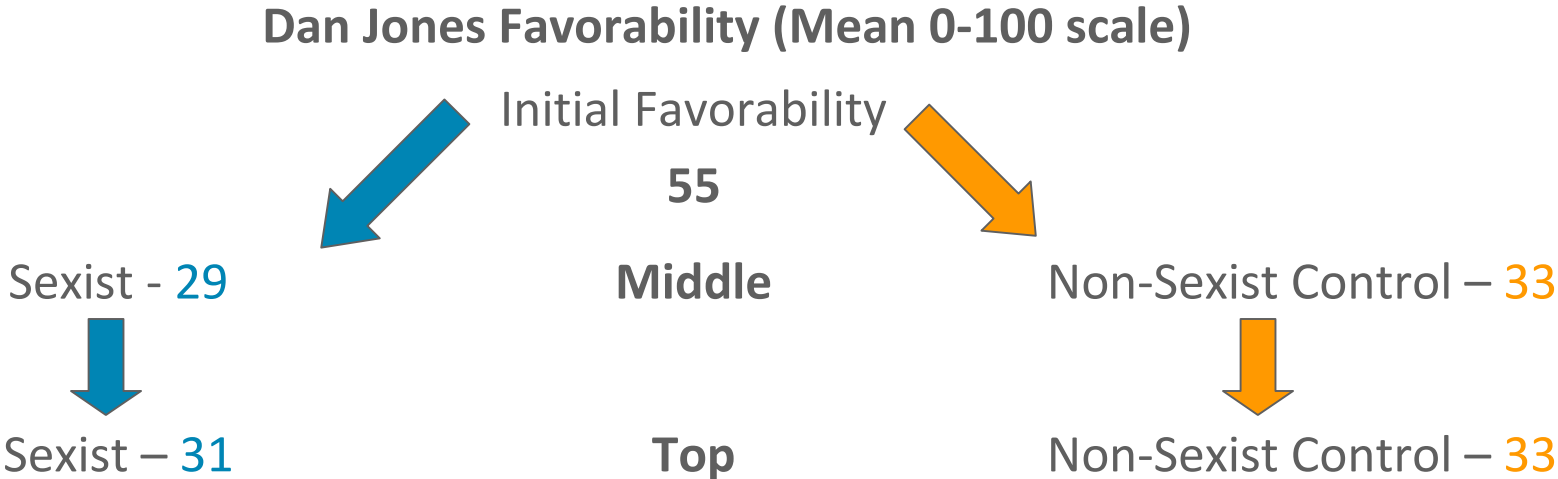
Jane Smith's favorability wears down when voters hear the sexist and the non-sexist language about her, but there also seems to be an extra price paid for a male candidate engaging in a sexist campaign.

Like the ballots, Jane Smith’s favorability wears down when voters hear the sexist and the non-sexist language, but the effect is greater for sexism. Sexism costs a woman an average of 10 points in favorability. Mild sexism has a larger impact. All responses are similar in regaining ground.

Jane Smith Favorability (Mean 0-100 scale)



Dan Jones pays a price for attacks against him, but there also seems to be an extra price paid for engaging in a sexist campaign.



Sexist attacks lower Jane Smiths' favorability across the board more than the control attacks. It especially has an effect among men.

Favorability: Jane Smith (Mean 0-100 scale)						
	Men	Women	Under 50	50+	Non-college grad	College grad
Initial	58	63	60	61	59	62
Mild Sexist*	25	31	29	27	26	30
Mild Control*	38	37	38	38	36	40
Sexism Effect	-13	-6	-9	-11	-10	-10
Top Sexist*	27	32	29	31	28	33
Top Control*	40	36	39	37	37	39
Sexism Effect	-13	-4	-10	-6	-9	-6

*Split sample question

There is some backlash among male voters for the male candidate with a sexist campaign.

Favorability: Dan Jones (Mean 0-100 scale)						
	Men	Women	Under 50	50+	Non-college grad	College grad
Initial	55	55	55	54	52	58
Mild Sexist*	28	31	31	28	25	35
Mild Control*	35	31	35	31	30	36
Sexism Effect	-7	--	-4	-3	-5	-1
Top Sexist*	30	32	34	29	28	36
Top Control*	37	30	33	33	31	36
Sexism Effect	-7	+2	+1	-4	-3	--

