



Enterprise Washington Focus Group Report December 19, 2011

Executive Summary

In November and December 2011, Enterprise Washington (Enterprise) conducted a series of three 90-minute customer focus groups with the purpose of gaining voter perspectives on a variety of issues that may be relevant in coming elections. Each group represented a unique demographic and a different region in the Seattle area. In particular, Enterprise wanted to know the current political zeitgeist among voters on the following topics:

- Present satisfaction with Washington politics
- Personal political alignment and key issues that influence this
- What “business-friendly” means and the positive/negative implications of the term
- What types of businesses and business-related policies people like to support politically
- The best and worst ways to approach job creation
- Feelings regarding different entities with prominent political presences
- Factors and people that influence individual voting habits
- Various perspectives on expectations regarding politics in 2012

To recruit a good sample of randomly chosen focus group participants, The Connections Group divided participants by region and then recruited participants based on how they fit into three specific demographics of voters: women aged 40 years or less, minorities, and 24-to-45-year-old college graduates. The Seattle metropolitan area was separated into northern and southern portions of the region, and we recruited the participants based on how they fell into one of the three categories. The women aged 40 years or less and 24-to-45-year-old college graduates were both recruited from the northern region while the minority group was recruited from the southern region. We aimed to have balanced groups in terms of gender and age, when appropriate, by instituting a minimum of five men, five women, and representatives from various age groups. Furthermore, we looked for a balance of ethnic representation consistent with the region; this was especially scrutinized for the focus group of minorities.

We randomly selected and called individuals from the list until we reached the targeted number of recruits: 13. Recruitment was successful for every group and recruits also received a reminder call the day of the focus group. An incentive payment of \$85 or \$100, depending on the location, was offered to each participant for attending. A total of 11 participants ultimately attended the women aged 40 years or less focus group, which was conducted in North Seattle on November 21st; six participants attended the minorities focus group in Burien on December 6th; and 12 attended the 24-to-45-year-old college graduates focus group in Kirkland on December 7th. Cathy Allen was the moderator for all three focus groups.

Present satisfaction with Washington politics

When asked whether they felt the state was heading in the right or wrong direction, almost all participants expressed that they felt the state was heading in the wrong direction. Only one participant claimed without caveat that she felt the state was heading in the right direction, though another participant did express some ambivalence toward the issue.

While the reasoning behind the state heading in the wrong direction was varied, the most common answer by far had to do with the state's budget management. Many felt that the state was either overspending or misappropriating the funds being spent. The most common thread regarding budget appropriation was that more money needs to be headed toward education, obviously with fewer cuts to education going along with this. People from both sides emerged almost in equal numbers regarding the prospect of tax increases.

The other recurring complaint regarding the state was restricted to the young college graduates focus group, where some participants expressed concern with the high level of control that the state government seems to be implementing.

Political alignment and issues that influence this

Participants were well-distributed across the political spectrum; a significant number self-identified as independents, and the rest were fairly well divided between democrats and republicans. The large majority of participants demonstrated a reluctance to fully commit to either party, often expressing a moderation between the two. Some admitted that they had been more extreme in the past and have since tempered their views, looking at issues on more individual bases.

When asked what specific issues and topics influence their political affiliations, participants responded with a modest variety of topics. Many participants expressed the importance of a pro-education stance for any candidate they would want to support. There was also wide support for small businesses, but results regarding other types of businesses were varied. Participants also mentioned abortion as an issue, with people taking zealous stances on both the pro-life and the pro-choice sides. Some participants expressed support for the military as a key concern. Other common themes among participants included both high levels of support and opposition for environmental concerns and a relatively high anti-union sentiment, especially among the women under 40. Most other issues were mentioned by participants in isolation.

What “business-friendly” means and the positive/negative implications of business in politics

Participants largely felt that “business-friendly” would be a positive trait in a candidate, but almost all expressed a number of caveats along with these sentiments. The most common caveat expressed seemed to revolve around an inherent vagueness in the term; while participants had an inkling of the meaning of the term, they almost unanimously agreed that it would need to be clarified before they could take a stance on its positivity or negativity. There was an almost overwhelming support for being “small-business-friendly”; participants from all over the political spectrum agreed with this stance. However, a large number of participants, many of whom supported small business, showed a clear objection to large, corporate support. Participants made it clear that “business-friendly” was a positive term if it was explicitly shown to be applicable to small businesses and not large, corporate businesses. Some participants did not distinguish between the two, but those that did not make this distinction were in favor of business regardless. Participants expressed that they would like to see support for small business expressed through policies, such as supporting incentives that favor small businesses, but none claimed that this was imperative to demonstrate small-business support.

