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How NARAL Pro-Choice America Can Help Terry McAuliffe Win the Virginia Gubernatorial Election

Key Findings From a Survey of Virginia Drop-off Women Voters

To: Interested Parties

From: Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research

Information and data in this report are strictly confidential and are supplied on the understanding that they will be held confidentially and not disclosed to third parties without the prior consent of NARAL Pro-Choice America.

On behalf of NARAL Pro-Choice America, Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research conducted a survey of 600 drop-off women in Virginia, defined generally as women who have voted in presidential years but not in off-year elections (see Appendix A for more detail). These women are largely pro-choice (69 percent) and Democratic (79 percent of the pro-choice women voted for Barack Obama in 2012)—motivating them to turn out in 2013 could provide an important set of additional votes to Terry McAuliffe in what is shaping up to be a close race¹.

Main findings from the survey include:

- **Choice is a salient voting issue for the drop-off women voters**, and provides McAuliffe a bigger advantage than any other issue in the race among this targeted bloc, including the economy and jobs, health care, education, and transportation.
- NARAL Pro-Choice America is uniquely suited to impact this race by driving a choice-based message to the drop-off women. The data in this survey demonstrate that **choice can increase the likelihood that the drop-off women will turn out** to vote for Terry McAuliffe.

¹ Three of four public polls released since the beginning of May show McAuliffe with a 3 to 5 point lead.

Key Findings

- Choice is an important voting issue to the drop-off women.** Fully 83 percent of the pro-choice drop-off women say choice is an important issue for them when deciding how to vote, including nearly half (44 percent) who call choice a *very* important issue.
- Cuccinelli’s anti-choice position is a deal-breaker for a majority of the pro-choice drop-off women.** Right off the bat, 57 percent say they “*would never vote for anyone running for president who opposes a woman’s right to have a legal abortion, no matter how much I agree with them on other issues.*”
- The drop-off women trust McAuliffe on choice by a wider margin than on any other issue in this campaign.** The following chart shows that when asked whether McAuliffe or Cuccinelli would do a better job on a series of issues, McAuliffe’s margin on choice is the greatest among any issue tested.

	McAuliffe – Cuccinelli (Total)	McAuliffe – Cuccinelli (Pro-Choice)
Protecting a woman’s right to choose	+45	+58
Being on the side of women	+37	+52
Improving public schools and making college affordable	+30	+50
Making health care more accessible and affordable	+35	+49
Being on side of the middle class	+24	+41
Making Virginia’s economy stronger and creating jobs	+20	+39
Reducing gun violence	+24	+38
Solving Virginia’s transportation problems	+18	+32
Cutting government spending	+1	+14

- The pro-choice drop-off women agree strongly with McAuliffe’s position on choice.** While this is perhaps not surprising, it can be valuable information among an audience less likely to be familiar with the candidates’ positions on issues.

Terry McAuliffe believes there are many reasons a woman may consider abortion and we cannot know the circumstances each woman faces. He believes that the decision to have an abortion is profoundly difficult, and that these decisions are and should remain personal, without interference by the government.

88%

Ken Cuccinelli believes that every life is equal, has potential and deserves respect, and that abortion is ending a life. He supports alternatives to abortion, and says we need to show women respect at a difficult time, with the ultimate goal of making abortion a thing of the past.

8%

- Choice-based messaging drives votes to McAuliffe and increases interest in voting².**
 The following chart shows that not only do messages on choice move votes toward McAuliffe, they also create a significant increase in the drop-off women’s interest in voting. Pro-choice drop-off women, for instance, become 25 percentage points more likely to say they are very enthusiastic about voting after hearing this information. These trends hold across the three major media markets in the state.

	Pro-Choice Drop-off Women	DC Market (Pro-Choice)	Norfolk Market (Pro-Choice)	Richmond Market (Pro-Choice)
Initial Vote, McAuliffe – Cuccinelli	73-14	75-13	69-18	82-13
Final Vote, McAuliffe – Cuccinelli	85-7	86-7	81-6	89-5
Net Shift Toward McAuliffe	+19	+17	+23	+15
Initial Interest in Voting (76+ on 100-pt scale) ³	48	53	49	46
Final Interest in Voting (76+ on 100-pt scale)	73	74	76	74
Increase in High Voting Interest	+25	+21	+27	+28

The Bottom Line

Choice can play an impactful role in the Virginia gubernatorial election by encouraging drop-off women to turn out and support Terry McAuliffe, but it will require an aggressive, committed, and focused effort. This is an issue that provides McAuliffe his biggest opportunity to draw a sharp contrast with Ken Cuccinelli and use Cuccinelli’s misaligned values and priorities to motivate women who would otherwise stay home to vote.

² Respondents to this survey heard balanced positive information about McAuliffe and Cuccinelli, followed by negative information on Cuccinelli only. While the actual impact may be somewhat overstated, it is also likely that communications to this particular audience will also be imbalanced.

³ “Please rate your level of interest in voting in the election for governor coming up in November of this year on a scale from zero to one hundred, where one hundred means you are extremely enthusiastic about voting in the November election for governor and zero means you are not at all enthusiastic about voting. You can use any number from zero to one hundred, the higher the number the more enthusiastic you are about voting in November.”

About The Poll

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research conducted a survey among 600 women in Virginia who voted in either the 2008 or 2012 general elections but did not vote in 2009, or who have registered since November 2009 and voted in 2012 but not in 2010. The 600 total interviews include a statewide base of 400 interviews, supplemented by oversamples of 100 interviews in the Norfolk and Richmond media markets.

The survey was conducted by live professional interviewers between June 22nd and 30th, 2012. Thirty-four percent of all interviews were conducted on a cell phone. The sample is subject to a margin of error of +/-4.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval; margin of error is higher among subgroups.

The sample for this survey was drawn randomly from a list of registered voters and stratified by regions within the state. Quotas were assigned to reflect the expected contribution of these areas to the total population of drop-off women. The sample reflects the demographic composition of the total universe of women who fit the drop-off definition.