*Split sample question

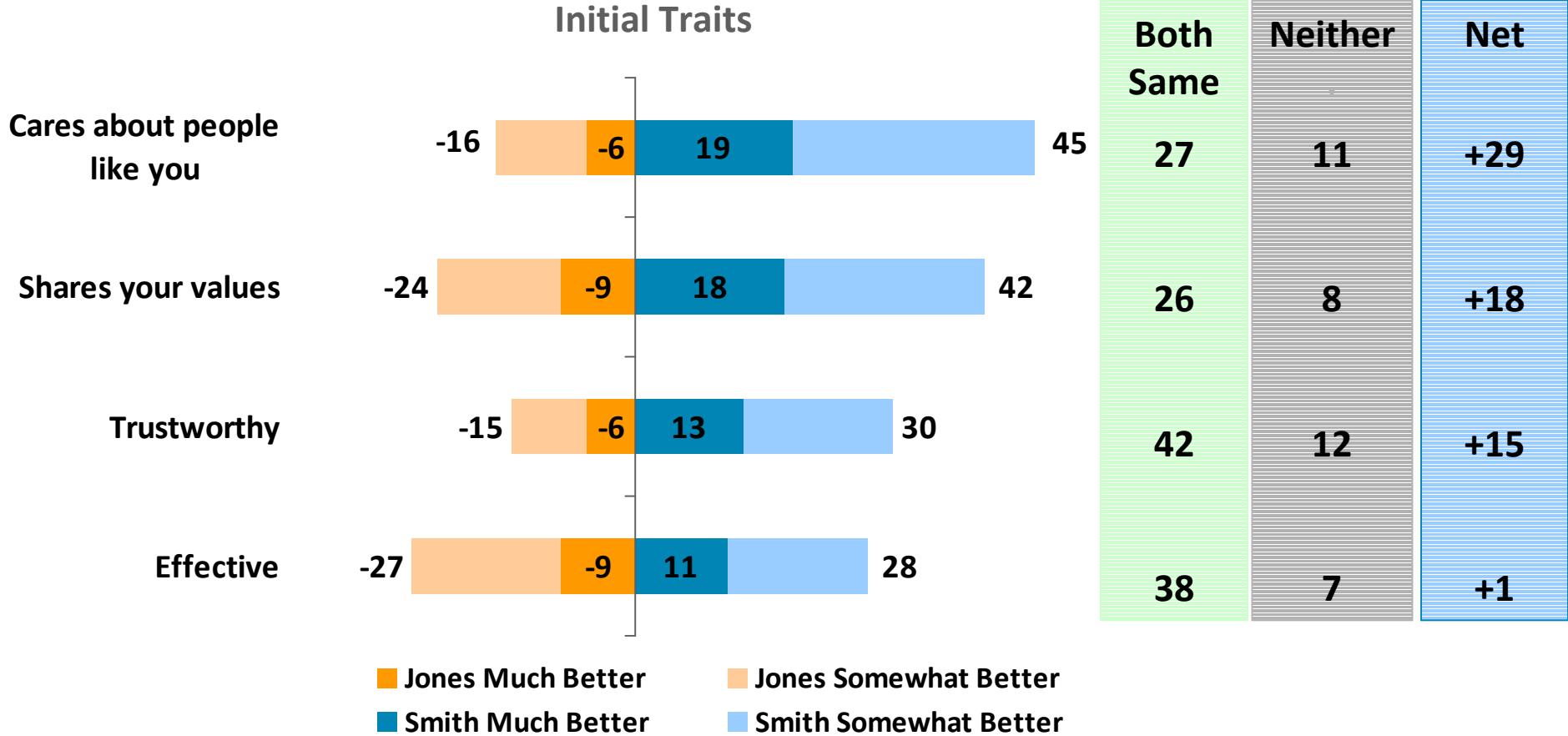
Images of the Candidates – Traits

Initially voters see Jane Smith as more empathetic and trustworthy than Dan Jones. They also think her values mirror their own, but after the attacks, Jane is seen as less empathetic, less trustworthy and her values are in doubt.

