

Mama Grizzlies and the Welfare State: Tea Party Women Tackle the Size and Scope of Government

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Abstract

Using qualitative and quantitative analysis, this paper examines Tea Party women's attitudes about the size and scope of government. Interviews with Tea Party and other conservative women activists, along with a textual analysis of their writings, reveal that such activists promote gendered rationales to support free market policies and the reduction of government welfare programs. Moreover, analysis of national survey data show that self-identified Tea Party women, along with Republican women who do not identify with the movement, hold more conservative attitudes than other American women when it comes to government's obligation to help the poor, ObamaCare, taxes, and work-family balance policies such as paid leave. The ability of Tea Party and GOP women leaders nationally to sway more women to support their free market positions, however, may be difficult given that not only do most American women largely reject these policies, but in some cases, even Tea Party women at the grassroots do not uniformly support the policies espoused by prominent women leaders on the Right.

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The 2012 presidential election was notable in two important respects. First, it marked the Tea Party's first foray into presidential electoral politics. Second, women's issues dominated national political discourse to an extent not seen in prior presidential elections. The "women's vote" has always been an important constituency for both political parties. Given that women are more likely to vote than men, and that there are more female voters than male voters, the political parties try their best to appeal to women, particularly mothers. As a result, political strategists have created numerous categories of potential swing female voters that routinely dominate the political lexicon during elections, including Soccer Moms, Security Moms, and, most recently, Wal-Mart Moms.¹ Tea Party women activists and conservative women's organizations became an active part of this dialogue as well in 2012, largely backing Republican Mitt Romney while denouncing the policies of the Obama administration and the Democratic Party, often using gendered rhetoric.

Take, for instance, the response by Tea Party women to an online, interactive infographic launched by the Obama campaign's website in May 2012, which it dubbed "The Life of Julia."² In this infographic, the Obama campaign illustrates how one fictional woman, "Julia," benefits over her lifetime from government programs that Obama supported such as Head Start, Pell Grants, Medicare, and Social Security, and how these programs were threatened by spending cuts proposed by the Romney campaign. The "Life of Julia" placed special emphasis on two signature pieces of legislation signed by Obama: the Lilly Ledbetter Act and the Affordable Care Act. With respect to the former, the Obama campaign stated: "Because of steps like the Lilly

Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, Julia is one of millions of women across the country who knows she'll always be able to stand up for her right to equal pay.” Later, when the fictional Julia turned 27, the infographic said, “Thanks to ObamaCare, her health insurance is required to cover birth control and preventive care, letting Julia focus on her work rather than worry about her health.” Four years later, when “Julia decides to have a child,” the Obama campaign maintained that she benefits from “maternal check-ups, prenatal care, and free screenings under health care reform.”

The condemnation of “The Life of Julia” by Tea Party women, not to mention Republicans and conservative groups more generally, was swift.³ Conservative blogger Michelle Malkin wrote that the infographic “inadvertently exposed the real Barack Obama: a chauvinistic control freak who would tether every last woman and child to his ever-expanding, budget-busting Nanny State.”⁴ Smart Girl Politics, a Tea Party women’s organization founded in early 2009, featured several posts critical of the Life of Julia and created a bumper sticker, “I’m Not Julia,” available for purchase to its members. As Smart Girl Politics’ Kristen Hawley wrote, “The problem with ‘The Life of Julia’ ... lies in the Administration’s assumption that the average American woman would want or need government assistance.⁵ Shouldn’t it be the goal of our leaders to create a culture of self-reliance, which is the pinnacle of individual liberty and freedom?” Tami Nantz, Smart Girl Politics’ Director of Social Media, was even more pointed in her response: “...[I]t seems to me that President Barack Obama is trying to make women a slave to the almighty government plantation.”⁶

In previous work, I discuss three motherhood themes that Tea Party women employ in their promotion of conservative economic policies.⁷ Many Tea Party women

argue that balancing the budget, eliminating the federal debt and scaling back or overturning government programs such as ObamaCare would be good for American families and that as Mama Grizzlies, conservative women should fight against “big government” as a way to safeguard the American way of life for the next generation. Conservatives in America have long maintained that a growing federal social safety system is not only unsustainable from a budgetary perspective, but that it does little to stem poverty. Moreover, many social conservatives reject a growing welfare state because they believe that government programs designed to help the poor ultimately usurp family responsibility and discourage marriage. The notion that an expanded welfare state threatens traditional family life has historically galvanized conservatives throughout the past century, and provided for conservative women, particularly in their role as mothers, a historical justification for engaging in political activism. This argument continues to be relevant today for social conservatives and for many Tea Party Mama Grizzlies as marriage rates plummet and single motherhood becomes the new social norm, particularly for younger women and women of color.⁸ For these conservative activists, the growth of government is intrinsically linked to these troubling societal changes, which they believe exacerbate income inequality and threaten the wellbeing of many children.

However, as their responses to Obama’s Life of Julia campaign infographic illustrate, Tea Party women sometimes move beyond motherhood rhetoric to make other gendered claims against “big government.” Many Tea Party women, and elected Republican women leaders as well, argue that federal government policies, including the Lilly Ledbetter Act, the Affordable Care Act, and long-standing social welfare programs

promote women's dependence on government rather than empower them. An overreaching government or the "almighty government plantation" not only usurps the proper responsibility of mothers to best meet the needs of their children, it also circumscribes women as autonomous actors, in ways that some Tea Party women argue is sexist. In this paper, I take a closer look at Tea Party women's attitudes about the size and scope of government through qualitative interviews with Tea Party and other conservative women activists. Through these interviews and an analysis of some of their writing, they make the case for why they think government social programs and a large regulatory state are ultimately bad not just for mothers with children, but for women themselves, by portraying women as victims rather than as empowered individuals.

The fierce opposition that many Tea Party women feel toward the federal government stands in direct contrast to progressive women leaders, who argue that government should do *more* to help struggling families, whether that means expanding social welfare programs, increasing the minimum wage, or requiring businesses to provide mandatory paid sick and family leave to help Americans better balance their work and family lives.⁹ Liberal women's organizations also tout the importance of passing new legislation, such as the Paycheck Fairness Act, that would make it easier for women to sue for pay discrimination, focusing their attention on the wage gap in America, which shows that women typically earn between 77 and 84 percent of what men do.¹⁰ These debates about the size of government and the sorts of regulations it should put on businesses have never been more relevant: wages in the last decade have been largely stagnant, helping to contribute to the most pronounced income inequality in the United States since the Great Depression.¹¹ Yet, as this paper illustrates, Tea Party

women and conservative women's organizations resoundingly reject government solutions to these problems, arguing that although well intentioned, such policies actually harm women more than help them. Instead, Tea Party women point to economic data that shows women's wages are rapidly coming into line with men's, which they believe demonstrates that the free market is the best way to close the wage gap, raise wages and lessen income inequality for both men *and* women.

In addition, I compare Tea Party women's attitudes on such policies nationally with other American women through quantitative analysis, as a way to gauge how receptive American women may be to the Tea Party's message that smaller government, reduced taxes, and fewer business regulations are in women's best interests. Using data from the Public Religion Research Institute, I examine American women's more general orientation toward government's obligation to help the poor as well as their perceptions about welfare recipients. I also consider how American women feel about the economic system in this country more generally, including their perceptions about whether all Americans enjoy equal opportunities to succeed. Moreover, I examine American women's attitudes about numerous policies that tap into both the size and regulatory scope of government: the Affordable Care Act, the birth control mandate, tax cuts, the minimum wage, and paid family and sick leave. In between examining the attitudes of American women on these policies, I also consider through interviews with Tea Party and conservative women activists, and through their writings, what Tea Party women have to say about these policies and why they believe they are detrimental to women.

Tea Party Women and the State: Why Government Programs Do More Harm Than Good for Women

Debates about the size and scope of government have dominated domestic politics in the United States for more than a century, with women activists on both the left and the right reaching very different conclusions about whether government policies to help the poor are beneficial or detrimental to American women and their families. Among the American public, women have always been significantly more likely than men to believe that government should do more to help the poor—a difference that helps drive the gender gap in American politics, in which women have been significantly more likely to vote and identify as Democrats than men.¹² Some scholars argue that women's more liberal orientation toward government spending may be grounded in inherent biological differences or socialization experiences, particularly given women's roles as caregivers.¹³ Others point out that women are more economically vulnerable than men, which may lead them to be more supportive of government providing a social safety net than men.¹⁴ Still others maintain that women support a larger government because they are more likely than men to work in occupations affected by redistributive government politics¹⁵. Lastly, work by social psychologists and economists, respectively, finds that women are more empathetic than men and less risk-averse, which may also help explain why women are more likely than men to support a strong social safety net.¹⁶

However, the rise of Tea Party women—not to mention the growing number of Republican women elected to Congress and to governors' mansions in the past few election cycles—reminds us that women's views on government social programs are far from monolithic. Data from two surveys conducted by the Public Religion Research Institute—the 2012 and 2014 American Values Survey, respectively—demonstrate that

both Tea Party women *and* Republican women who are not part of the Tea Party hold distinct attitudes from other American women when it comes to how large a role the government should play in helping the poor.¹⁷ Figure 1a shows that when respondents in the 2012 American Values Survey were asked whether government policies aimed at helping the poor either “serve as a critical safety net, which help people in hard times get back on their feet” or “create a culture of dependency where people are provided with too many handouts,” more than half of Tea Party women (55 percent) and non-Tea Party Republican women (53 percent) chose the latter option, compared with just 22 percent of other American women.¹⁸ When Tea Party status is regressed onto the notion that poverty programs create a culture of dependency among women, it remains a statistically significant explanatory factor. In other words, being part of the Tea Party has a conservatizing influence on women’s attitudes about anti-poverty programs even while controlling for partisanship and other demographic and religious factors (see Appendix for full model results; Table 1). Not surprisingly, Republican women are significantly more likely, and Democratic women are significantly less likely, than women who identify as Independents¹⁹ to believe that government programs aimed at reducing poverty create a culture of dependency.

