

To: Interested Parties
From: Geoff Garin and Celinda Lake
Re: Effective Strategies for Candidates Responding to “Born-Alive” Attacks
Date: August 30, 2019

On behalf of NARAL Pro-Choice America, Planned Parenthood Action Fund, EMILY’s List, and the Center for American Progress Action Fund, Hart Research and Lake Research Partners conducted comprehensive ad and message test research to identify effective responses to Republican attacks on Democrats who oppose the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (BAASPA).

The results of this research demonstrate a clear path for successfully and effectively pushing back on and neutralizing attacks against Democrats who oppose BAASPA. Note that these results are among voters who are not strongly partisan with fixed positions on abortion restrictions, thus they represent an especially critical segment of the electorate.

Many of the key message points identified in the research also are important in taking on attacks about abortions later in a pregnancy. Democrats ultimately must refocus the debate on the broader issue of whether women should be able to make their own decisions about abortion and go on the offensive against Republican candidates who favor extreme policies to make most abortions illegal.

- 1. These voters believe that Democrats are more aligned with their position on abortion than are Republicans.**
 - Among this critical sector of the electorate, 64% say the Republican Party is out of step with their values when it comes to positions and policies on abortion.
 - A majority (55%) of these voters say the Democratic Party’s positions and policies on abortion are in step with their values.
- 2. However, the attack on opposition to BAASPA resonates and impacts these voters’ feelings about and support for the generic Democrat.** After viewing an attack ad similar to what has been used this year against a generic Democrat who opposed BAASPA:
 - 64% have an unfavorable view of the Democrat in the ad, and
 - 60% say they would be less likely to support the Democrat in the ad.
- 3. The generic Democrat can regain that ground, but the attack must be answered. The fact-based ad and the ad featuring a couple describing their own deeply personal experience are the most credible, and the fact-based ad is especially effective at regaining support of this critical segment of the electorate.**
 - Majorities of this bloc say the Couple/Personal Decision ad (65%) and Facts ad (57%) are credible and believable.
 - In evaluating sustained impact on candidate support, the Facts ad is especially effective, regaining a nine-point margin for the generic Democrat.
 - Among Latinx voters, the Couple/Personal Decision ad has measurable strength on nearly all metrics, especially in regaining support for the generic Democrat.
- 4. When speaking directly to pro-choice Democratic and independent voters, it is effective to elevate and contextualize the debate around the assault on a woman’s right to make personal decisions and a candidate’s belief that a patient’s health should drive important medical decisions.**

5. What resonates with these ads:

- The Couple/Personal Decision Ad: the focus on the unique, complex, and deeply personal nature of families’ heartbreak and loss in the face of extreme medical complications is compelling.
- The Facts ad: The use of simple and clear facts about abortion later in pregnancy to provide credible information that demonstrates how Republicans knowingly are spreading falsehoods is convincing.

Couple/Personal Decision Ad

- ✓ No one but those involved in these cases—parents and their doctors—are in a position to make these decisions
- ✓ There is NO place for politicians in these decisions.

Facts Ad

- ✓ If a woman’s life is at risk or the fetus will not survive, parents have no good choices.
- ✓ Murder of anyone, including newborns, is already illegal.
- ✓ Only 1% of abortions occur after 21 weeks of pregnancy.
- ✓ These are false attacks by people who want to ban abortion completely.

METHODOLOGY

Sample	Ads Tested
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2,047 online interviews across four states: AZ, FL, MI, MN (<i>weighted equally</i>)• Including an oversample of 400 online interviews with Latinx voters, nationwide• Excludes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Strong Democrats who are strongly pro-choice· Strong Republicans who are strongly anti-choice• Field period: July 2 to 10, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two versions of an ad attacking a hypothetical Democrat who voted against BAASPA (<i>identical scripts, alternating candidate gender</i>)• Eight versions of a response ad (<i>four identical scripts, alternating candidate gender</i>)• Each respondent saw one attack ad and two response ads.• The candidate’s gender did not seem to make a difference in terms of the power of the attack or response ads.
