



Date: July 26, 2004

To: Interested parties

From: Stan Greenberg, Anna Greenberg and Jennifer Berktd

RE: The Unmarried Women's Vote, June/July 2004

As national polls continue to forecast a very competitive presidential race, each campaign is looking to mobilize their base support. This year, unmarried women have emerged as an important core bloc for Democrats and presidential candidate John Kerry. At 20 percent of the voting population, this is a serious group that will have a big say in deciding the outcome of the November elections.

Unmarried women remain extremely dissatisfied with the direction of the country, as our earlier research demonstrated.¹ They continue to hold very negative views about George Bush and the way he is handling the country with regards to a range of important policy questions such as the war in Iraq and healthcare. Resolute in their desire for change, unmarried women are increasingly looking to challengers for the presidential office: John Kerry and, to a lesser extent, Ralph Nader.

This memo is based on a compilation of polling research conducted by various national surveys and polling organizations in June and early July. It is the first in a series of memos that will update interested parties on the political attitudes and current polling numbers of unmarried women. This research is one component of a comprehensive research project to understand the political concerns and interests of unmarried women and in order to ultimately increase their voter registration and turnout. This research was collected and conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research.²

¹ Our previous research (http://www.greenbergresearch.com/campaigns_us/publications.php?cat_id=3) shows, moreover, that this is a group that could constitute an even larger portion of the electorate; 22 million unmarried women either did not vote or are not registered to vote in 2000 and they are significantly less likely to vote than their married counterparts.

² Unless otherwise stated, most July numbers are from the July Democracy Corps survey. For more information about the polls used in this memo, please see the data appendix.



Key Findings

- Unmarried women are unhappy with the current direction of the country (64 percent wrong track compared to 54 percent nationally) and continue to deeply desire change. Most importantly, they want to see a serious change in their economic situation, with 65 percent saying they want to go in a different direction than Bush on the economy (53 percent nationally).
- Unmarried women remain extremely disaffected with George W. Bush. They do not particularly like him (38 percent favorable, 51 percent unfavorable) and they strongly disapprove of how he is performing in office (61 percent disapprove) and on all the major domestic and international issues.
- As we approach the Democratic convention, unmarried women are increasingly leaning toward Kerry. In July, 60 percent of unmarried women said they are supporting Kerry compared to 31 percent who are throwing their support to Bush. Kerry enjoyed a 5-point bump among this group with the selection of John Edwards as a running mate, moving from 55 to 60 percent.
- Support for Nader is also fairly substantial, especially among younger, never married women. While Nader garners support from 4 percent of voters overall, 9 percent of these women favor him.
- In their foreign policy attitudes, unmarried women were early critics of the war in Iraq. As the military presence has continued, this conviction has only grown stronger and unmarried women feel strongly that the situation in Iraq was not worth the cost in lives and dollars.

The Mood of the Country among Unmarried Women Favors Kerry

Heading into July, a majority of the general electorate is dissatisfied with the direction of the country and believes the country is pretty seriously on the wrong track (54 percent). Unmarried women's dissatisfaction with the direction of the country, however, stands out as particularly strong and sets them apart from their married counterparts. Fully 64 percent of unmarried women believe the country is pretty seriously on the wrong track. Among white unmarried women, this number is also dramatic – 60 percent believe the country is on the wrong track, a similar 10 points margin over their married counterparts (50 percent).



COUNTRY DIRECTION <i>(Percent responding)</i>		
	Right direction	Wrong track
Total	41	54
Unmarried women	31	64
All Whites	45	49
White married women	42	50
White unmarried women	34	60

SOURCE: Democracy Corps, July 13, 2004

Much of this angst is rooted in economic concerns. As we noted in our previous research, unmarried women are deeply apprehensive about the economy and would like the country to go in a different direction on a range of economic issues. They are particularly concerned about healthcare costs – more so than jobs – with nearly two thirds say that healthcare costs are a very serious concern (61 percent very serious concern), 22 points higher than unemployment (39 percent very serious concern). Unmarried women are much more inclined to believe, moreover, that recent economic growth has not benefited them: jobs are scarce, benefits are being cut, even while health care costs skyrocket (65 percent) versus believing that the economy is showing real signs of success, like record growth, highest home ownership ever, new jobs and rising stock values (16 percent).