[Figure 1a-1b about here]

Moreover, from the 2014 American Values Survey, 56 percent of Tea Party women and 55 percent of non-Tea Party Republican women, respectively, either mostly or completely disagree that the “government should do more to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor,” which is in stark contrast to the 22 percent of other American women who disagree (See Figure 1b). Again, controlling for other political and demographic

factors in a regression analysis, I find that Tea Party status among American women is a significant factor in explaining attitudes about whether government should do more to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor. Party also matters, but only for Democrats: Democrats are significantly more likely than Independents to believe that government should address income inequality while Republican status is not a statistically significant variable in this model.

In their own words, Tea Party women explain why they believe such social welfare programs ultimately do more harm than good to women as individuals. In some cases, they believe these programs promote the false premise that women are incapable of taking care of themselves. Amy Jo Clark, who along with Miriam Weaver runs a popular blog and radio show called Chicks on the Right, says that although many women support government social programs out a sense of empathy, “what they don’t hear in the messaging is really how these programs keep women down. The cyclical things that keep these women down, it keeps them poor, it keeps them dependent on these programs. They don’t see how absolutely non-empowering these programs are.”²⁰ Jennifer Jacobs,²¹ who heads a local Tea Party organization in Maryland, believes that “women are socialized into thinking they need government support.” She recounts the time she separated from her first husband and that people told her that she should apply for housing assistance, welfare and food stamps, which she refused to do. She told me “once women are a part of the [government] system, they can’t leave the system. These women think that standing on their own two feet is being on welfare when they are actually dependent.”²² Gabriella Hoffman, a 2012 graduate of UC San Diego who runs the blog

“All-American Girl for the Restoration of Values,” also believes that government today usurps individual responsibility and ultimately restricts the freedom of women. She says,

Big government policies want you to have government dependency from cradle to grave. And, when you are beholden to the government, you have no decisions over what you can do. You are going to be told to have as many abortions as you want, or as many sexual partners, and to not be accountable for your actions, leading you to beg the government for certain items or certain rights or privileges, that you don’t necessarily need and which are contrary to being what an independently-minded female is.²³

Instead, Tea Party women maintain that women should be expected to take care of themselves, and if they cannot, the onus should be on charity groups or families—not government—to help. Said *Elizabeth Reynolds*, a co-founder of the statewide conservative organization Maryland Citizen Action Network or MD-CAN:

I think we have veered away from our community and religious groups to be the providers of the social safety net. I don’t think government should provide social services unless for the very destitute. I guess my bottom line is what promotes freedom? What promotes individual liberty? I think social programs are better being addressed in your community and by your family. You need to take responsibility for yourself.²⁴

The common theme connecting these responses is that government programs ultimately undermine women’s ability and responsibility to be self-sufficient.

The argument that women themselves as individuals should be responsible for their own livelihood reflects classic conservative positions that promote self-reliance and industry. It also assumes that all women are equally capable of solving their own problems and enjoy the same opportunities to succeed as one another—a premise that is often challenged by progressive activists, who believe government must help those who come from less privileged backgrounds and who face structural barriers to overcoming poverty. In the 2014 American Values Survey, Public Religion Research Institute asked respondents the extent to which they thought “children from all income groups have

adequate opportunities to be successful,” which suggests that upward mobility is still a key characteristic of American society—seventy-five percent of Tea Party women either completely or mostly agree with this statement (see Figure 2a). By contrast, 55 percent of non-Tea Party Republican women agree with this sentiment, compared with only 36 percent of other American women. These findings suggest that Tea Party Women, and to a slightly lesser extent Republican women, hold a very different orientation about individuals’ abilities to shape their own destinies than other American women. Given these results, it should come as little surprise that Tea Party women and non-Tea Party Republican women are far more likely, 77 percent and 71 percent, respectively, than other American women (42 percent) to believe that “most people on welfare are taking advantage of the system” rather than being “genuinely in need of help,” as asked by the 2012 American Values Survey (see Figure 2b). In the case of both dependent variables examined here, Tea Party status remains a statistically significant predictor of attitudes about upward mobility and welfare recipients once additional controls are included in a regression analysis. (See Appendix for full model results; Table 2). In other words, identifying as part of the Tea Party has a conservatizing impact on the attitudes of American women when it comes to these opinions.

[See Figures 2a-b about here.]

Returning to the qualitative analysis, Tea Party women’s opposition to these social safety net policies also evoke more traditionalistic themes, which is not surprising given that many social conservatives in America believe that government programs today have come to usurp family roles. Janice Shaw Crouse, Senior Fellow at the Beverly LaHaye Institute—the think tank of the socially conservative organization Concerned

Women for America—worryes that the growing acceptance of the social safety net maligns the traditional family structure and detaches any stigma to unwed parenthood. In referencing a claim that former candidate Mitt Romney made during the 2012 presidential election that Obama had the votes of the 47 percent of Americans who “are dependent upon government,”²⁵ Crouse said:

Now unmarried women don’t have as much to fear. The government is the provider. The government is the husband. The government provides better than most men can provide. And that colors the whole culture. Romney was right about the 47 percent. The way he said it was offensive. The way he said it was distorted. But it is true that close to half of the people in the country are dependent on government and not all of them find that shameful. And so stigma has been removed. And that is producing a sea change of attitudes about the role of government.²⁶

The former Executive Director of Phyllis Schlafly’s organization Eagle Forum’s D.C. office, Colleen Holcomb, also believes that the growing acceptance of government-sponsored programs to alleviate poverty by many Americans obfuscates the real solution to poverty, which in her mind is linked to the traditional family structure. She maintains that if “you protect the family, if you have mothers and fathers together supporting each other and raising their own children, not only does that limit welfare use. Marriage is the solution to poverty and the greatest indicator of prosperity.”²⁷ Even conservative women whose activism is not rooted in their religious beliefs argue that single women and married women often view the role of government in their lives quite differently. Carrie Lukas of the secular Independent Women’s Forum believes the divide between married women with children and unmarried women with children is incredibly important, because “a lot of single people are more concerned and more interested in the

government safety net as they are on their own and don't have the family infrastructure."²⁸

Criticism about the impact of the social safety net on American women derived from socially conservative and libertarian perspectives need not be mutually exclusive. Returning to the denunciation of the Life of Julia meme floated by the Obama campaign in 2012, for example, many conservative women such as Meredith Jessup of *The Blaze.com* not only decried the portrayal of Julia as a “completely helpless and hopeless cretin who depends on government assistance to function,” but they also expressed dismay that the infographic did not once mention a father or family structure.²⁹ Conservative blogger Dana Loesch described the Life of Julia as the “Dads are Unnecessary, Single Women are Helpless Campaign,” writing:

As a woman, the idea that I can't accomplish anything in life unless a male in government plans it out for me is offensive. It's amazing to me how progressives reject the oversight of the divine and the gift of free will but embrace the oppressive oversight of flawed men who reject free will. Men, too, should be offended at their lack of representation in the life of "Julia" -- the white, faceless female stereotype that the Obama administration sees as the average female voter.³⁰

Loesch's comments reveal that Tea Party women take issue with what they perceive as government's paternalistic assumption—that women need or want government assistance in their lives. They also worry that such programs belittle men and their role in helping women raise families. Instead, Tea Party women believe scaling back the size and scope of government is ultimately good for American women and their families, making women more self-reliant. As the PRRI survey data show, Tea Party women are far more likely than other American women to believe that if individuals work hard enough, they can still get ahead in American society, no matter what station in life they were born into,

which helps to explain why they more likely to believe government social safety programs are not only unnecessary, but downright damaging, to women.

ObamaCare and the Birth Control Mandate

Tea Party women's opposition to an expansion of the social safety net also extends to two specific policies that dominated headlines during the 2012 presidential election: the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which critics dubbed ObamaCare, and its corresponding birth control mandate. The Affordable Care Act was the widest expansion of federal government social welfare policy since the Great Society programs under LBJ.³¹ President Obama, working with Democrats in Congress, passed the Affordable Care Act in 2010, with the aim of providing health care to the majority of the nation's uninsured. Based on a model first developed in Massachusetts, the Affordable Care Act legislated that individuals would be required to purchase health care or face a tax penalty. It also mandated that states set up online health care exchanges to allow Americans to shop for private insurance policy, while expanding Medicaid to provide subsidies for lower-income Americans to purchase policies.³² Requiring that businesses with more than 50 full-time employees provide health insurance coverage, the Affordable Care Act also made changes to the types of coverage that insurance companies had to provide. For example, it eliminated the ability of insurance policies to drop customers with pre-existing conditions. Moreover, it mandated that health care policies had to provide prescribed birth control to women patients without a co-payment as part of several gender-specific preventative health care services.³³

Controversy erupted over the Obama administration's decision not to exempt certain religious non-profit organizations, such as Catholic universities, hospitals, and

charities, from the birth control mandate despite the Catholic Church's long-time religious opposition to the use of contraceptives. While the administration did exempt churches and houses of worship from having to comply with the mandate if they had religious objections, its initial refusal to extend the exemption to religiously affiliated organizations deeply offended many religious leaders. Republican leaders denounced the Obama administration for not backing down on the rule, arguing that it amounted to a violation of religious liberty. Ultimately, the administration announced a series of compromise measures, first mandating that companies providing insurance for religious organizations foot the bill themselves for any contraceptive coverage for female employees, and then later instituting a plan by which insurance companies would offer separate policies covering only birth control directly to employees of such organizations.

To say that the Affordable Care Act, and its corresponding birth control mandate, was opposed by Tea Party activists and Republicans is an understatement. Debate about the Affordable Care Act helped fuel the flames of the Tea Party movement in 2009, with Tea Party activists jamming town hall meetings over that summer to express their opposition to "ObamaCare" and prominent Republican leaders denouncing the policy. While a detailed examination of the Tea Party's opposition to the Affordable Care Act and its birth control mandate is beyond the scope of this study, I examine Tea Party women activists' opposition to these measures, specifically focusing on why they think ObamaCare and its birth control mandate are bad for American women.