A number of participants, especially in the women-under-40 group, expressed staunchly anti-union sentiments. They did not want to see candidates with union support. Participants who were in favor of unions were much more uncommon among the different groups, though a number of participants did state a general neutrality on the subject.

Participants expressed varying views regarding the positivity or negativity of a candidate with a background in business. While most participants felt that a small-business or entrepreneurial background was a positive trait for a candidate, they were more divided when it came to having a corporate background. Many participants also agreed that they would favor a candidate who had a background with a more local business as opposed to a candidate who had been with non-local business. While some expressed support for minority-owned and women-owned businesses, most felt that it would not be a factor in their decision-making processes.

Almost all participants felt that job creation is an important issue in the coming years, and many also felt that these jobs should not be governmental. Participants seemed to only want government to interfere by helping to foster the creation of jobs with businesses. When asked specifically how a Democratic candidate should approach the issue of job creation, participants noted that they would require a detailed plan.

Feelings regarding different entities with prominent political presences

Participants were asked to express their feelings on four different organizations and movements that hold explicit political views. The four organizations and movements were the Occupy movement, the Tea Party, the Democratic Party, and the Republican Party. Responses to each were varied, though some elicited more consistent reactions than others.

When asked about the Occupy movement, including Occupy Seattle, almost all participants responded negatively. Some felt the purpose of the movement was unclear. Some felt the movement held a good message but was not implementing the proper methods of delivery. Many seemed exasperated at the existence of the movement, expressing large amounts of criticism toward it. Only three participants across all focus groups openly supported the movement.

Although most participants knew the Tea Party by name, many were unclear as to the exact characteristics of the party. Among those who were more aware of its nature, most failed to demonstrate any strong feelings regarding the party. The most common sentiment expressed regarding the Tea Party was an agreement with its fiscal perspectives.

When asked about the Democratic Party, the response from participants was largely negative, citing associations with a number of negative traits. Specific reasoning varied among participants, but they ranged from particular politicians, stances on specific issues, and general characteristics they associate with the party.

Reaction to the Republican Party was more mixed than reaction to the Democratic Party but was still largely negative. Some participants seemed to favor the fiscal policies and the small governmental presence associated with the Republican Party, but most were largely unimpressed with the party's overall performance.

A number of participants were dissatisfied with both parties in general and did not call out either in particular for its faults.

Factors and people that influence individual voting habits

When asked who could influence their voting habits, participants answered sparsely. However, the answers collectively indicate that they are only interested in listening to individuals close to them whom they know personally.

Regarding organizations that can influence voting habits, participants came forth with varying answers. Environmental organizations had participants that both favored and opposed their support. Union support was widely opposed. Some participants, generally younger, noted that they felt the alma mater of a candidate could influence their voting habits. Only one participant claimed to be influenced by a religious organization.

A large number of participants claim that they make some decisions based on the information provided in the voter pamphlet.

Various perspectives on expectations regarding politics in 2012

Due to time constraints, discussions of the politics of 2012 were sparse. However, there were a small number of valuable revelations to be had.

Participants discussed which issues they most wanted to see addressed in the coming elections. Education was among the most prominently mentioned issues, as well as fiscal policies. Participants also seemed keen to know a candidate's stance regarding business.

When asked what sort of campaign tactics to which they respond well, participants came forth with a small handful of answers. Many claim to read the voter pamphlet, and a few claim to read political brochures that arrive in the mail. Other sources named include speeches and vocal support from close family and friends. There was a large amount of contempt expressed for robo-calling.

Key Findings

I. State Performance and Political Leanings

Do you think as a state we are headed in the right direction or wrong direction? What's going right and what's not?

Only a small number of participants felt the state was headed in the right direction.

"I feel like we're headed in the right direction when it comes to what the governor spoke about today as far as raising the tax for education and [criminal rehabilitation]."

Many participants felt that the state is headed in the wrong direction for financial reasons. A number of participants specifically mentioned a lack of financial support for education.

"As a student, my focus is on the financial part of it, and we've had a lot of budget cuts lately, so that's directly affected me... The wrong direction."

"I'm a recent grad student graduate... I definitely felt the pain of the increase in tuition... I'd hafta say the wrong direction."

"I definitely think we're in the wrong direction, and the reason why is because the government has really increased significantly over the last eight years or so here... Government has kind of overreached its bounds."