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS <i>(Percent responding very serious problem)</i>		
	Total	Unmarried women
Rising health care costs	54	61
Employers cutting back contributions for employees' health insurance and pensions	40	50
The federal deficit	38	43
People squeezed with debts and little savings, few wage increases while costs of essentials are skyrocketing	35	46
Job losses to China and India	34	38
The growing gap between the rich and everybody else	33	40
Rising gasoline prices	32	41
Unemployment	32	39

SOURCE: Democracy Corps, July 13, 2004

Their mood is ugly, as unmarried women deeply desire change in nearly every policy area – especially economics – and express strong dissatisfaction with our current national political leadership. Overall, in July, 65 percent of unmarried women would go



in a significantly different direction than Bush on the economy, compared to 53 percent of voters nationally. Even among white voters, the marital gap also emerges as quite strong, as white unmarried women strongly favor a different direction on the economy (58 points, net difference 18 points).

BUSH DIRECTION v. DIFFERENT DIRECTION: THE ECONOMY <i>(Percent responding)</i>			
	Favor different direction	Favor Bush's direction	Net difference
Total	53	45	+8
Unmarried women	65	34	+31
All Whites	47	51	-3
White married women	49	48	+1
White unmarried women	58	40	+18

SOURCE: Democracy Corps, July 13, 2004

Unmarried women hold strong feelings about President Bush. In July, only 38 percent of unmarried women give him a favorable or warm rating, compared with 48 percent of the general population. In fact, a majority of unmarried women (51 percent) view him unfavorably (43 percent nationally). These low marks are reflected in his job approval ratings. According to a recent AP/IPSOS Public Affairs poll of registered voters, 64 percent of unmarried women disapprove of the way George Bush is handling his job as president and across a range of policy areas; they strongly disapprove of the way Bush is handling issues like the economy (63 percent), domestic issues like health care, education, or the environment and energy (65 percent), foreign policy issues and the war on terrorism (65 percent), and the situation in Iraq (63 percent).³

³A host of polls conducted in the months of June and July broadcast bleak numbers for the Bush administration among this demographic. In the July Democracy Corps, Bush's job approval among unmarried women was 38 percent. The Battleground poll, from Lake Snell Perry and Associates and the Tarrance group had Bush's job approval at 39 percent. Annenberg places job approval a little higher, at 41 percent, however, a recent New York Times/CBS News poll placed Bush's job approval a little lower at 31 percent. See data appendix for more details.



APPROVAL OF GEORGE W. BUSH ON THE ISSUES						
<i>(Percent responding)</i>						
	Total			Unmarried women		
	Approve	Disapprove	Difference	Approve	Disapprove	Difference
The economy	49	50	-1	36	63	-27
Domestic issues like health care, education, or the environment and energy	46	52	-6	34	65	-31
Foreign policy issues and the war on terrorism	51	48	+3	34	65	-31
The situation in Iraq	47	51	-4	33	63	-30

SOURCE: AP/IPSOS Public Affairs, July 7, 2004

Kerry fares considerably better though his ratings are somewhat lukewarm given the Democratic leanings of this group. In the July Democracy Corps survey, his favorability ratings (47 percent) are barely under a majority, while a third of unmarried women regard him unfavorably. This suggests that his support stems as much from hostility towards Bush as his own candidacy. Kerry's pick for his Vice Presidential running mate fares well among unmarried women and trounces Dick Cheney in the match-up. About 42 percent rate John Edwards favorably, while only 24 percent rate him unfavorably (compared with 30 percent favorable versus 52 percent unfavorable for Cheney).

With the naming of John Edwards as Vice President, the Kerry vote did enjoy a slight bump among unmarried women in July. In a three-way race that includes Ralph Nader, Kerry currently carries 60 percent of the unmarried women vote, up 5 points from June and 8 points from May. This Edwards bump is supported by other polls that have been released in the last two months, such as Investor's Business Daily/Christian Science Monitor/TIPP and AP/IPSOS Public Affairs (see appendix for details).

PRESIDENTIAL VOTE						
<i>(Percent responding)</i>						
	Unmarried women			Married women		
	Kerry	Bush	Nader	Kerry	Bush	Nader
July 10-13, 2004	60	31	6	50	44	3
June 14-17, 2004	55	35	6	41	49	6
May 10-13, 2004	52	34	8	44	49	5

SOURCE: Democracy Corps



At 60 percent, with a 29-point margin over Bush, unmarried women are some of Kerry's staunchest supporters. They favor Kerry by 10 points over their married counterparts. Among white women, the marital gap remains, making white unmarried women one of Kerry's strongest groups. Among white unmarried women, Kerry's leads by 14 points, 52 to 38 percent. On the other hand, Kerry trails Bush among white married women (46 to 49 percent), although it is worth pointing out that this gap has closed considerably in the last month. In June, among white married women Kerry trailed Bush by 14 points, 38 to 52 percent.