First, I analyze American women's attitudes about ObamaCare nationally. In 2014, Public Religion Research Institute queried Americans about the Affordable Care Act, asking them whether the health care law should be expanded, kept as is, repealed

and replaced with a Republican alternative, or repealed and not replaced. As Figure 3a illustrates, Tea Party women and non-Tea Party Republican women hold very different views from other American women: just 18 percent of Tea Party women and 11 percent of non-Tea Party Republican women believe the law should be expanded or kept as it, which contrasts sharply with a solid majority of other American women. Instead, both Tea Party women and non-TP Republican women express strong support for repealing the law, although Republican women do tend to support replacing ObamaCare with a Republican alternative (52 percent) at higher levels than Tea Party women (37 percent). Nonetheless, when the data are grouped into two categories—support for repeal or support for expanding/keeping the law—and Tea Party status is regressed on repealing ObamaCare while controlling for other factors, Tea Party status remains a significant predictor of opposition to the law (as does party; see Appendix for full model results; Table 3).

[Figure 3a about here]

All of the Tea Party women I interviewed strongly opposed the Affordable Care Act. While many of them argued that ObamaCare was an unnecessary, “socialist” expansion of government that they feared would ultimately do little to control costs but instead restrict consumer choices, several used specifically gendered argumentation as to why they believed the Affordable Care Act was bad for women and families. Janice Shaw Crouse, of Concerned Women for America, believes that women will feel ObamaCare’s impact disproportionately, given that the woman in the family is the one who “handles the health care decisions, and goes to the doctor and plans the doctor’s appointments.”³⁴ Her remarks echo similar concerns expressed by Republican

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rogers, who in an interview with Smart Girl Politics stated her belief that women's activism in the Tea Party was largely motivated by the health care reform debate: "Women make 85 percent of the healthcare decisions in their household...Women in America do not like the idea of the federal government getting in the way of them being able to make healthcare decisions for their families."³⁵

Crouse elaborates on why ObamaCare is especially harmful for women and their families in a study she penned for CWA called *Obamanomics*. She takes aim at the employer mandate, which requires employers of more than 50 employees to offer health care, arguing that the financial penalties non-participating small businesses face will likely result in less hiring and that "women, employed disproportionately in small businesses, will be especially hit hard."³⁶ This theme was also taken up by the U.S. House Republican Caucus, which in a press release entitled "3 Things House Republicans are Doing for Women," argued that Obamacare "introduced a slew of problems that hit women harder than men," including the employer mandate, which they claim is leading many companies to cut workers' hours to avoid falling under the mandate. The House GOP states that the mandate "affects women at a rate 64 percent more than male workers—meaning more women are being demoted to part-time positions instead of the full time jobs they held before ObamaCare."³⁷

CWA's Janice Shaw Crouse also makes the case that ObamaCare effectively enforces a marriage penalty, noting that unmarried, cohabiting couples earning smaller salaries individually would be eligible for larger health care subsidies to offset the cost of insurance than they would if they combined their incomes as a married couple. She writes that the policy is a "boondoggle for older, unmarried mothers (in their 20s and

30s)” at the expense of married mothers.³⁸ The end result for Crouse is that “instead of encouraging single mothers to marry the father of their children and to become financially independent by facilitating job growth, ObamaCare creates another avenue of dependency through health insurance subsidies.”³⁹ CWA’s President Peggy Nance Young, writing for Fox News.com, also argues that ObamaCare is bad for married women, expressing dismay that if government forces “women to pay for health care services they do not need or want... married women and their families will bear the brunt of ObamaCare’s income redistribution.” Young believes that the increased taxes imbedded within the policy are especially harmful to women compared with men, “because women enter and exit the labor force more often and for longer periods of time. Furthermore, women typically have an additional 15 to 18 more years of life than our male counterparts. Citizens on Medicare and Medicaid, mostly women, will receive less, and possible worse, care under ObamaCare than under privatized health services.⁴⁰ In this last point, Young references cuts to both programs that bill designers argue would be offset by stopping overpayments to hospitals and other wasteful spending.

The Independent Women’s Forum also cites research showing that both younger women and older women who need to purchase individual plans through health care exchanges will be especially hard hit by ObamaCare’s individual mandate. For instance, Carrie Lukas cites a study by economists from the Wharton School, which found that premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for women ages 55 to 64 buying individual plans on the health care exchange as compared to their expenses prior to passage of the Affordable Care Act increased by 50 percent—more than any other demographic group.⁴¹ Hadley Heath, also of IWF, cites other research that predicts women 30 years and

younger who buy their own insurance will also face higher premiums than those they faced prior to enactment of the law.⁴² She also points to a decline in student plans offered by colleges and universities as a result of ObamaCare, leading her to quip, “perhaps some of the 67 percent of single women who voted to reelect President Obama will feel some buyer’s remorse.”⁴³

Writing in *Forbes* with April Ponnuru, Policy Director for the conservative think tank YG Network, IWF’s Carrie Lukas makes the case that ObamaCare “lets women down” because many women are forced to buy plans for their families that often result in changes in provider networks.⁴⁴ Noting that women, unlike men, require both a primary-care physician as well as an obstetrician-gynecologist, Ponnuru and Lukas argue that ObamaCare stands to threaten long-standing relationships that women have developed with their doctors:

Good doctor-patient relationships often take years to form and they are not easily remade. But many women will have a very difficult time finding an ObamaCare plan that covers the two or more doctors that they require, because physician networks are being narrowed dramatically by many ObamaCare plans in an effort to keep costs down. Hospitals are being cut out, too. The upshot: many women are losing their access to first-rate care they have come to expect.⁴⁵

Fear of unwanted changes to their health insurance was a major concern that drove many women to become active in the Tea Party, at least according to Eagle Forum’s Colleen Holcomb: “Healthcare was huge. As a woman of childbearing age, I certainly don’t want to go into labor under ObamaCare in this state-run hospital. Who wants to sit in waiting rooms for 2 hours more than you have to? So there was this general sense that our whole way of life was under attack and was only going to get worse.”⁴⁶

Conservative women activists were also put off by the Affordable Care Act’s birth control mandate. For some Tea Party women, their opposition to the birth control

mandate stemmed from their religious convictions. Describing the birth control mandate as an “outrageous interference of religious liberty,” conservative icon Phyllis Schlafly argued that ObamaCare includes “birth control, the morning-after pill (an abortion drug), and sterilization, at zero cost to the individual without any additional premium, co-pay, or out-of-pocket expense.”⁴⁷ And yes, this mandate does apply to religious hospitals, schools, colleges, and charities, even though their religion teaches them that these acts are immoral and wrong.” Even conservative women from secular organizations, such as Hadley Heath from IWF, joined forces with more religiously minded conservative activists to oppose the mandate based on liberty concerns. At a Heritage Foundation panel discussion about the mandate, Heath remarked that despite working for a secular organization, IWF believes “that individual liberties—like religious liberty—are vital to a free and flourishing country, and therefore we strongly oppose the most recent HHS mandate under discussion today.”⁴⁸ Another conservative blogger, Rachel Bjorkland, described the birth control mandate in much starker terms on her blog *Thoughts from a Conservative Mom.com*: “This isn’t about birth control or women’s choices or religion. This is about an elite ruling class who believe they can abuse unconstitutional powers to tell private citizens and organizations what to buy and sell, and at what price, and how, and to whom. We can’t allow our liberties to be stripped away without a fight.”⁴⁹

Still other Tea Party women took issue with what they perceived as a bait and switch from the Obama administration, claiming ObamaCare’s stipulations that provide free, preventative health services for women, such as no-cost prescription birth control and free yearly wellness exams, were in actuality anything but “free.” Take for instance, the following point from CWA’s Brenda Zurita:

When ObamaCare supporters tout the preventive health care services now mandated, especially for women, they fail to mention that somewhere along the line you are, in fact, going to pay for those, whether you use them or not. The charge will not be the day you receive those services, but they will be paid for with a higher deductible, higher premiums, and higher co-pay amounts. They might be paid for by the exclusion of another health service you actually use.⁵⁰

This line of thinking was echoed by Phyllis Schlafly, who claimed that that compromise offered by the Obama administration to allow employees of religiously affiliated organizations to purchase insurance for birth control separately was simply a red herring: “It’s obvious that insurance companies will distribute and conceal the costs so nobody appears to be paying for the controversial procedures.”⁵¹

Similar to their opposition to an expanded social safety net, some Tea Party women viewed the birth control mandate as yet another overreaching, paternalistic government handout. Said Smart Girl Politics’ Tami Nantz, “I can’t buy a \$4 pack of birth control myself? Big Daddy Government has to provide that for me? I resent that. I don’t want anybody thinking that I expect taxpayers to take care of me.”⁵² Moreover, Smart Girl Politics President Stacy Mott said that the birth control mandate was essentially a distraction from the more pressing issues women faced, in part because she believed this social issue was not as critical to women’s well-being as economic issues. She argued that the job of Smart Girl Politics was to “turn the conversation” around from birth control and social issues and instead discuss how fiscal issues were more important to women’s well-being, claiming, “The financial issues impact *everyone*. And you may have your beliefs on the social issues [such as the birth control mandate], but the bottom line is, the odds are that they are not directly impacting you.”⁵³

As these comments make clear, Tea Party women activists were outspoken critics of the birth control mandate. Nationally, Tea Party women were the least likely among

other American women to support the birth control mandate according to the 2012 American Values Survey: 31 percent of Tea Party women, followed closely by 35 percent of non-Tea Party Republican women expressed support for the policy, compared to more than two-thirds (69 percent) of other American women. (See Figure 3b.) Controlling for other factors via logistic regression analysis, however, Tea Party status does not remain a statistically significant predictor of attitudes about the birth control mandate among women. (See Appendix for full model results.) Instead, partisanship, ideology, and religious factors help to explain women's attitudes the birth control mandate. In particular, Democratic women appear to care more about this issue than do either Republicans or Independents. Church attendance negatively affects women's attitudes about the birth control mandate, as does holding more conservative ideological viewpoints.

[Figure 3b about here.]