"I really think education should be one of the last things to cut... if the future generations are to be supported."

"I think it's good that they're trying to balance the budget, [but] I don't know that they're there... They seem to spend more, and then they have to cut way back... It doesn't seem like it's headed in the right direction."

"...Wrong direction... We haven't learned how to curtail our spending... we spend... like there's no tomorrow... and then the most important things that should have been funded aren't funded."

"That we're cutting education... is harmful to us."

How would you best describe your politics? Do you vote for one particular party? Are you more moderate or conservative or liberal?

Largely due to the selection process, there was a fair balance between liberals, conservatives, and moderates present at the focus groups. However, it is noteworthy how reluctant many seemed to commit wholeheartedly to a party.

"I don't really have a particular party... I guess I go more towards liberal... I really don't jump the gun to a party until I... get a background on each candidate..."

"I tend to be more conservative, but I am also very willing to hear [other] sides."

"I... don't claim to be part of a specific party. In fact I bristled at the idea that I had to claim allegiance to a particular party... I tend to vote for Republicans."

"I'm a liberal Republican."

Some respondents admitted that they had previously voted on a strict partisan basis but claimed to have amended this behavior, while others persist in these voting habits.

What issues are most important to you when deciding who will get your vote?

"More fiscally conservative... Raising taxes is something I don't really vote for."

"I also tend to be [against taxes except for education]."

"The first thing that jumps out at me is education... I would put that as the absolute last thing I would cut."

"[Support for] public transportation."

Abortion was a deciding factor for a number of participants, most of whom were pro-life.

What sort of characteristics do you look for in a candidate? How important is character?

"Divorce doesn't bother me too much... If I find out they've had affairs... children out of wedlock... that tends to turn me off."

"Whatever areas that they're focused on... are they engaged in those areas? If they're not, how passionate are they...?"

"[Military background.]"

"[Political experience.]"

"Character matters... It makes all the difference in the world."

"I just want somebody who is like me... who has gone through the same things... Not somebody who... doesn't know what it's like to struggle."

"I lean more toward candidates that aren't career politicians... When I look at candidates, I look at their education background and what they did for a living prior to becoming a politician."

"There's a lot of career politicians out there. I think that's really corrupting in the long-run, so I try to look for fresh faces."

"Somebody who is a pragmatist instead of an ideologue."

Honesty and follow-through were cited to be particularly important by a number of participants.

Participants expressed frustration at advertisements of derisive natures.

Individuals in the minority focus group felt that professed religious faith was a positive quality regardless of the faith.

Talk to me about women candidates. Do you look more favorably towards supporting them? How about young candidates ... some people say that we need more young people in office as they will be inheriting all these problems we are leaving them? What about minority candidates – more favorable towards them?

“At the end of the day, if they still don’t align with my values... I’m not gonna vote you in.”

“I think if there’s a woman candidate, I’m more likely to read more into her.”

(Regarding women candidates from a woman’s perspective) *“If they’re trying to act like a man, that kind of turns me off.”*

“I value a woman for stepping forward, but what are her values?”

Some of the participants in the women under 40 focus group acknowledged that they may evaluate her in ways that they may not evaluate a man, such as their role as mother.

“I would evaluate them just like I would evaluate a man... [although if] she had three small children home, I probably would not vote for her.”

There were varying views regarding young candidates. Most agreed that they would at least scrutinize the candidate more closely than otherwise, but some considered it an open advantage.

“I get nervous.”

“I think it depends on the office that they’re running for.”

“Age doesn’t really matter... I’m not sure that older is necessarily better... What you’ve dealt with 10 years ago may not be the new problem.”

“I think a lot of the younger people that are getting into politics are coming in with the right perspective... but they’re getting into politics for the wrong reasons... like the [senior citizen] issues are being overlooked.”

“I think they’re going to reach a lot more people that aren’t necessarily voting.”

II. Business Issues

Is "business-friendly" a positive or a negative? What does it mean in its most positive and/or most negative characteristics? Is "business-friendly" more important or less important than political party? Does being "business-friendly" mean Wall Street or Main Street?

"I'd say business-friendly is a big plus in my book because business means jobs, whether it be a corporation or a small business."

"I think that business could mean... more people with jobs."

"They would cut more [government] services."

"I'm a small business owner... I would like to hire more people."

Most participants stressed that "business-friendly" needed to be further clarified, frequently only being supportive of the concept if it was oriented toward small businesses.