PRESIDENTIAL VOTE, WHITES <i>(Percent responding)</i>						
	White unmarried women			White married women		
	Kerry	Bush	Nader	Kerry	Bush	Nader
July 10-13, 2004	52	38	7	46	49	3
June 14-17, 2004	49	42	6	38	52	6
May 10-13, 2004	45	39	1	39	53	6

SOURCE: Democracy Corps

Yet there is a red flag for Kerry in these survey results. Unmarried women are more likely than the national electorate to voice support for Ralph Nader (7 percent versus 5 percent). They are also more likely than their married counterparts to favor Nader (7 percent versus 5 percent), and this support rises among never married women: 9 percent of never married women support Nader. One of the strongest correlations here, however, is age, as younger voters are more apt to favor Nader. Among young white single women (under 30 years of age), 13 percent say they will vote for Ralph Nader.

NADER SUPPORT <i>(Percent responding)</i>	
Total	5
White unmarried under 30	13
Never married women	9
Seperated, Divorced or Widowed	6
Married women	5

SOURCE: Democracy Corps Combined, May – July, 2004

Foreign Policy and Iraq

Unmarried women are strong critics of George Bush's foreign policy, the war on terrorism, and especially the war in Iraq. Despite the assumption that women are more concerned about security than men, unmarried women are quite comfortable offering strongly critical views of Bush's handling of these issues, with more than half (55



percent) of unmarried women would go in a significantly different direction than Bush on the war on terrorism, compared to 43 percent among voters overall.

WAR IN IRAQ <i>(Percent unfavorable)</i>		
	Total	Unmarried women
July 10-13, 2004	50	61
June 14-17, 2004	49	59
May 10-13, 2004	48	51
April 19-22, 2004	46	66
March 16-21, 2004	40	52
February 10-15, 2004	44	53
January 13-18, 2004	41	54
November 11-16, 2003	43	57
October 14-19, 2003	42	48

SOURCE: Democracy Corps

Of course, opposition to the war plays a huge role in unmarried women’s views about the Administration’s foreign policy, and their opposition grew more intense over recent months. Since October, unmarried women have looked more unfavorably upon the war in Iraq than the general electorate (48 percent versus 42 percent unfavorable). However, their disapproval of the war spiked sharply among unmarried women between October and November and since then, a majority of unmarried women have viewed the war unfavorably. In contrast, skepticism about the war has grown slowly among the general electorate, only reaching a majority unfavorable in July.

The marital gap also remains large. By July, 61 percent of unmarried women give the war in Iraq unfavorable ratings versus half of the married women. Even among whites, the marital gap remains strong; 53 percent of white unmarried women think unfavorably of the war in Iraq versus 47 percent of white married women.

Today, unmarried women overwhelmingly believe the war in Iraq was not worth fighting. In July, unmarried women say the war in Iraq was not worth the cost of U.S. lives and dollars by more than a 2 to 1 margin (71 percent not worth it versus 29 percent worth it), compared to 56 percent not worth it versus 41 percent worth it in the national electorate. Similarly, in a recent Annenberg poll, 63 percent of unmarried women said that the situation in Iraq was not worth going to war over versus 52 percent of the general population.

Gay Marriage and Choice

Unmarried women are socially progressive though they are not a monolith. Younger, never married women are by far the most liberal on issues such as a woman’s right to choose and gay marriage. Divorced and separated women are also progressive,



while older widowed women behave more like their currently married counterparts. Similarly, college-educated unmarried women are significantly more progressive than blue collar unmarried women.

Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of unmarried women oppose banning all abortions compared to 59 percent of married women (National Annenberg Electoral Study, June 30, 2004) and 46 percent of unmarried women are unfavorable towards anti-choice groups compared to 42 percent of all voters (Democracy Corps, July 13, 2004). Unmarried women are more supportive of gay marriage than other voters, though the differences are not as dramatic here; according to the Annenberg study 54 percent of unmarried women oppose an amendment to the U.S. Constitution saying that no state can allow two men or two women to marry each other, compared to 48 percent of all voters.

SOCIAL ISSUES <i>(Percent responding Strongly/Somewhat Oppose)</i>		
	Total	Unmarried women
Do you favor or oppose banning all abortions	63	74
Would you favor or oppose an amendment to the U.S. Constitutional saying that no state can allow two men or two women to marry each other	48	54

SOURCE: National Annenberg Electoral Study, June 30, 2004

But as many note, older unmarried women are different from younger unmarried women and their socially progressive tendencies emerge much more strongly when we look at the youngest groups. Younger unmarried women are more likely to call themselves liberal (39 percent compared to 18 percent among older women) and a plurality are favorable towards gay marriage (44 percent to 14 percent). We also see important class differences on gay marriage; college-educated white unmarried women are much more favorable of gay marriage (45 percent favorable, versus 15 percent of those with high school educations).