The finding that Tea Party status does not predict attitudes about the birth control mandate may be a bit of a surprise given that women activists within the movement uniformly denounced it. Perhaps part of this reason is that even Tea Party women express nearly universal support for the use of birth control: PRRI's 2012 American values survey found that 85 percent of Tea Party women, which is comparable to both non-Tea Party Republicans and other American women, find the use of birth control to be "morally acceptable."⁵⁴ Nonetheless, the lack of significance of Tea Party status in the full regression model indicates one instance in which self-identified Tea Party women nationally find this political issue to be less salient than movement leaders. Instead, the

more important drivers of attitudes on the birth control mandate among American women are religion and ideology—not belonging to the Tea Party.

The Scope of Government: Government Regulation of the Economy and Work/Family Balance Issues

Tea Party women believe that the social safety net has grown too large and worry that an expansion of government policies, although perhaps well intentioned, is bad for American women and their families. Not surprisingly, this opposition extends to ObamaCare as well, although attitudes about the birth control mandate are more mixed: my qualitative analysis shows that Tea Party women activists routinely denounced the mandate while my analysis of national survey data finds that Tea Party status is not a significant predictor of birth control mandate opposition. Instead, ideology and religion appear to be the driving factors in explaining attitudes about the birth control mandate. What about other aspects of the regulatory state? In other words, how do Tea Party women feel about government regulation of the economy, and in particular, economic regulations that are often touted by progressive women leaders as being necessary for women to alleviate poverty, minimize their wage gap with men, and help them achieve a better balance between their work and family lives?

Turning first to attitudes about taxes and the role of tax cuts in stimulating economic growth, the 2014 American Values Survey shows that Tea Party women (57 percent) and non-Tea Party Republican women (50 percent) are far more likely to oppose raising taxes on the most wealthy Americans—those earning more than \$250,000 a year annually—than other American women (31 percent) (see Figure 4a). The relationship between Tea Party status and women’s attitudes is statistically significant once additional

controls are added to a bivariate logistic regression model,⁵⁵ as is partisanship. White women and self-identified conservative women also are more likely to oppose raising taxes than other women. (See Appendix for full model results.) Moreover, when asked in the 2012 American Values Survey whether they believe economic growth would be best promoted by either “lower[ing] taxes on individuals and businesses and pay for those tax cuts by cutting spending on some government services and programs” or “spend[ing] more on education and the nation’s infrastructure and raise taxes on wealthy individuals and businesses to pay for that spending,” 64 percent of Tea Party women, along with 67 percent non-TP Republican women, choose lowering taxes, compared to just one-third of other American women (see Figure 4b). Again, once controlling for other factors, Tea Party status remains a statistically significant predictor of attitudes on economic growth: women who are part of the Tea Party (as well as Republican women) are more likely to believe that cutting taxes and spending on government programs will spur economic growth. (See Appendix for full model results). Additionally, ideology, income, age, Southern residency, and religion also play a significant factor in explaining women’s attitudes about what best promotes economic growth.

[Figures 4a-b about here.]

That Tea Party women hold more conservative attitudes about taxes should come as little surprise given that Tea Party leaders such as Michele Bachmann (2014) often describe their movement as the “Taxed Enough Already” (T.E.A.) Party. Adhering to free market philosophy, Tea Party activists are quick to espouse taxes as wasteful and economically inefficient, often expressing profound distrust in the Internal Revenue Service.⁵⁶ While most of the Tea Party women I interviewed opposed taxes on economic

principle, several did use gendered rhetoric to explain their hostility to taxes. As my previous work has demonstrated, Mama Grizzlies sometimes voice their opposition to taxes as part of a larger motherhood theme that promotes their political activism as “kitchen table” conservatives. Similar to moms whose families have to stay within their means, these Mama Grizzlies argue that the federal government should cut its spending and stop burdening families with onerous taxes to pay for programs that they don’t support.

Some Tea Party, however, also believe women’s growing role in the economy, whether as small business owners or as their family’s breadwinners, may be leading more women to oppose taxes, especially single mothers. Whitney Neal, formerly of FreedomWorks and herself a single mother, notes that women may be looking at their family finances anew:

You do see a lot more single Moms out there right now. With the economy the way it has been, the Dad has lost his job and the Mom is out there. We see our role in the family as changing because we have women saying, ‘Whoa, wait a minute. Why does this much of my check go in taxes? What is this going toward?’⁵⁷

This theme is echoed by Republican strategist and pollster Kristin Soltis Anderson, who notes that there are lots of women who are becoming “financially self-sufficient and independent, who are starting their own businesses, even if it is something as simple as they are a stay at home Mom who is making her own fun crafts on Etzi and she is selling them online.” As a result, she believes many women are now discovering for the first time the heavy taxes and regulatory hoops placed on business owners, which provides for conservatives a “huge opportunity” with women “for a Republican message about how it

is unconscionable, the [tax] burdens we place on people who just want to do something as simply as sell a few products online.”⁵⁸

Other conservative activists note that current tax policy enforces a marriage penalty, as married couples are often taxed at a higher rate when they file jointly. In their book *Liberty is No War on Women*, the Independent Women Forum’s Carrie Lukas and Sabrina Schaffer make the case that such tax policies disproportionately hurt married women compared with single women:

Married women, for example, face some of the highest tax rates because they are often the second earner in the family, which means that the first dollar they earn is taxed at their husband’s top rate. Those high marginal tax rates discourage some married women from going to work, leaving them with less work experience, which can be a real hardship in the event of divorce or widowhood (67).⁵⁹

Moreover, they add that such higher taxes may also push women who prefer to stay at home into the workplace since “one after-tax salary isn’t enough to make ends meet.”⁶⁰

As a result, conservative women’s organizations, such as the Independent Women’s Forum, along with other conservative political groups such as the Heritage Foundation, the Family Research Council, and the CATO Institute, call for tax cuts for families, more generally, and removal of “marriage penalties” in the tax code. Phyllis Schlafly goes even further, writing in Eagle Forum.org, that political leaders should eliminate “the sections of the tax code that reward non-marriage with lower taxes” and that “family allowances and child credits should be reserved for married parents who are raising their own children.”⁶¹

While not as extreme as Schlafly’s approach, the Republican Party has begun tapping its prominent female members in Congress to co-sponsor and speak out on behalf of tax legislation specifically geared at married families with children. Writing in *The*

Washington Examiner, Republican Representatives Lynn Jenkins (R-KS) and Rep. Diane Black (R-TN) discussed why they introduced legislation that would “help parents keep more of their hard-earned money to use for the mounting expenses of parents and help save for the costs of a college education.”⁶² In the Child Tax Credit Improvement Act, these congresswomen called for expanding the current \$1,000 child tax credit by adjusting it for inflation, which has not been done since 2004, and by removing the marriage penalty embedded in the current tax credit, increasing “the income level at which the child credit begins to phase out from \$110,000 to \$150,000 for married couples—which is twice the level for single filers.”⁶³ Moreover, in July 2014, Rep. Cathy McMorris Rogers led a GOP Press Conference on the steps of the capital building to tout the Child Tax Credit Improvement Act and other bills that they argued would empower women, noting that women manage more than 80 percent of the household income and start two out of three new businesses.⁶⁴

Support for conservative economic policies does not stop at tax cuts or tax credits, however, among Tea Party women. Tea Party women, as Figure 5 demonstrates, are the group of women most likely to strongly oppose or oppose (48 percent) raising the minimum wage to \$10.00 per hour, which stands in stark contrast to the 18 percent of other American women who strongly oppose or oppose raising the minimum wage. Once again controlling for other factors in a multivariate logistic regression model,⁶⁵ Tea Party status remains a significant predictor of attitudes among American women when it comes to the minimum wage. Although it is notable that slightly more Tea Party women—50 percent—actually *avored* raising the minimum wage than opposing it nationally, their support still falls short of the nationwide average: PRRI data show that 69 percent of

Americans favor increasing the minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$10.10 per hour.⁶⁶ However, Tea Party women's mixed attitudes about the minimum wage demonstrate that there are economic arenas in which self-identified Tea Party members nationally may not march in lockstep with national Tea Party leaders or prominent conservative and/or libertarian policy experts.

[Figure 5 about here.]

Indeed, organizations such as the Cato Institute, the Heritage Foundation, and FreedomWorks strongly denounce the minimum wage as an unnecessary intrusion into the free market, which they believe does a more efficient job at setting wages. Such arguments often find their way into the language and writings of Tea Party women's organizations. For example, Smart Girl Politics features numerous blog writings about the minimum wage that draw heavily from such libertarian arguments. Brandi Frey, writing in the Smart Girl Politics blogs, maintains that that minimum wage jobs are meant to provide a stepping stone to higher paying jobs and should not be made into a career. She argues that calls for raising the minimum wage, while compassionate on their face, hurt Americans because "skilled citizens are priced out of the labor market because this rate is set by some faceless government bureaucrat and not the initial productivity of that person."⁶⁷ SGP's Elizabeth Vale cites the Congressional Budget Office's 2014 analysis of Obama's proposal to raise the federal minimum wage to \$10.10, noting that their study estimates that such a policy change would result in the loss of about 500,000 low wage jobs as business owners would be saddled with higher expenses.⁶⁸ Julie Borowski, Policy Analyst at FreedomWorks, also posted a blog piece on Smart Girl Politics, maintaining that very few people with family below the poverty line earned

wages at or below \$10.00 an hour. Instead, most individuals earning the minimum wage do not work full-time, are young and/or unskilled workers.⁶⁹ She points out that some of these workers are, in fact, “mothers that are entering the workforce for the first time to provide second income to their household,” and they would most likely be most susceptible to layoffs.