"If they didn't specify that they were talking about small business and describe that right away, I would be more distrustful."

"...Hopefully it's not just helping the big corporations already making a lot of money but actually supporting small businesses, new businesses. 'Business-friendly' seems like a really broad term..."

"It would depend on whether they were talking about big business or local, small business."

"I always think when candidates say they're for business that they're trying to reach out to the people that own their own little business more so than the big businesses."

"I'd like to think that... 'business-friendly' means... reaching out to the small ones, but I'm not quite sure that's always what they mean necessarily because the big businesses do bring in a lot of revenue..."

"It seems like for smaller businesses they get a lot of tax obligations put on them."

"I think government's role in business promotion should be a freeing up of resources that allows businesses to thrive... tax exemptions, tax benefits [for small businesses]..."

"If they're talking about... medium, small business, yeah! But big corporations... they get enough tax breaks as it is."

Most felt it held little-to-no implications toward social policy.

While some participants expressed the contrary, many participants felt that "business-friendly" implied a support for large or corporate business, which they generally saw in a negative light.

"I would think they were for helping out the big businesses."

"I think they would... continue extending tax cuts for corporations... [However,] I would hope that it would be for small business."

How important is a candidate's position on business issues compared to, say, their position on social policies or environmental policies?

“As a woman, I’m looking more for... their social issues.”

“I tend to vote selfishly... How will this affect my life, my family? I tend to try not to look at the bigger picture because I get overwhelmed...”

“I look at the healthcare... I disagree with [universal healthcare].”

What about businesses speaks to your values – something that you are sympathetic to and might be persuaded to support? What businesses do you take notice and respect more ... women-owned businesses, minority business owners, big business, corporations native to Washington State, local business, out of State corporations doing business in Washington State. Talk to me a little about business you like and respect.

There was a very high amount of support for small and local businesses. A number of participants were small-business owners.

“Small business, just in general.”

“Local businesses that are working with other local businesses.”

“I tend to lean more toward... the entrepreneur or the woman that’s out there kind of starting or creating her own product...”

“Someone who... built a small business from the ground up... I have a lot of respect for that.”

A number of participants make efforts to support various Washington businesses, especially agricultural businesses.

“You need someone that really understands the local culture.”

One participant was willing to pay \$3000 more for solar panels because they were from Washington and not Oregon.

It may be noteworthy that the focus group of women under 40 did not seem particularly devoted to supporting women-owned businesses with some exceptions. Some others were keen to support both women-owned and minority-owned businesses, but they were few.

What priorities or positions from candidates who are pro-business would make you support them?

“Lower taxes.”

“I’m still looking at their personal life and their viewpoint on other things... What’s their character really like, and what decisions have they made in other areas that might help me know what are they talking about when they say they are business-friendly?”

“Cut government spending... that would be my top priority.”

“Major overhaul of government before you tax... Or we’ll find ourselves in the [same problem cycles].”

Most participants favored the creation of incentives and tax breaks for small businesses.

How can we help create more jobs? Who will do that best? What can government do to help?

"I feel like the way the state creates jobs is by creating more bureaucracy... they're filler jobs."

"Equipping the next generation... teaching them more about what a good work ethic is."

(In reference to graduate school programs) *"I think it's silly that you have to go through all that education to get a skillset when you can do it right out of high school."*

"Better guidelines on those tax cuts for the corporations [to help keep jobs domestic]."

Some participants wanted to see an approach to job creation that focused on small businesses.

"If they want to do it by creating this giant program with the government, then that turns me off, but if they wanna cut payroll taxes so that small businesses keep more money so that they can hire more, then that attracts me more."

"Somebody that's probably from a small-business standpoint or something like that I'd be more apt to vote for them because they know how difficult it is and they maybe have a plan..."

What should we NOT do in the name of creating jobs?

"We shouldn't put any more money in the government that allegedly has this answer... It ain't working."

"I think everything has to have boundaries... Are we creating jobs that will have longevity?"

Many participants felt that unions were not the proper avenue for job creation.

"There are a lot of people out there who are perfectly qualified, but because they don't belong to a union, they can't find work."

"When I think of unions, I think of people joining them because they want security or they want someone looking out for them... But just the word 'greed' comes up into my mind."

"I've seen the wages of union workers... and they think they own the world... I'm not a big union person."

"I was a union representative [for the aerospace machinists]... We did a lot of good I felt for wages, benefits... [but] we were way overpaid."