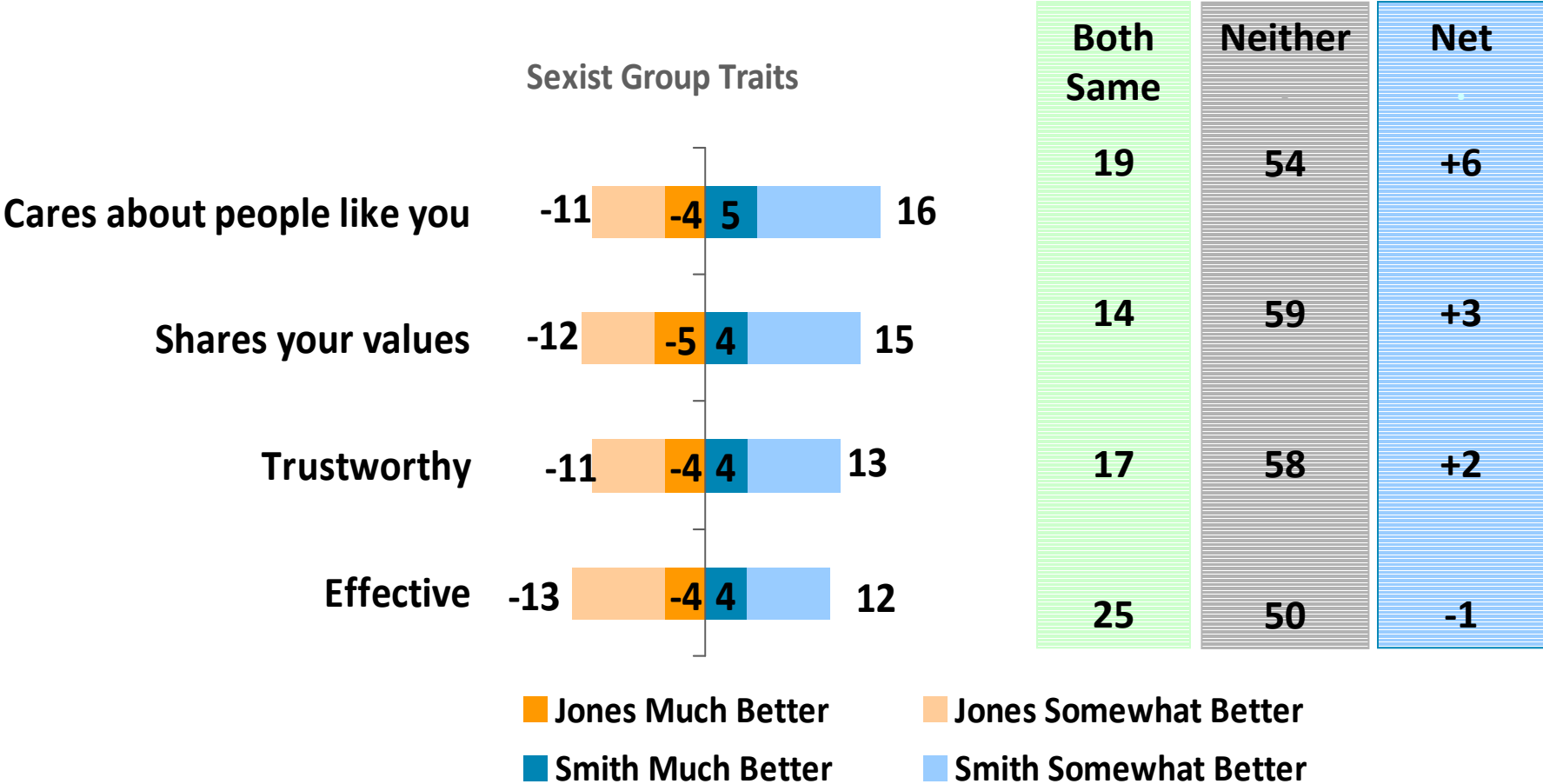
Voters start out believing Smith is more likely to care about people like them, to share their values and is more trustworthy. Voter's views of Smith's traits are strongly impacted by the sexist language. She is seen as less empathetic, trustworthy and effective, and her values are questioned. She loses all the advantage of her gender. When voters only hear non-sexist attacks, Jane Smith drops across positives, but drops are significantly less than for the sexist language.

Net Describes Candidate Better (Jane Smith minus Dan Jones)			
	Initial Net	After Hearing Sexist News Coverage Net	After Hearing Non-Sexist News Coverage Net
Cares about people like you	+29	+6	+16
Shares your values	+18	+3	+13
Trustworthy	+15	+2	+12
Effective	+1	-1	+4