Further tying minimum wage hikes to the detriment of women, Carrie Lukas of the Independent Women’s Forum argues that efforts by Congressional Democrats to raise the minimum wage as “part of their agenda for women” are disingenuous. She writes that politicians who promote increasing the minimum wage “make it sound as if those making minimum wage are heads of households working full-time throughout their working lives to support their families. However, that’s not an accurate picture of minimum wage workers or their typical work experience.”⁷⁰ Instead, she notes that most minimum wage workers either work part time or work these jobs at entry-level, and that most are able to “climb the economic ladder” and receive pay raises so that they are earning more than the minimum wage within a year of work. Moreover, she contends that women will be especially hurt by a federal minimum wage increase, citing studies estimating that such a hike will result in job losses, particularly in the part-time sector. In *Forbes*, Lukas writes, “Women also account for nearly two-thirds (about 63 percent) of part-time workers, and part-time workers are more likely to earn the minimum wage. As the minimum wage goes up, these women may find that their part-time jobs are cut and consolidated.”⁷¹ That’s bad news for those who had sought out a part time schedule to balance their work and family responsibilities.”

Instead, free market conservatives maintain that there are better ways to address low wages and stem poverty among low-skilled women. Rachel DiCarlo Currie, a Senior Fellow at IWF, believes the government should expand the Earned Income Tax Credit, in which the government provides lower income Americans with a refundable credit on their federal income taxes if their adjusted gross income falls below a certain amount, instead of raising the minimum wage (In 2014, for example, a married couple with two children who earned less than \$49,000 were eligible for a tax credit of approximately \$5,460 according to the IRS.)⁷² Although she believes the policy is far from perfect, Currie maintains that expanding the EITC is far preferable to increasing the minimum wage, given that “the credit lifts millions of Americans above the poverty line by incentivizing them to work and then augmenting their wages.”⁷³ Moreover, Carrie Lukas argues that although they have their own drawbacks, direct aid to struggling families in the form of food stamps and Medicaid are preferable to increasing the minimum wage as they “have the virtue of doing less to distort the employment market.” Ultimately, free market conservatives believe policies that raise the costs of hiring for employers are ultimately counter productive and that creating more jobs is the ultimate solution to poverty.

Opposition to raising employers’ costs also unites conservative women against government policy that would provide paid sick and parental leave for their employees. Many progressive women’s organizations, such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), routinely note that the United States stands apart from other developed nations because it lacks such policies for workers. As a result, many American families, they contend, must “choose between their paycheck and caring for their families” in moments

of health crises.⁷⁴ NOW argues that “improving current paid sick leave and paid family leave” would disproportionately help women, “especially those who are heads of households and primary caretakers.” MomsRising.org, an online advocacy group that works to “achieve economic security for all families,” lists paid family leave as among its top policy priorities.⁷⁵ Momsrising.org maintains that paid family leave not only combats poverty, but also lowers the wage gap between women and men by “providing structural support to balance work and family.”⁷⁶ Their promotion of family-friendly policies also extends to paid sick leave, arguing that “even Super Moms can’t fight all germs!” They note that lack of sick pay has the largest impact on low-wage workers, 80 percent of whom do not currently qualify for sick leave.⁷⁷

Not surprisingly, conservative economic groups, including Smart Girl Politics and the Independent Women’s Forum, do not look kindly to such policies, instead viewing them as yet more costs to be incurred by businesses and potentially hurting women more than helping them. For instance, Sabrina Shaffer, Executive Director of the Independent Women’s Forum, writes about her opposition to the proposed FAMILY or Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act, introduced in Congress in 2014 by Democratic Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Democratic Representative Rosa DeLauro. Modeled after paid leave programs run in New Jersey and California, the FAMILY Act would create an independent trust fund funded by employee and employer contributions of 0.2 percent of wages—similar to Social Security—that would provide up to 3 months of partial paid family leave to Americans who qualify based on employment history and contribution status.⁷⁸ Deriding it as the “enemy of flexibility and workplace opportunity,” Shaffer maintains that the FAMILY Act may, in fact, lead employers less likely to hire women:

Not only would this program require its own dedicated payroll tax, and likely encourage many private companies to do away with existing leave policies, but it would also encourage businesses to avoid hiring women (particularly of childbearing age). Businesses would have good reasons to assume that such women are likely to take leave for several months' time, with no ability to negotiate partial-work arrangements that benefit both worker and employer. In the long run, women would become costlier and more difficult to employ. The result would be fewer opportunities—particularly leadership opportunities—as a result.⁷⁹

Shaffer argues that such policies are unnecessary, as many private companies are offering more generous leave packages and flexible schedules than ever before in response to the demands of working parents and to recruit and retain top professionals. Ultimately, Shaffer maintains that the best solution for women to balance work and family life is a robust economy, so that “women can look for another employer and have a greater range of employment opportunities” if they are currently unsatisfied with their current job and the benefits it allows.⁸⁰

Republican women in Congress have sought ways to legislate more workplace flexibility while remaining steadfastly opposed to paid leave policies. For instance, Representative Martha Roby, an Alabama Republican elected as part of the Tea Party wave in 2010, introduced the Working Families Flexibility Act in 2013, a bill that would allow private sector workers to receive “comp” time or paid time off instead of cash wages for overtime—a policy that is legal for public sector employees but remains restricted by federal law for the private sector according to the Fair Labor Standards Act. As Roby stated in a press release, she believes her bill would strongly appeal to women:

As a working mom, this bill is personal to me. I understand the time demands on working families, including children’s activities, caring for aging parents or even a spouse’s military deployment. It only makes sense that our laws governing the workplace catch up to the realities of today’s families. The Working Families Flexibility Act would finally offer Americans working in the private sector what

their peers in the public sector already enjoy – more freedom and more control over their time.

As reported by *USA Today*, House Republicans purchased a \$20,000 ad buy on more than one hundred websites frequented by women, such as MarthaStewart.com, to promote the bill, micro-targeting the ads so that they would be viewed by residents in various swing-districts nationally. Viewers who saw the ad were encouraged to call contact their Democratic Representatives and tell them to support the bill, hyperlinking to a petition website that tells lawmakers to “support more freedom for working moms.”⁸¹ Democrats opposed the measure, arguing that despite GOP assurances that such a policy would be purely voluntary on the part of employee, they feared as written the bill would allow employers to withhold pay for overtime work or cut workers’ hours.⁸² Moreover, the progressive organization National Partnership for Women & Families (2013) argued that the bill as written does not guarantee employees the opportunity to use comp time when they want to use it and that it incentivizes employers to give overtime hours to employees who elect comp time as opposed to overtime pay as a cost saving measure. Instead, the National Partnership advocates for increasing the minimum wage and legislation that would allow for paid sick days in addition to legislation comparable to Senator Kirstin Gillibrand’s FAMILY Act.

When it comes to national public opinion on family leave and paid sick leave, however, far more American women support these initiatives than oppose them, *including* Tea Party women and non-Tea Party Republican women. According to the 2014 PRRI American Values Survey, 69 percent of Tea Party women, 78 percent of non-TP Republican women, and a whopping 92 percent of other American women either favor or strongly favor paid sick leave (see Figure 6a). Support for paid family leave is

similarly high among all three categories of American women: 72 percent of Tea Party women, 78 percent of non-TP Republican women and 88 percent of other American women favor or strongly favor paid family leave (see Figure 6b). Regression analyses do demonstrate that Tea Party women hold distinct attitudes on paid sick leave, being significantly less likely to support the policy than other American women while controlling for other factors (see Appendix for full model results), but not when it comes to supporting paid leave. Yet strong majorities of Tea Party women nationally support both policies. Comparable to attitudes on the birth control mandate, paid leave appears to be another area in which Tea Party women do not necessarily march lock step with Republican leaders or conservative women policy wonks.

[Figures 6a-b about here.]

Lastly, Smart Girl Politics and the Independent Women's Forum, as well as most prominent Republican women, also denounce efforts geared at pay equity concerns for women, including the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which was signed by President Obama in 2009, and the Paycheck Fairness Act, which was sponsored by Democratic leaders but failed to pass the Senate in 2012 and 2014. The Ledbetter Act, which was featured prominently in the Life of Julia infographic during Obama's re-election campaign, was passed by Congressional Democrats in 2009 in response to a 2007 Supreme Court decision brought by Ledbetter, a manager at a tire plant in Alabama who sued her former employer Goodyear Tire when she learned that she had been earning far less than male managers for the same work for decades. The Supreme Court denied Ledbetter's claim that she be allowed to sue for pay discrimination because she failed to file a formal complaint with a federal agency within 180 days after her pay was

established, as mandated by the Civil Rights Act, despite the fact that Ledbetter did not learn of the pay disparity until years later.⁸³ Democrats in Congress worked to amend the law in 2009 to reset the 180-day to file a claim with each discriminatory paycheck, which was the first piece of legislation signed by President Barack Obama. Republicans in Congress largely voted against the measure, claiming that the bill does little to stem pay discrimination but instead is a boon to trial lawyers.⁸⁴

Democrats did not stop with the Ledbetter Act, however. Senator Barbara Mikulski and other Senate Democrats have sponsored the Paycheck Fairness Act for several years, which seeks to amend current federal law that bans gender-based wage discrimination. The Paycheck Fairness Act, as proposed by Senate Democrats, would close certain loopholes in the 1963 Equal Pay Act—which currently requires employers to pay women and men the same amount for the same job—by allowing workers to share information about salaries without threat of losing their jobs or other retaliation by their employers. As Mikulski (2014) stated on the Senate floor in defense of the bill before it failed passage in 2014:

The Lilly Ledbetter bill that we passed restored the law to where it was before the Supreme Court's decision. The *Paycheck Fairness Act* updates and strengthens it. It deals with the whole issue of retaliation. The Lilly Ledbetter bill did not address employers who are currently able to legally retaliate against workers who share salary information. The *Paycheck Fairness Act* would stop employers from being able to sue or punish workers for comparing their wages. It also helps restore Congressional intent, which is to change how discrimination cases are litigated. And it makes sure that employers who claim that differences in pay are based on something other than sex are dealt with.

Democratic leaders and progressive women's organizations, including MomsRising.org, the National Women's Law Center, and the National Organization of Women, support the Paycheck Fairness Act as a way to help eradicate sex discrimination and to close the

wage gap between men and women, which, according to the White House, resulted in full-time working women earning just 77 cents on average for every dollar that a full-time working man earned in 2014.⁸⁵ Again, Republican leaders and conservative organizations believe the Paycheck Fairness Act is misguided, raising the costs of doing business while doing little to eradicate the wage gap, which in their minds is greatly over-exaggerated.