"I've seen unions hurt small business to the point where they can't compete."

A small minority did appreciate the idea of union endorsements.

"I like that idea. It's more for the people."

III. Influence and Impressions of Political Entities

What are you thinking about the Occupy Wall Street/Occupy Seattle movement?

"I think they're morons."

"There's a lot of rabble, but I don't hear what it is they want."

"They are out there causing chaos... Maybe your time would be better spent... working at the mall."

"I totally agree with it; I don't like what they're doing because of it."

"It's a little confusing overall... I agree with [their position on the corporate bailouts]... The movement as a whole... is confusing to me."

Only a few participants across all the groups were sympathetic toward the cause.

"I think they're awesome. I don't even care if they're right... Just to see somebody out there bitching is a good beginning to something hopefully."

What about the Tea Party? Who are these folks and how do they affect your thinking if at all?

"Our generation (20s, 30s)... they're bringing a fresh perspective to a more conservative viewpoint... I like that they just bring something new."

"They're very conservative [on social issues]."

"Smaller government and less taxes."

"I feel out of it not knowing what the Tea Party is."

"I agree with some of their points... They have good ideas."

"It generally scares the Hell out of me."

Some participants were not aware of what the Tea Party is or for what it stands.

Describe for me what you think about the Democratic Party?

"Large government."

"They have their work cut out for them... Obama made a lot of promises that he hasn't been able to keep..."

"National healthcare... Letting the government be in control of things that they shouldn't be in control of."

"Pro-choice."

“They’re a party that wants to focus on the social services [for everybody in every situation]... regardless of how much it costs.”

And now, the Republican Party?

“More towards pro-life, but they tend to be more lenient [on abortion].”

“All of my thoughts on the Republican Party are based on [President Bush]... Right now I guess I have a negative opinion of the party.”

“More supporters of the military and quicker to say... let’s go to war.”

“Closed-minded at times.”

“I tend to think of the Republican Party as having more of a hand in business, and that business is then in turn getting more involved in government.”

“There’s a bias behind both [parties].”

What do you think of a candidate who crosses party lines and votes for positions not in characteristic with his or her party?

“I wanna see him mostly vote with his party... stay consistent.”

Most participants found this to be very positive.

“There needs to be compromise somewhere.”

“If nobody said what party they were for, it would be way easier to vote for them just based off their issues and what they’re standing for.”

“I would be glad they’re looking at the issues as issues and not holding themselves to that [party identity].”

“It makes them... look like a stronger candidate in a way.”

“They’re not a follower; they’re a leader.”

When it comes to supporting job creation, what could a Democratic candidate say that might make sense to you in creating jobs? Can they talk about crossing party lines? If so, how do they say it?

“If they have a business background... that’s gonna mean a lot to me.”

“It doesn’t if they’re Democrat or Republican... if they are [pro-business], my first question is, ‘How?’”

“You support small businesses... the creation of jobs.”

Most participants want to hear something to substantiate such a claim, such as a specific plan, if they are to be swayed.

Who are the people, organizations, special interests or parties whose opinion helps you decide how you will vote?

“The Christian Coalition website.”

“What college they went to... if it’s one I’ve heard of or one I went to, I like that.”

Participants held varying views regarding environmental groups.

“[Environmental support makes me less interested in voting for a candidate.] There’s a lot of things that the environmentalists have... unnecessary taxes... agenda.”

“I’m a firm believer in being a good steward of what we have here... I measure carbon footprint.”

“I think that it’s nice to take care of our environment if we can.”

Unions were largely viewed as a negative presence in campaigns.

Many participants listen to parents, significant others, coworkers, and friends.

Many participants read their Voter’s Pamphlet and allow it to influence their decisions.

Do you tend to continue voting for an incumbent you have previously voted for?

This topic was only discussed with the minority group, and they all agreed that they reassess any given candidate each election and will not automatically vote for the same individual multiple times. However, this does not mean they were closed to the idea.

“It’s better than bringing in someone new and starting all over again.”

“It depends on what they did previously.”

“If I’m just fed up with how things are, I’ll vote for somebody new... I’m heading toward let’s bring somebody new.”

IV. The Politics of 2012

What are the issues you are looking to see addressed in next year's election?

"Smaller government."

"Healthcare."

"Gay marriage... Everyone should be equal."

Many participants were interested in fiscal policies and how candidates would handle the budget. Most approached this from a fiscally conservative perspective.

Many participants felt education at all levels, including college, is an important topic to be addressed.