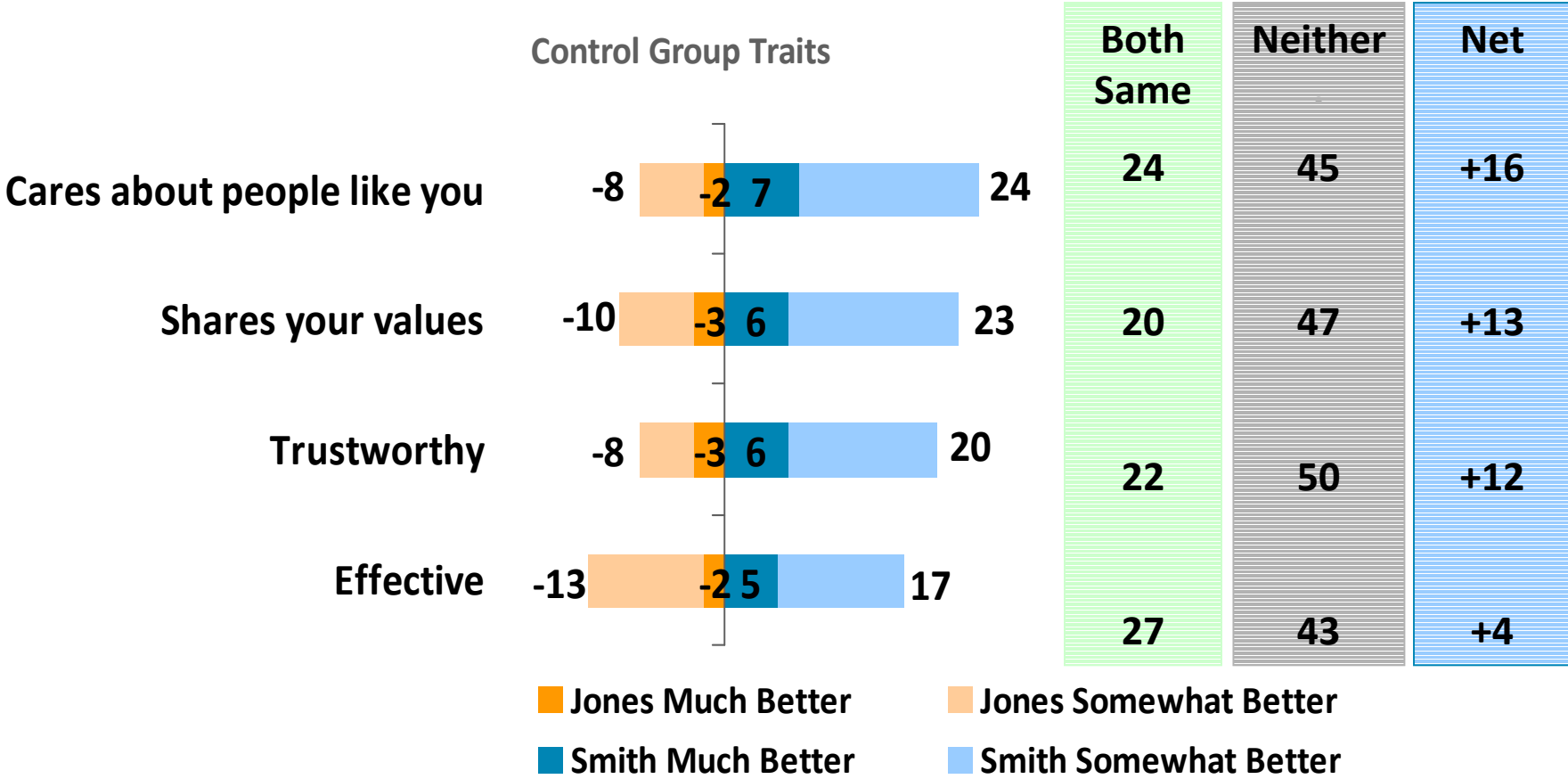
Voters start out believing that Smith is more likely to care about people like them, to share their values and is more trustworthy. They split on effectiveness.



Voter's views of Smith's traits are strongly impacted by the sexist language. She is seen as less empathetic, trustworthy and effective, and her values are questioned. She loses all the advantage of her gender.



When voters only hear non-sexist attacks, Jane Smith drops across positives, but drops are significantly less than for the sexist language.