Opposition to both the Lilly Ledbetter Act and the Paycheck Fairness Act by Republican women and conservative women activists does not mean that either constituency believes that sex discrimination has been wholly eradicated in the United States. In other work, I show that a majority of Tea Party women and non-Tea Party Republican women according to data from the Public Religion Research Institute agree that sex discrimination is still a problem in American society.⁸⁶ Unfortunately, PRRI has not polled nationally on the questions of support for the Lilly Ledbetter Act and the Pay Check Fairness Act. However, many Tea Party groups and Republican women take issue with legislative solutions to eradicate sex discrimination proposed by Democrats and with the very idea that a pay gap between men and women necessarily represents such discrimination.

Prominent Republican women leaders who voted against the Lilly Ledbetter Act towed the party line as to why they voted against a bill that would remove the statute of limitations to sue for back pay—namely, that the law would result in unnecessary litigation. In an interview with *Glamour* magazine, for instance, Republican Representative Cathy McMorris Rogers, while insisting that she and the GOP support equal pay for equal work, said she voted against the Ledbetter Act because it was “more

of a treasure chest for trial lawyers.”⁸⁷ Additionally, conservative women activists, including those from the Independent Women’s Forum, also opposed the measure, including Charlotte Hays, director of cultural programs at the Independent Women’s Forum. When discussing the role of women’s issues in the 2012 presidential campaign, Hays told a conservative news website, OneNewsNow.com, that “a better name for the Lilly Ledbetter Act would be the Tort Lawyers Full Employment Act.”⁸⁸ Moreover, many conservative women argue that the Ledbetter Act would do nothing to protect women against gender-based discrimination, nor does it, as IWF’s Sabrina Schaffer points out, “actually create equal pay...[i]t simply extends the 180-day statute of limitations for filing an equal-pay discrimination suit established under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.”⁸⁹ In 2014, conservative women in Texas were quick to denounce a call by Democratic gubernatorial candidate Wendy Davis for a state version of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act using similar logic. The Executive Director of the GOP in Texas, Beth Cubriel, criticized the proposal by Davis, asking in an interview with an Austin television news station, “Is it really fair to clog up the courts with litigation that you can take through another avenue and put that ahead of litigation that can only go through the state courts?” Instead, she encouraged women to become “better negotiators” in terms of salary grievances instead of “pursuing the courts for action.”⁹⁰

Tea Party women hold similar reservations about the Paycheck Fairness Act, which they believe would do little to stem pay disparities between men and women. Conservatives take issue with the proposed law’s stipulation that employers must justify wage differentials between men and women with bona fide factors such as education, training, or experience. According to Smart Girl Politics’ Elizabeth Vale “If a company

can't prove that a female employee is earning less due to one of the above three factors, the company is 'liable in a civil action'" and the bill 'authorizes the Secretary of Labor to seek additional compensatory or punitive damages in a sex discrimination action.'" ⁹¹

Vale argues that this stipulation would prove onerous to companies who would be "at the mercy of the federal government" by having to document each reason given to workers for their salaries and wages. Rachel Grezler, of the Heritage Foundation, also argues that the bill would make it more difficult for employers to pay workers according to their merit.⁹² Moreover, she contends that the law would have the perverse effect of reducing employment opportunities for women. Facing the prospect of "frivolous class-actions suits" that would effectively allow "lawyers to second-guess employers' business calculations," she contends that the Paycheck Fairness Act would "discourage business owners from selecting female job applicants, reducing women's opportunities and choices in the workplace."⁹³

Prominent Republican women in Congress argue that the Paycheck Fairness Act would not only promote unnecessary litigation, but that the legislation is simply redundant. Republican Senator Susan Collins (ME), who voted against the Paycheck Fairness Act in 2014, told *The Huffington Post* that current legislation, including the Equal Pay Act, the Civil Rights Act, and the Lilly Ledbetter Act "provide adequate protections" for women who face sex discrimination in pay. She believes the Paycheck Fairness Act would "result in excessive litigation that would impose a real burden, particularly on small businesses."⁹⁴ Kelly Ayotte, Republican Senator from New Hampshire, also voted against the bill, telling *Politico* that current legislation that bans sex discrimination should be better enforced. She also expressed concerns that the

Paycheck Fairness Act could make it more difficult for employers to pay based on merit. She added, “And obviously I think it’s self-evident that I’m for women receiving equal pay. In fact, I’d like them to be paid more.”⁹⁵

Collins, Ayotte, and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)—all of whom faced notable public scrutiny not afforded their male Republican colleagues when they voted against the 2014 Pay Equity bill—joined with Republican Senator Deb Fischer of Nebraska to offer a conservative amendment to the Paycheck Fairness Act, which was ultimately unsuccessful. While dropping the controversial bona fide business rationale language, the amendment still would have prohibited retaliation against employees who request information about or discuss their salaries. Discussing the amendment in an op-ed for *Politico*, Fischer argued that their amendment would also “reinforce employers’ obligations to fully apprise employees of their rights regarding pay discrimination.”⁹⁶ By arming women with knowledge about their rights, according to Fischer, their proposal would equip “women who might otherwise be unaware of their ability to recover lost wages.”⁹⁷ The amendment also pledged to commit existing federal grant funding to train women (and men) in underrepresented—and more lucrative—sectors of the economy that require more worker training, including manufacturing, energy, transportation and logistics, information technology, and health care.⁹⁸

Fischer’s *Politico* op-ed also calls into question the basic premise underlying pay equity proposals such as the Paycheck Fairness Act—that women’s wage gap with men is based solely on discrimination. As Fischer states,

Much has been made recently of the difference in men and women’s average salaries. I believe – and reports prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor confirm – that commonly used “wage gap” statistics don’t tell the full story. Factors including differences in occupation, education, fields of study, type of

work, hours worked and other personal choices shape career paths and earning potential. Moreover, salaries alone don't account for total compensation.

Fischer's arguments echo similar themes first raised by conservative women activists who routinely denounce federal government efforts to stem the pay gap between men and women. Prominent conservative women activists such as Christina Hoff Sommers, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, and Carrie Lukas and Sabrina Shaffer of the Independent Women's Forum, have long maintained that the wage gap is product of women's choices in terms of what they study in school, what career paths they find more appealing (and which happen to pay less), and their desire for more flexible work hours compared with men.⁹⁹ Writing in the *New York Times*, Sommers (2010) points to research showing that women are more likely to leave the workforce than men to take care of children or older parents, and thus place a higher preference on having flexible work hours, often in exchange for lower salaries. Once these factors are controlled for, Sommers says economic studies show that the pay gap between men and women narrows dramatically.

Sabrina Schaeffer, Executive Director of the Independent Women's Forum, also rejects claims by liberal feminist groups that the current wage gap is largely a product of discrimination faced by women in the work force. As Schaeffer puts it, "choices — not widespread discrimination — explain the small pay disparity between men and women. But choices are a function of a woman's freedom, not an injustice imposed on her by society."¹⁰⁰ Krista Kafer, a Senior Fellow with the IWF, also opposes the Paycheck Fairness Act, writing that the Paycheck Fairness Act is unnecessary because "women are not hapless victims but are intelligent decision-makers balancing work and life's demands."¹⁰¹ Of course, liberal feminist groups take issue with this claim by conservative

groups, arguing that women’s choices are still “fraught with inequities” given the widespread sexist stereotypes that women still face in society.¹⁰² Moreover, liberal feminist critics say that the “choice rhetoric” often employed by conservative groups tends to divert attention from “oppressive social systems and focuses on the individual, avoiding the more difficult to tackle and achieve systemic change necessary in struggles for gender equality.”¹⁰³ Nonetheless, Sabrina Schaeffer points to Pew Social Trends data from 2013 that shows that women are for more likely than men to value workplace flexibility over higher pay—70 percent to 46 percent, respectively—and that relatively few married American working mothers—just 23 percent—would work full-time if they had the choice as a way to counter liberal feminists claims that their solutions are what most women seek.¹⁰⁴ Schaeffer and other conservative women fear that legislation such as the Paycheck Fairness Act would actually limit workplace options that best meet the needs of women and their families. Writes Rachel Gretzler of the Heritage Foundation:

As a working mother, flexibility is a crucial component of my job. Sick days, doctor appointments, and snow days when school and daycare are closed all take time away from work. There are also accommodations and benefits such as teleworking, “pregnancy parking,” and paid maternity leave. The value I place on these benefits and my use of them is reflected in the paycheck I negotiated to receive. The Paycheck Fairness Act would restrict the availability of such personalized, flexible work arrangements for women and men alike.¹⁰⁵

Instead, Tea Party women believe feminists should embrace free enterprise principles, as they believe the free market is the best way to expand the opportunities and job benefits for both women *and* men. In fact, they point to studies that show that “young, childless, single urban women” now earn more than their male colleagues, mainly due to education differences as evidence that the free market will ultimately provide salaries that are fair and non-discriminatory. They also believe that a truly functioning free market, with

expanded job growth, would allow women who are underpaid to seek new jobs that would “pay them according to their worth.” Or, as GOP pollster Kristin Soltis Anderson told me, an unregulated free market would “be paying women the same as men and economic liberty would empower women more than a government program.”¹⁰⁶ At the end of the day, Tea Party women worry that legislative efforts that seek to address pay equity perpetuates the notion that women, according to Sabrina Shaffer, are a “victim class in need of special protections from government.”¹⁰⁷

Lastly, Tea Party women accuse Congressional Democrats and President Obama of backing equal pay legislation, and of harping on the pay gap between men and women, purely for political ends. The Republican National Committee issued a press release from RNC Women in April 2014, shortly before the Senate voted on the Paycheck Fairness Act, in which they described the bill as a “desperate political ploy,” claiming that the Democrats are resorting to this measure as they “don’t have other issues to run on.”¹⁰⁸ The RNC women criticized Democrats in the Senate for failing to consider “any of the 40 jobs bills the Republican House has sent them.” Elizabeth Vale, writing in the Smart Girl Politics blog, also bemoaned the Paycheck Fairness Act and other wage gap actions by President Obama as pure political propaganda, claiming that Democrats are trying to extend the “War on Women” campaign theme that they used to great effect in the 2012 election.¹⁰⁹ Vale points to an Executive Order issued by Obama on April 8, 2014 that extends the regulations proposed by the Paycheck Fairness Act to federal contractors as advancing “the narrative that President Obama had to go around the Republican-run Congress to get something done about equal pay.”¹¹⁰ In Vale’s opinion, such a move allows liberal Democrats and progressive women’s organizations to

continue the narrative that “Republicans hate women, Democrats love women – got that?”¹¹¹

In short, Tea Party and Republican women promote a series of economic policies that stand in stark contrast to policies championed by progressive women’s organizations and Democrats in Congress. While liberal women believe raising the minimum wage, providing workers with paid and sick leave, and equipping women with more legal tools to fight sex discrimination in pay would help women, particularly on the lower end of the economic spectrum, conservative women counter that such policies—while seemingly well-intentioned—actually end up being more harmful to women and limit their choices. They believe that such policies are essentially political in nature, allowing Democrats to portray Republicans and conservatives, more broadly, as hostile to women’s needs. Instead, they champion free market solutions as being best for women in the long run.