There was a roughly equal divide among the young graduates on the topic of a prospective income tax.

How involved will you be in politics next year?

A few participants expressed they may participate in campaigns next year. One named Obama specifically.

Have you ever helped another candidate or campaign in the past? What would prompt you to get involved?

"The abortion issue. Pro-life."

"I want to... [see charity support]."

What endorsements do you look for in a candidate you would support?

No robo-calls. Speeches and brochures are well-received. Face-to-face endorsements were seen as fairly effective.

Attachments

I. Discussion Guide

Focus Groups – Discussion Guide Draft Enterprise Washington November/December 2011

Introduction

- First, let me thank you for coming today.
- This focus group involves a discussion with you – good Presidential year voters. We are trying to gain better knowledge and understanding of the issues and ideas that are likely to be at play in 2012 elections.
- Have any of you been in a focus group in the past?
- There is no right or wrong answer.
- Please speak your mind, but try and be brief so we can have everyone weigh in with a point of view or two.
- We have a few people in the room behind us who will be listening to your comments and jotting down notes.
- Your comments will not be recorded by name. We won't sell or give your information to any marketing companies, but we are recording this focus group on video. It is unlikely, but possible that we would show your comments in public settings.
- My job is to keep things moving and ask good questions. If I don't have the answer, but you do, or think you do, feel free to answer your colleague's questions.
- I'd like to go around the room and introduce ourselves. Tell me what you do, and where you live. **INTRODUCE YOURSELF FIRST – Hi my name is**

Overview of Current Washington State Politics

1. Do you think as a state we are headed in the right direction or wrong direction? What's going right and what's not?
2. How would you best describe your politics? Do you vote for one particular party? Are you more moderate or conservative or liberal?
3. What issues are most important to you when deciding who will get your vote? (Go to the white board and list the issues they mention, then ask the group to rate them).

4. Definition/Role of Business Candidates

5. Can you describe the characteristics you're looking for in candidates you will vote for?
6. Is "business-friendly" a positive or a negative? What does it mean in its most positive and/or most negative characteristics?
7. Is "business-friendly" more important or less important than political party? Does being "business-friendly" mean Wall Street or Main Street?
8. How important is a candidate's position on business issues compared to, say, their position on social policies or environmental policies?
9. What about businesses speaks to your values – something that you are sympathetic to and might be persuaded to support?
10. What businesses do you take notice and respect more ... women-owned businesses, minority business owners, big business, corporations native to Washington State, local business, out of State corporations doing business in Washington State. Talk to me a little about business you like and respect.

11. What priorities or positions from candidates who are pro-business would make you support them? (Probe: cutting taxes, not canceling tax exemptions they get because they create jobs, cutting government spending, eliminating state employee positions or benefits, reducing the power of unions, collective bargaining, insisting on major government reforms before any new taxes are asked for, etc.)
12. How can we help create more jobs? Who will do that best? What can government do to help?
13. What should we NOT do in the name of creating jobs?

Personal Attitudes about Political Influencers

14. Who influences you enough to change your mind or help you decide on how you will vote?
15. What are you thinking about the Occupy Wall Street/ Occupy Seattle movement?
16. What about the Tea Party? Who are these folks and how do they affect your thinking if at all?
17. Describe for me what you think about the Democratic Party?
18. And now, the Republican Party?
19. What do you think of a candidate who crosses party lines and votes for positions not in characteristic with his or her party?
20. When it comes to supporting job creation, what could a Democratic candidate say that might make sense to you in creating jobs? Can they talk about crossing party lines? If so, how do they say it?
21. Who are the people, organizations, special interests or parties whose opinion helps you decide how you will vote?

22. Talk to me about women candidates. Do you look more favorably towards supporting them? How about young candidates ... some people say that we need more young people in office as they will be inheriting all these problems we are leaving them? What about minority candidates – more favorable towards them?

Next Year: The Politics of 2012

23. What are the issues you are looking to see addressed?

24. How involved will you be in politics next year? (Probe: watch debates, read voter pamphlets, turn off TV negative ads, go to a rally, go to a web site of a candidate or issue, read brochures, listen to robo-call phone messages, read emails from politicians.)

25. Have you ever helped another candidate or campaign in the past? What would prompt you to get involved?

26. What endorsements do you look for in a candidate you would support?

Wrap – Up

27. If we wanted to follow up with you after this great discussion. Are you willing to give us your e-mail today?

28. Anything I forgot?

29. Thank you!