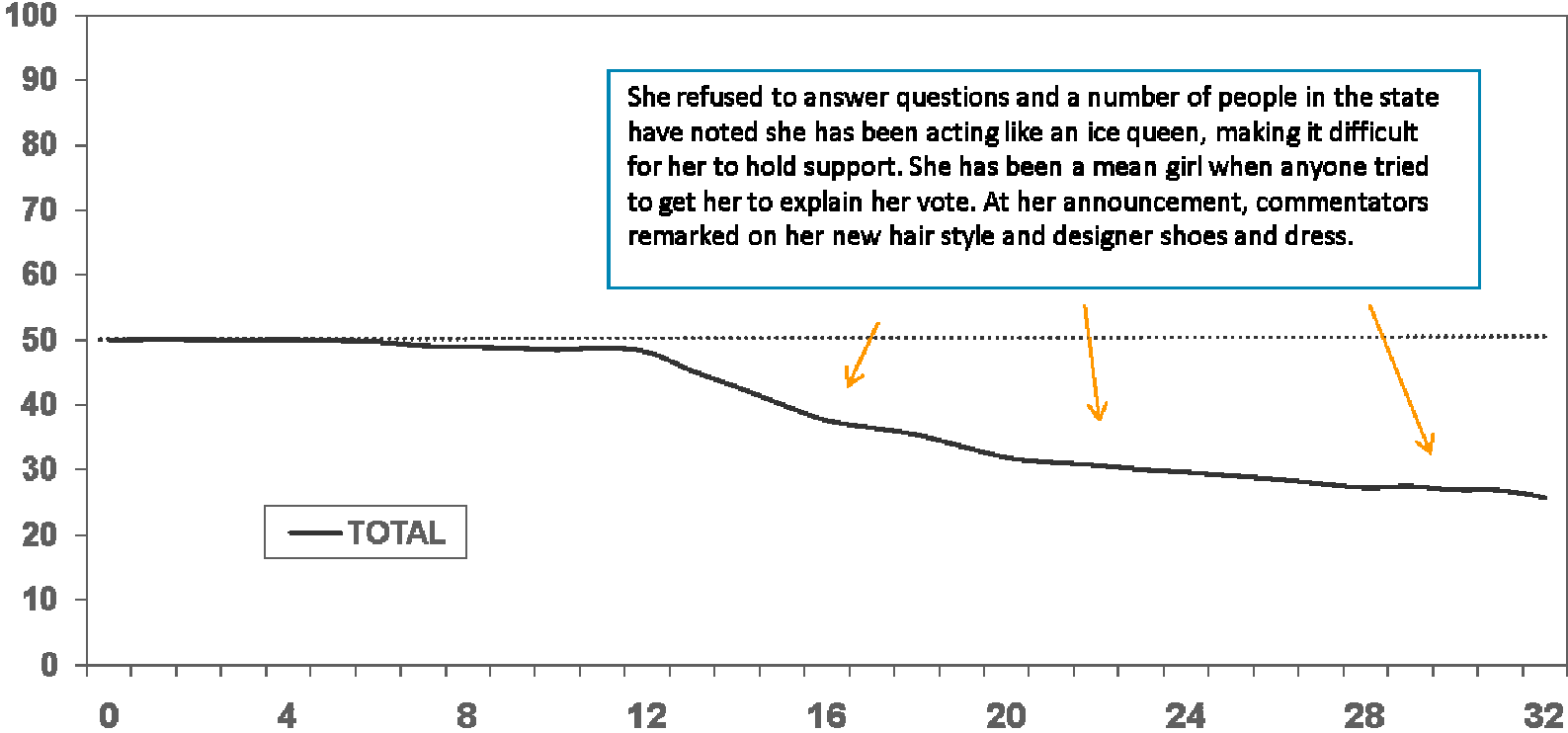


Dial Analysis

The best language to respond to sexist attacks acknowledges a desire to focus on the issues that weigh on voters' minds, asserts sexism has no place in the media coverage and demands that critiques avoid a gender focus, and express a desire to erase sexism against candidates.

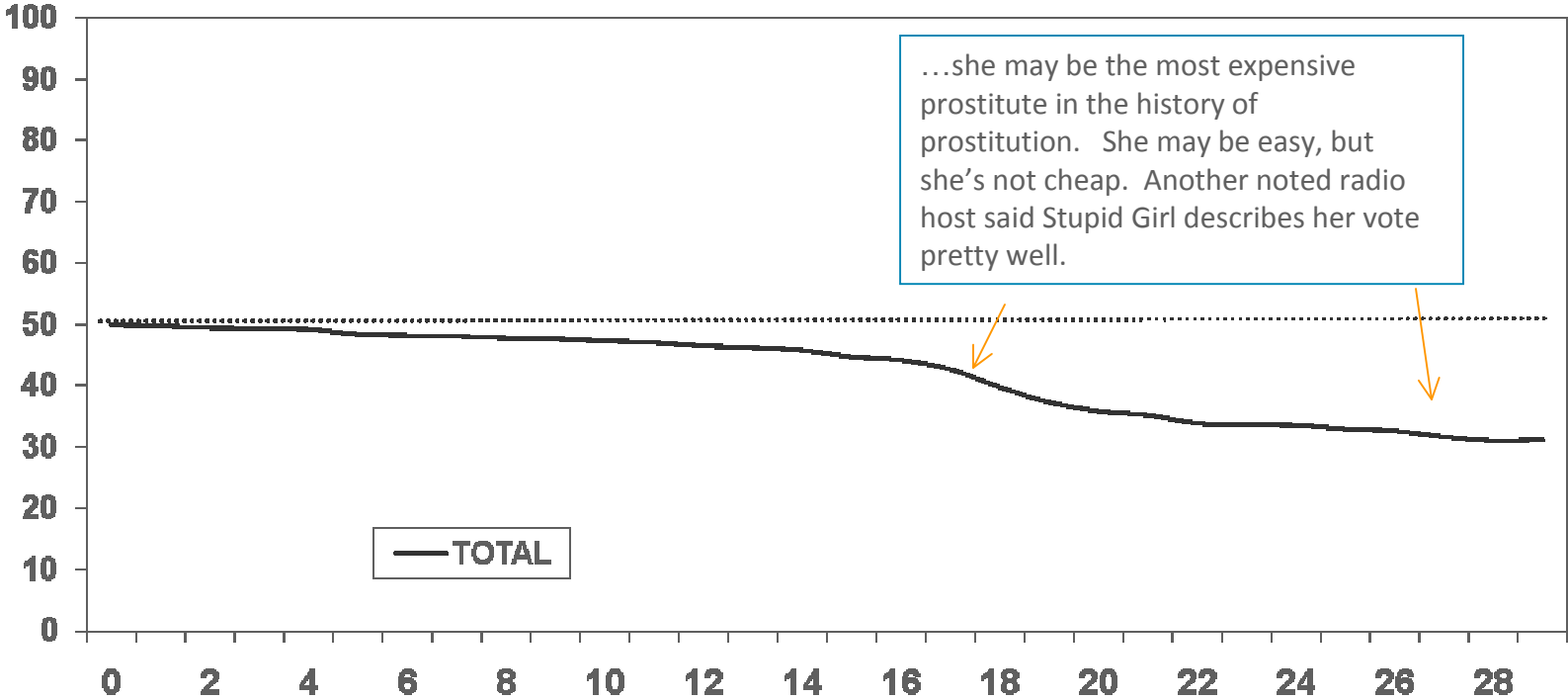
Voters begin to dial down once they hear that Jane Smith has refused to answer questions. They continue to dial lower and lower as they listen to the coverage call her an ice queen and a mean girl.