Conclusion: The Message Challenge for Tea Party Women

The qualitative and quantitative analysis shows that Tea Party women, along with their fellow Republican sisters, largely hold distinct attitudes about the scope and size of government compared with most American women. That such women hold conservative economic positions is not surprising given their affiliation with a movement and political party that promotes smaller government and free enterprise. But perhaps what is somewhat unexpected are the gendered arguments that such women make to explain why they embrace a smaller social safety net and reduced workplace regulations. Tea Party and conservative women activists reject an expansion of the welfare state, to include ObamaCare, because they believe it encourages a sexist culture of dependency

that assumes women are unable to take care of themselves. Moreover, they believe that workplace regulations such as increasing the minimum wage, providing for more generous leave policies, and making it easier for women to sue for pay discrimination will ultimately backfire against women, making women less desirable as potential hires for employers and threatening to jeopardize women's abilities to negotiate part-time work or other benefits with their employers that best suits their needs and the needs of and their families. Instead, conservative women leaders and Republican women in Congress promote tax cuts, reduced business regulations, and smaller government as they firmly believe that America is a land rich in opportunity, and that if left to her own device, any American women can succeed.

However, there are a few areas in which Tea Party women nationally do not sing the same tune as Tea Party movement leaders or prominent GOP congressional women. For instance, the national survey data from PRRI show that overwhelming majorities of Tea Party women, comparable to non-Tea Party Republican women and other American women, support businesses being required to provide paid family and sick leave. Moreover, Tea Party women are evenly split on the minimum wage—while more conservative than most American women on this issue, about half of Tea Party women believe a raise in the minimum wage is overdue. While there are much fewer differences between self-identified Tea Party members nationally and Tea Party women leaders when it comes to their attitudes about the social safety net, taxes, Americans who are poor, or ObamaCare, the fact that movement leaders have yet to fully persuade even self-identified Tea Party American women on issues such as paid leave and the minimum

wage show some of the challenges the Tea Party faces in convincing more American women that their economic positions are best for them.

How, then, will Tea Party women activists and Republican women leaders get more women to align with their views concerning the social safety net, ObamaCare, and a smaller regulatory state given that a majority of American women hold such opposing positions? Several of the activists I interviewed acknowledged that changing American women's minds about curtailing popular government programs will be difficult, such as Amy Jo Clark of Chicks on the Right. She said that it is understandable why most American women find the message of Democratic leaders, as embodied by the Life of Julia infographic, appealing, saying, "What they see is the messaging that it's all puppies and skittles and rainbows. What they don't see is their kids being broke [in the future]." ¹¹² She adds that conservatives are "sucking wind" at the messaging battle and that they need to do a better job of explaining why such programs lessen women's accountability. Robert Boland, Chief of Staff to former Minnesota Representative Michele Bachmann, told me that "advertising the conservative message is hard" and that the Left has been very successful in painting an appealing narrative for women voters: "Look at the War on Women [message] and ObamaCare. They boiled down a 2000-page piece of legislation into 3 things: no pre-existing conditions, kids being covered until they are 26, and free birth control." ¹¹³ By contrast, Boland acknowledged that the GOP does "not have a good story to sell" in part because most of their efforts have involved blocking President Obama's legislative agenda in Congress, so there are no concrete measures to point to as legislative successes. ¹¹⁴

Carrie Lukas, of the Independent Women’s Forum, also acknowledges that changing women’s minds about social welfare policies is a challenge and that attempts by conservatives in the past to promote tax law and social security reform have largely fallen on deaf ears by many women, in part because such policies are sold as a means to make individuals better off financially. She said, “There’s reams of research that shows that women are more risk averse than men...[T]hey don’t worry about being rich. They just worry that they’re safe and secure.”¹¹⁵ Similarly, GOP pollster Kristin Soltis Anderson also believes that the Right will have to walk a fine line in promoting conservative economic policies, one that focuses on pocketbook issues that hit middle class women directly rather than “the top marginal tax rate or corporate profits and the corporate tax rate.”¹¹⁶ She adds that in addressing women’s concerns, Republicans need to clearly state how their policies will make it easier for Americans to “have the time that you can pay attention to your kids and your work at the same time, so that you don’t feel that the cost of living pressures are so much that you can’t take time away from your work to be with your kids to where your tax burden is low enough, the hours you are working, your money will go further; that our health care solutions will bring the cost of health care down and here’s how.”¹¹⁷ Anderson, Lukas, and other conservative women activists concede that current conservative, free market economic messages often touted by the GOP and Tea Party leaders—which often neglect women in them—don’t tap into many women’s economic insecurities.

Lastly, several Tea Party women also worry that the message of less government will be a hard sell to many younger women. Tea Party Patriot’s Keli Carendar says that Millennials, in particular, will be hard to convince that reducing or eliminating certain

government programs, such as welfare or student loan financing, will be in their best interests. Herself a Millennial, Carender says,

I think my generation and younger have had it handed to us. We are told that we are entitled to a college education, to this free thing and that...when you have schools telling us that and the culture telling us that and our parents telling us that, I don't think it is a surprise that a lot of young people vote for free stuff over freedom, so yeah, it is a huge undertaking to see how we are going to re-install the desire and love of freedom even if it means it might make your life a little bit harder or you might have to have a little bit less of something because you are going to have to work for it instead of get it for free.¹¹⁸

Kristin Soltis Anderson agrees, adding that one challenge faced by conservative groups that often tout the linkage between economic prosperity and a strong, two-parent household is that the notion of family is rapidly changing. With people getting married later, having kids later, and living apart from their extended families, Anderson maintains that economic conservatives have to find a way to “talk about the importance of family [to economic well-being] while not sounding like they only want the nuclear family with golden retriever and 2.7 kids.”¹¹⁹

Faced with changing demographics, with an America that is increasingly populated by more diverse constituencies, including more single mothers, and with a majority of American women currently opposed to their policies, Tea Party women certainly face many challenges in promoting their message that smaller government is better for American women and their families. At the same time, however, Tea Party women may face new opportunities to advance their conservative economic beliefs given recent trends that show that women are beginning to outperform men in terms of educational and career achievement. Moreover, many economists and pundits argue that women appear poised to do better than men in many sectors of the 21st century economy.

If rising paychecks can convince women that tax cuts and conservative economic policy may better suit their needs, the Tea Party has a fighting chance of growing its movement among American women.

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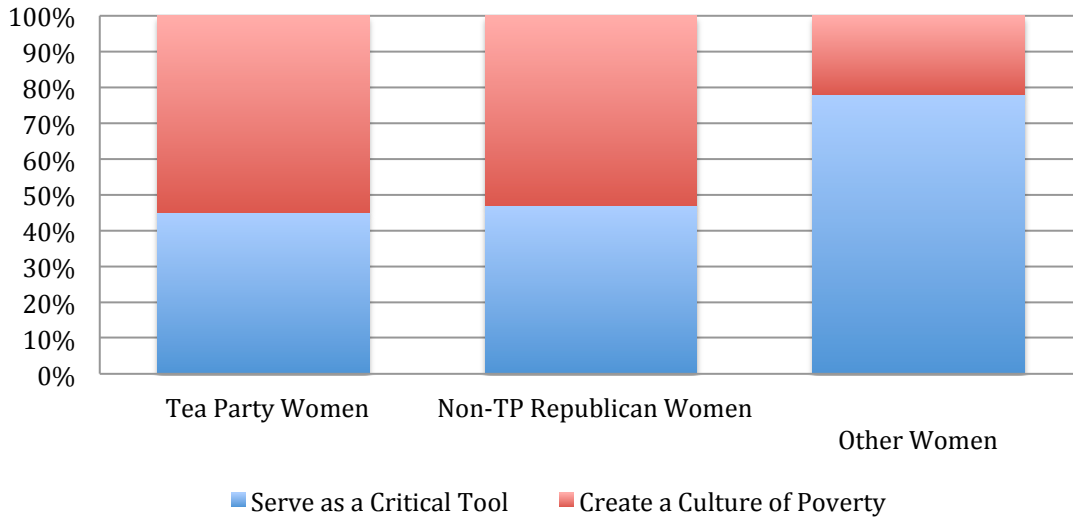
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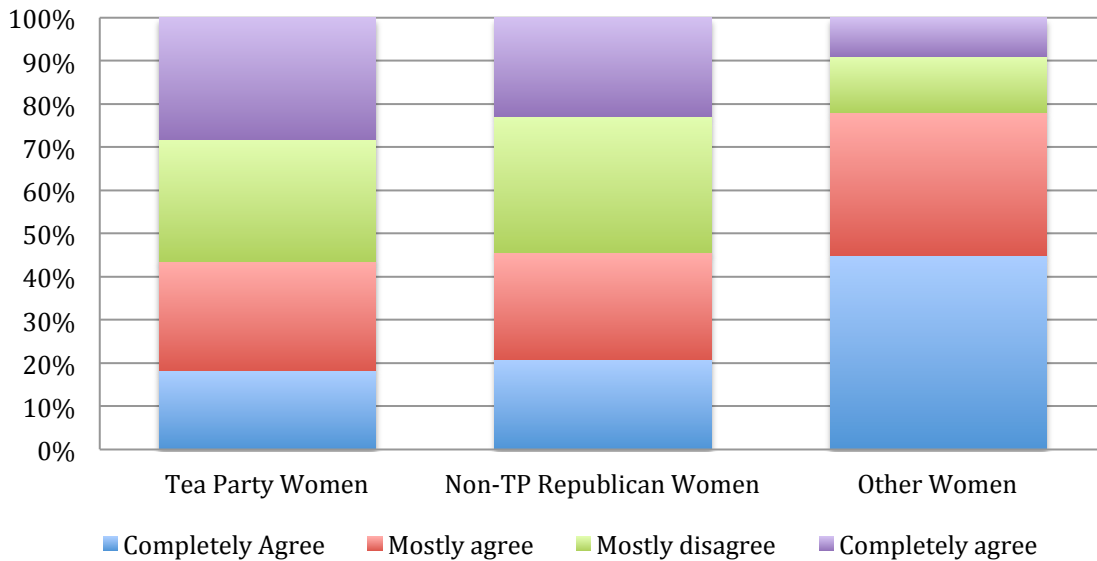
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Figure 1a
Government Policies for the Poor... by
Tea Party Status among Women



