



NEW SURVEY PROVES THE POWER OF THE PARENT VOTE: MOMS AND DADS UP FOR GRABS

*Identifying as a Parent Ranks Higher Than Gender or Race
Undecided Parent Voters' Strongest Concern Not Yet Addressed by Candidates*

Shattering conventional wisdom, a new poll by the Center for Work-Life Policy/National Parenting Association shows that when parents with children at home step into the voting booth, they think of themselves as parents significantly more than any other traditional political interest group.

Fifty percent of fathers and 54% of mothers - 52% of all parents - say that being a parent is one of the top two factors they consider when they vote, compared to only 13% who said gender and 6% who said race.

Conducted by Charney Research, *The Parent Vote* examined the political attitudes of parents. The results of this survey are especially critical because parents make up 38% of likely voters - a higher percentage than seniors or union members. Our research has also shown that parents are surprisingly unified in their political opinions, **cutting across the usual divisions of gender, race, income and political party.**

Parents are a potential strong political force, whose voting power, if mobilized, could rival that of many of the established voting blocs in American politics. "These poll results have dramatic political implications - parenthood is clearly the dominant political motivation in the country and parents are the largest voting bloc in the country – yet they are not recognized as such by the politicians or the media," said NPA President Ruth Wooden.

More parents are undecided on their election choice right now than non-parents, further increasing the implications of the latest poll findings. Moreover, the issue undecided parents feel most strongly about in their daily lives - the work-family balance - is barely on the politicians' radar screens. This finding could have major consequences in the final weeks of the presidential and other campaigns. "Despite the 'working families' and 'family values' rhetoric, parents do not feel heard. This is clearly about more than just 'soccer moms,'" said Wooden.

The Parent Vote reveals **the potential power of the parent vote** and the influence parents could have on the public agenda. Overall, the most significant findings include:

- Parenting is a powerful collective identity in America - more powerful in shaping candidate choice than other interest group identities commonly thought to be very important, such as locality, gender, and race.
- Parents have a different set of political priorities from non-parents.
- They also have the numbers and the voting power to be an important influence, if they become a voting bloc like that of other interest groups.
- Parents feel that neither public officials nor the political parties are really listening to them.
- Parents who are undecided in the presidential race are among the most dissatisfied with government's efforts on behalf of parents.
- The principal daily challenge facing undecided parents is balancing work and family.
- Education is the top priority for parents, and there is broad agreement among parents on what the federal government should do: cut class sizes, raise standards and accountability, and provide better teacher salaries and training.

In many respects the situation of parents today is similar to that of women thirty years ago. There is a powerful common identity, distinctive priorities and shared perspectives, and a sense of being neglected by the powers that be. But these perceptions have not yet been mobilized into an effective voting bloc, because politicians have not begun to compete for the "parent vote." In today's political arena, candidates are quick to address 'soccer moms,' low-income families, and the gender gap - however, **parents - of all types** - are ready to emerge as a major interest group on the American political scene. Understanding this - and responding to it - may be the key to winning this year's election, as well as others to come.

The full report is available at *The Parent Vote* <http://www.parentsunite.org/parentvote.pdf>

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