Middle Sexist Coverage

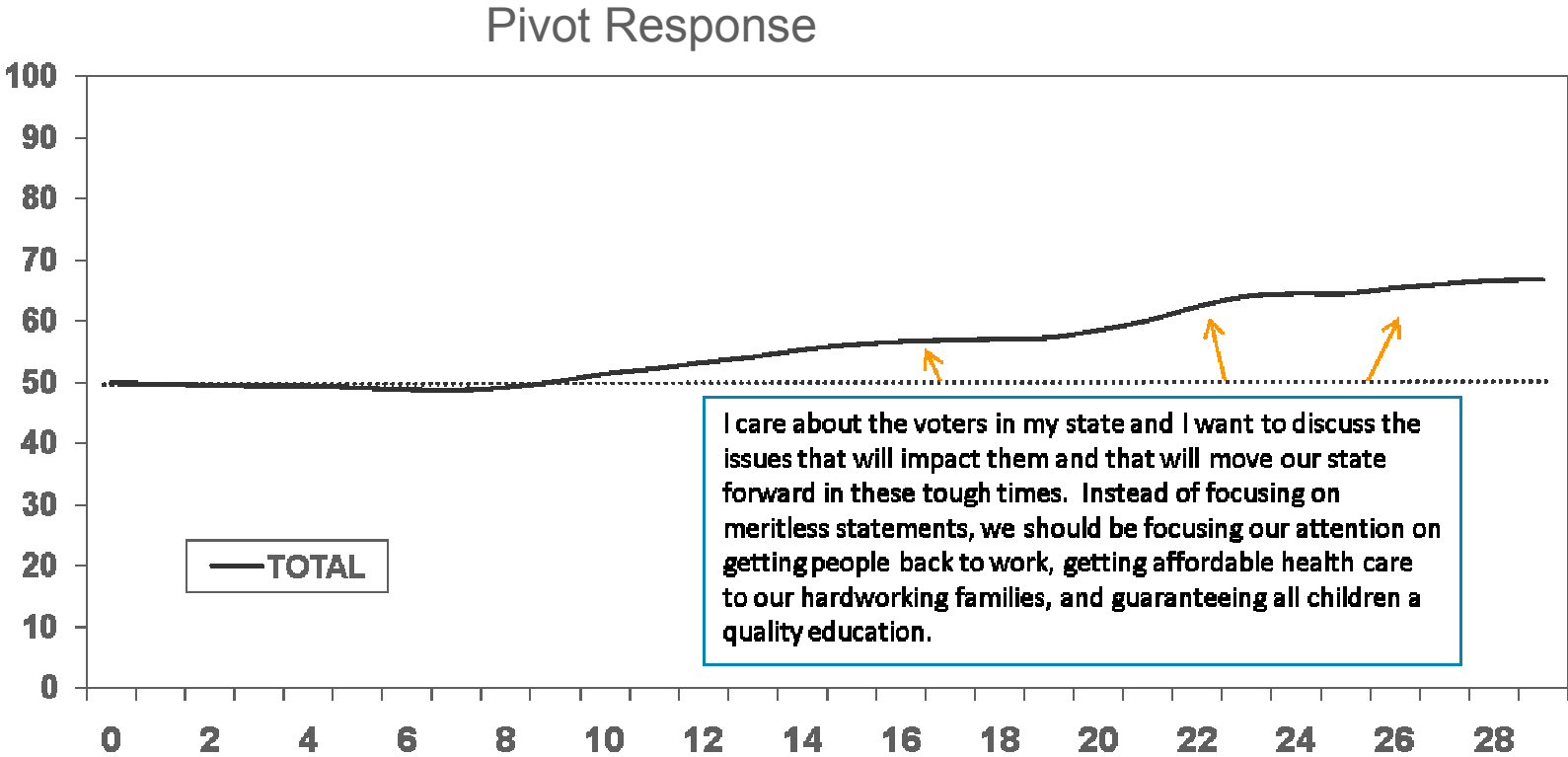


Voters dial down quickly as they hear the radio host's description of Smith as a prostitute.