THERMOMETER: GAY MARRIAGE <i>(Percent responding warm)</i>		
	Total	Unmarried women
18-29	37	44
30-39	30	43
40-49	22	34
50-64	22	30
Over 64	14	14

SOURCE: Democracy Corps Combined, May – July, 2004



Conclusion

Unmarried women have the power to decide this election; at 20 percent of the electorate, they are a powerful and united voice in favor of John Kerry. They are upset about the war, feel left behind by the economic recovery and do not like the direction Bush is taking the country. They have the potential to play an even larger role, if more unmarried women entered the electorate. As the general election campaign unfolds, we will keep watching unmarried women, documenting their political concerns and political preferences. No matter what the outcome, unmarried women's voices will be heard this election year.



Data Appendix – Selected Questions

**Democracy Corps
National
July 10-13, 2004
1010 likely voters**

Generally speaking, do you think that things in this country are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

	Total	Unmarried women
Right direction	41	31
Wrong track	54	64

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George Bush is handling his job as president?

	Total	Unmarried women
Strongly approve	35	24
Somewhat approve	13	14
Somewhat disapprove	10	13
Strongly disapprove	40	48

Now I'd like to rate your feelings toward some people and organizations, with one hundred meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; zero meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from one to one hundred, the higher the number the more favorable your feelings are toward that person or organization. If you have no opinion or never heard of that person or organization, please say so.

	Total		Unmarried women	
	Favorable	Unfavorable	Favorable	Unfavorable
George W. Bush	48	43	38	51
Dick Cheney	41	46	30	52
John Kerry	43	41	47	33
John Edwards	38	32	42	24
The Iraq war	37	50	29	61
Big corporations	33	34	25	38
Gay marriage	24	58	28	51



Thinking about the elections in November, if the election for president were held today and the candidates were Republican George Bush and the Democrat John Kerry – for whom would you vote – George Bush or John Kerry?

	Total	Unmarried women
Bush	47	40
Kerry	50	57
Other	1	3
Undecided	1	0

If the candidates for president were Republican George Bush, Democrat John Kerry, and Independent Ralph Nader, for whom would you vote?

	Total	Unmarried women
Bush	45	31
Kerry	48	60
Nader	4	6
Undecided	2	1
Other	1	1

**Investor’s Business Daily/Christian Science Monitor/TIPP poll
National
July 6-July 10, 2004
1001 adults, 818 registered voters**

General election match-up (among registered voters)

	Total				Unmarried women			
	Bush	Kerry	Nader	Undecided	Bush	Kerry	Nader	Undecided
7/6-7/10	43	47	4	4	33	56	3	8
6/14-6/19	44	41	6	10	35	50	7	9
6/8-6/13	43	40	5	12	29	50	6	14
6/1-6/6	43	41	7	9	26	51	11	12
5/12-5/18	42	41	7	11	35	47	7	10



AP/IPSOS Public Affairs

National

July 5-7, 2004

1,000 adults, 804 registered voters

Generally speaking, would you say things in this country are heading in the right direction, or are they off on the wrong track?

	Total	Unmarried women
Right direction	41	32
Wrong track	56	64

[REGISTERED VOTERS] Overall, do you approve, disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President? (IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE, ASK:) Is that strongly (approve/disapprove) or somewhat (approve/disapprove)? (IF HAVE MIXED FEELINGS OR NOT SURE, ASK:) If you had to choose, do you lean more toward approve or disapprove?

	Total	Unmarried women
Approve	50	35
Disapprove	48	64

[REGISTERED VOTERS] And when it comes to handling the economy, do you approve or disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way George W. Bush is handling that issue?

(IF APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE, ASK:) Is that strongly (approve/disapprove) or somewhat (approve/ disapprove)? (IF HAVE MIXED FEELINGS OR NOT SURE, ASK:) If you had to choose, do you lean more toward approve or disapprove?

	Total	Unmarried women
Approve	49	36
Disapprove	50	63

[REGISTERED VOTERS] If the election for president were held today and the candidates were George W. Bush, the Republican and John Kerry, the Democrat and Ralph Nader, the Independent, for whom would you vote? Do you lean more toward Kerry or Bush or Nader?