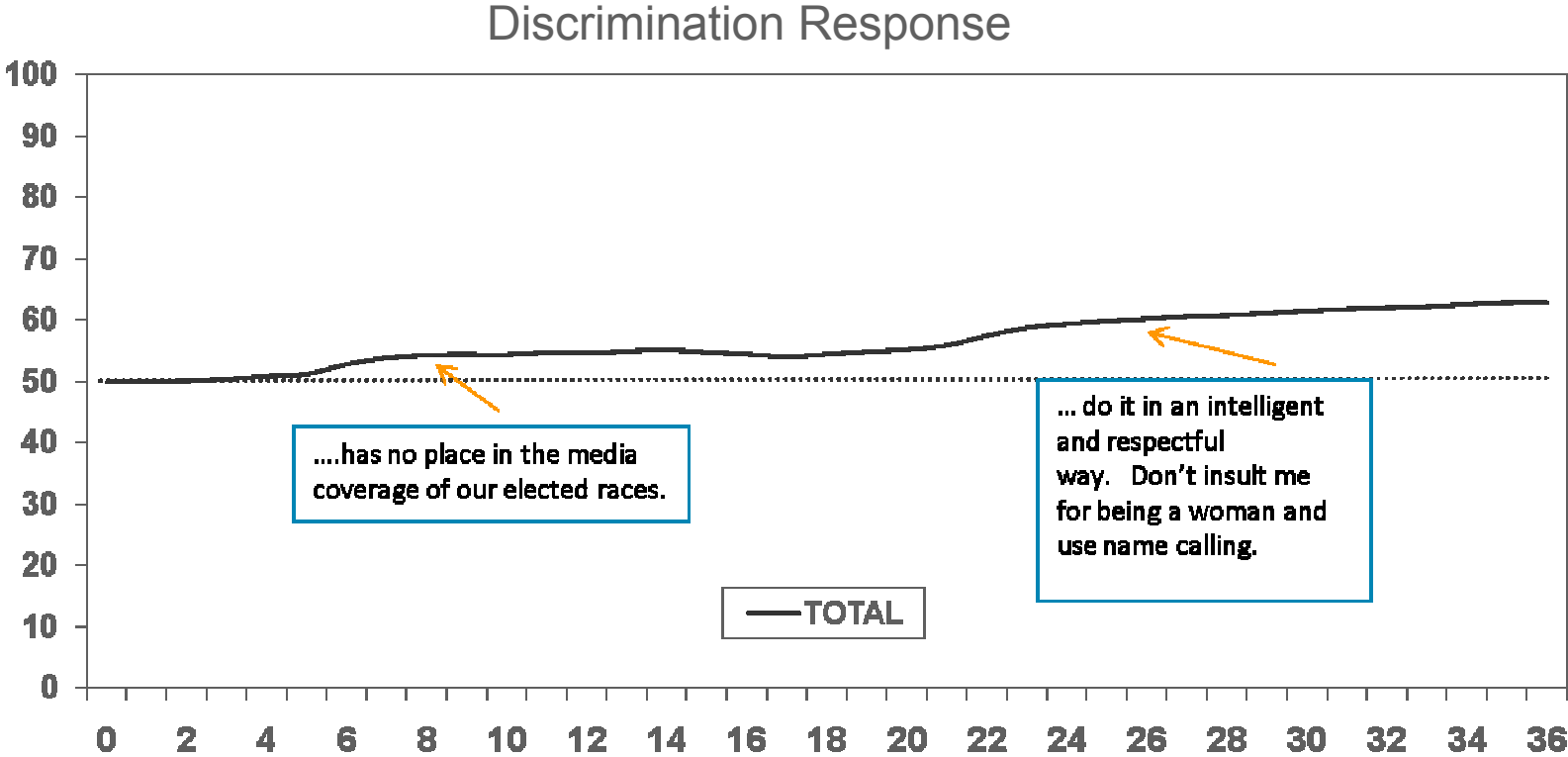
Top Sexist Coverage



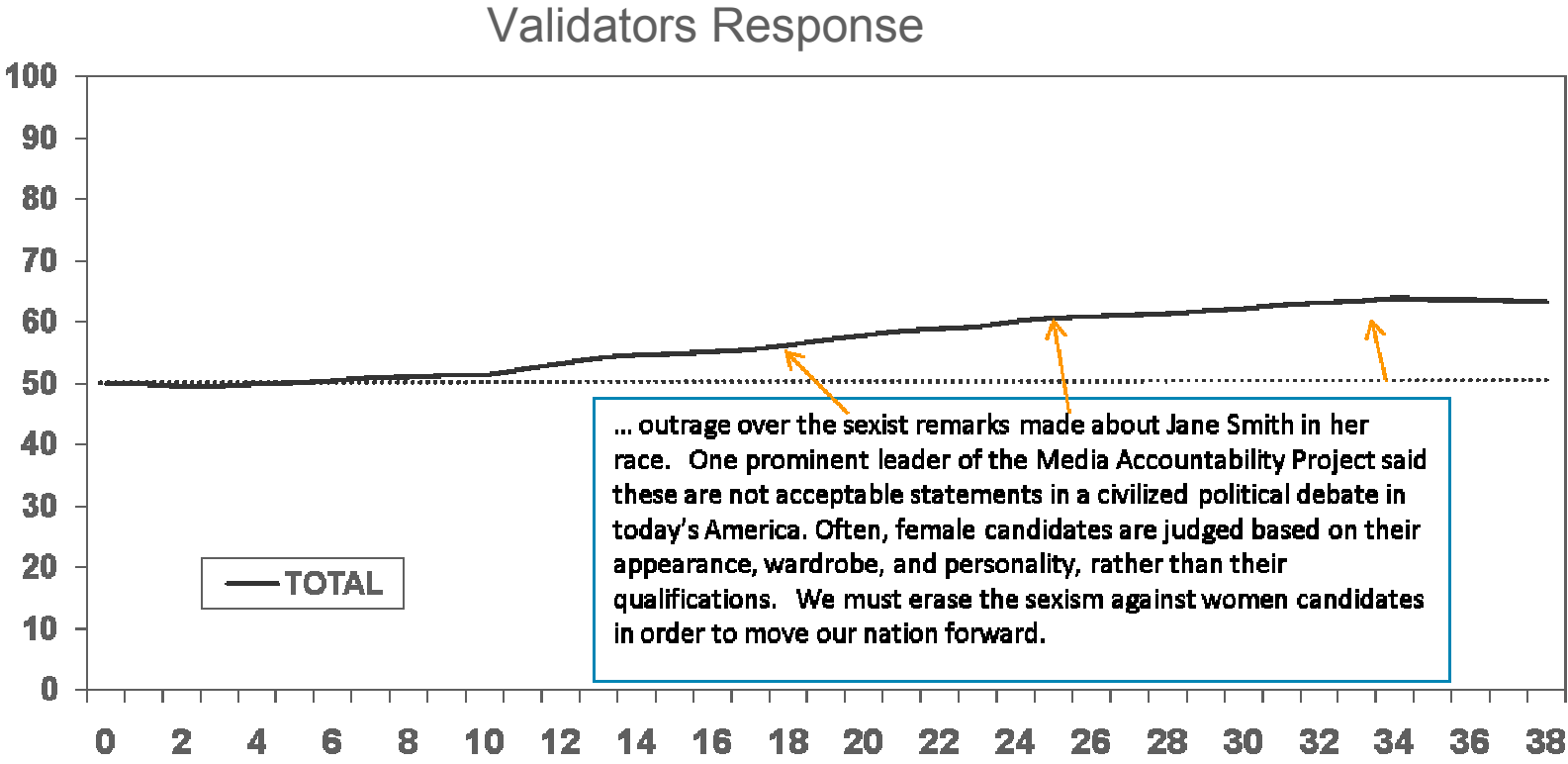
When voters hear Jane Smith’s say she cares about the voters, they begin dialing up and continue throughout the remainder of the statement.



In the response where Smith takes on sexism, voters respond to language around sexism having no place in media coverage and wanting critiques to focus on the race rather than gender.



The validator response makes voters dial consistently up as it highlights how sexism is not acceptable, how women are judged and how we should erase sexism and move the nation forward.



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Celinda Lake
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