	Total	Unmarried women
Bush	49	34
Kerry	45	60
Nader	3	4



**New York Times/CBS News
National
June 23-June 27, 2004
1053 adults, 875 registered voters**

[REGISTERED VOTERS] General election matchup (2-way)

	Total	Unmarried women
Bush	44	31
Kerry	45	58

[REGISTERED VOTERS] Bush job approval

	Total	Unmarried women
Approve	42	31
Disapprove	51	59

[REGISTERED VOTERS] Right Track/Wrong Track

	Total	Unmarried women
Right direction	36	23
Wrong track	57	72

**National Annenberg Election Survey
National
1641 adults
June 16-June 30, 2004**

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President?

	Total	Unmarried women
Approve	50	43
Disapprove	47	54

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the nation's economy?

	Total	Unmarried women
Approve	43	32
Disapprove	51	61



Would you favor or oppose an amendment to the U.S. Constitution saying that no state can allow two men or two women to marry each other?

	Total	Unmarried women
Strongly favor	37	30
Somewhat favor	6	6
Somewhat oppose	9	11
Strongly oppose	39	43

Do you favor or oppose banning all abortions?

	Total	Unmarried women
Strongly favor	25	19
Somewhat favor	6	4
Somewhat oppose	17	19
Strongly oppose	46	55

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as

	Total	Unmarried women
Republican	27	19
Democrat	34	44
Independent	27	25

Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as:

	Total	Unmarried women
Conservative	37	32
Moderate	36	34
Liberal	24	32

Do you feel things in this country are generally going in the right direction, or do you think things are seriously off on the wrong track?

	Total	Unmarried women
Right direction	35	19
Wrong track	56	72



All in all, do you think the situation in Iraq is worth going to war over, or not?

	Total	Unmarried women
Yes, worth it	41	29
No, not worth it	52	63

Do you favor or oppose the government giving tax credits or vouchers to help parents send their children to private schools?

	Total	Unmarried women
Strongly favor	32	23
Somewhat favor	18	20
Somewhat oppose	16	20
Strongly oppose	30	32

Do you think the federal government should do more, the same, less, or nothing at all about restricting the kinds of guns that people can buy?

	Total	Unmarried women
More about it	60	70
Same as now	21	15
Less about it	10	8
Do nothing at all	8	6

Battleground 2004
Lake Snell Perry & Associates /The Tarrance Group
National
1000 likely voters
June 20-23, 2004

General election matchup (2-way)

	Total	Unmarried women
Bush	43	31
Kerry	41	55
Undecided	13	14



Bush job approval

	Total	Unmarried women
Approve	51	39
Disapprove	48	57
Unsure	2	3

National Annenberg Election Survey

National

1431 adults

June 8-June 21, 2004

Bush

	Total	Unmarried women
Favorable	49	35
Unfavorable	38	52

Kerry

	Total	Unmarried women
Favorable	39	52
Unfavorable	32	18

Democracy Corps

National

June 14-June 17, 2004

1007 likely voters

Generally speaking, do you think that things in this country are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

	Total	Unmarried women
Right direction	41	29
Wrong track	55	67
(Don't know/refused)	5	4



Do you approve or disapprove of the way George Bush is handling his job as president?

	Total	Unmarried women
Strongly approve	35	27
Somewhat approve	13	11
Somewhat disapprove	12	13
Strongly disapprove	36	45
(Don't know/Refused)	3	3

Now I'd like to rate your feelings toward some people and organizations, with one hundred meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; zero meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from one to one hundred, the higher the number the more favorable your feelings are toward that person or organization. If you have no opinion or never heard of that person or organization, please say so.

	Total		Unmarried women	
	Favorable	Unfavorable	Favorable	Unfavorable
George W. Bush	51	42	39	51
Dick Cheney	41	41	34	44
John Kerry	40	41	45	29
Ralph Nader	19	53	21	45
The Iraq war	38	49	26	59
Big corporations	32	37	22	38
Gay marriage	24	56	30	46

Thinking about the elections in November, if the election for president were held today and the candidates were Republican George Bush and the Democrat John Kerry – for whom would you vote – George Bush or John Kerry?

	Total	Unmarried women
Bush	48	38
Kerry	49	60
Other	2	0
Undecided	2	2

If the candidates for President were Republican George Bush, Democrat John Kerry and Independent Ralph Nader, for whom would you vote?



Unmarried Women: Electoral Update

	Total	Unmarried women
John Kerry	45	55
George Bush	45	35
Ralph Nader	6	6
(Undecided/Refused)	3	4
(Other candidate)	1	-