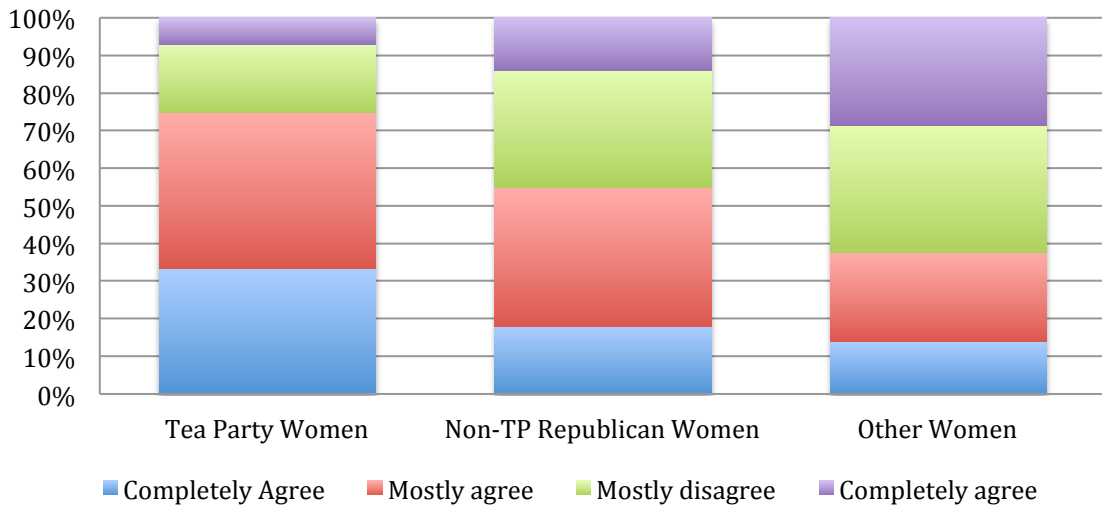
Source: 2012 Public Religion Research Institute's American Value's Survey

Figure 1b
Government Should Do More to Reduce
Gap Between Rich and Poor



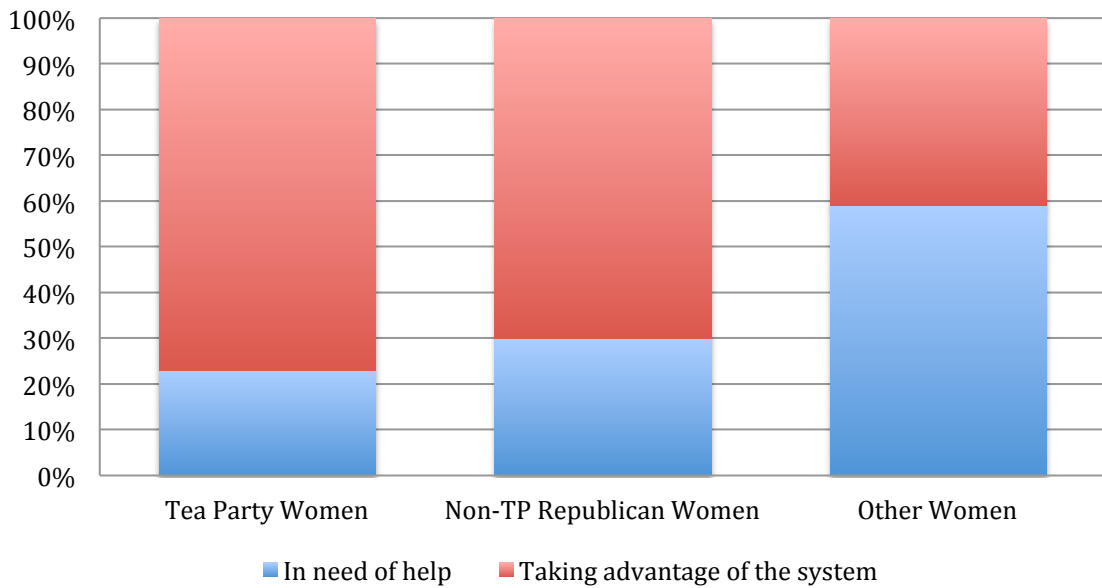
Source: 2014 Public Religion Research Institute's American Values Survey

Figure 2a
Children from all income groups have opportunities for success



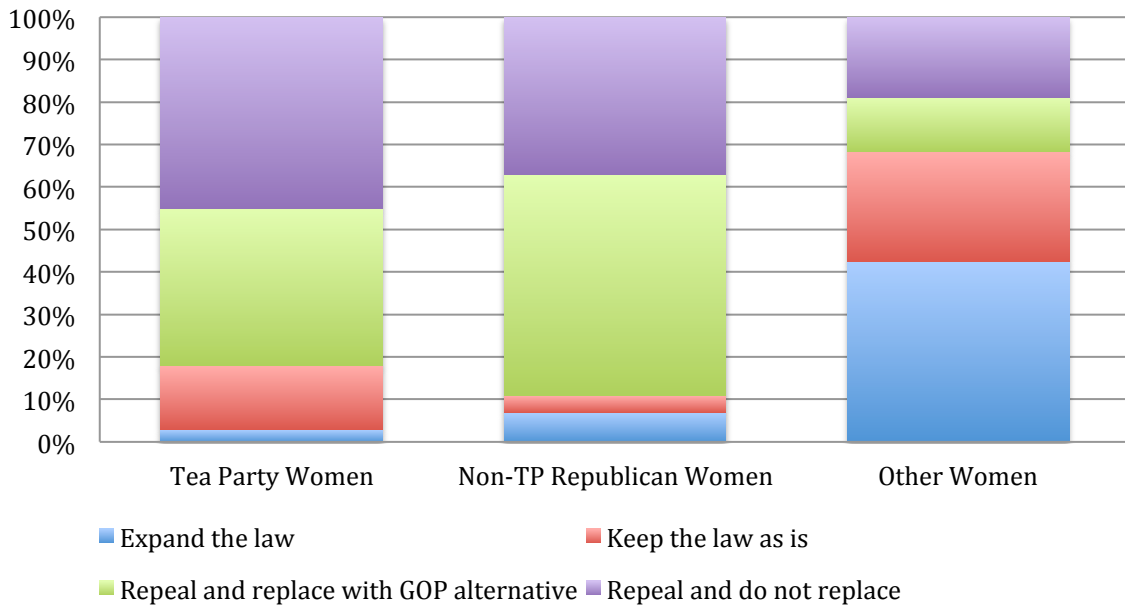
Source: 2014 Public Religion Research Institute's American Values Survey

Figure 2b
Welfare Recipients Are...



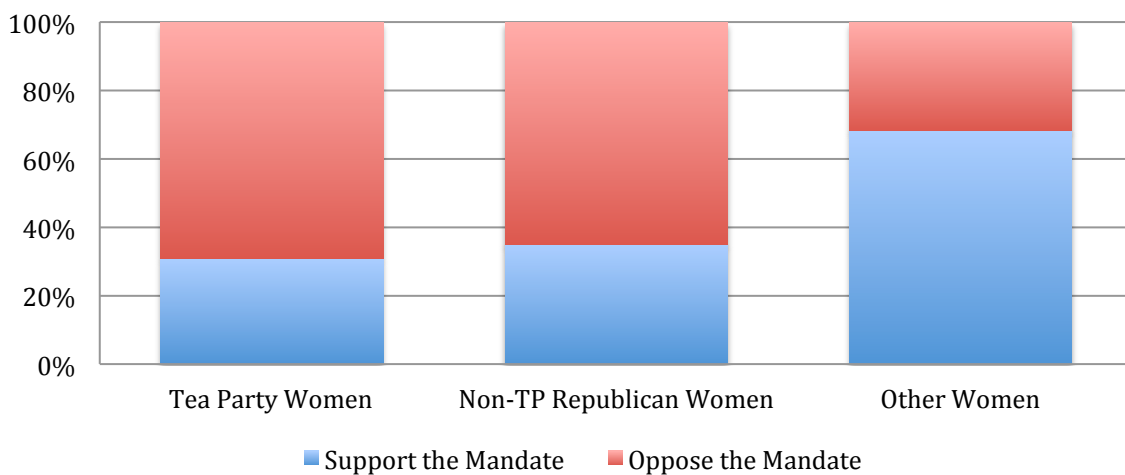
Source: 2012 Public Religion Research Institute's American Values Survey

Figure 3a
Views on ObamaCare



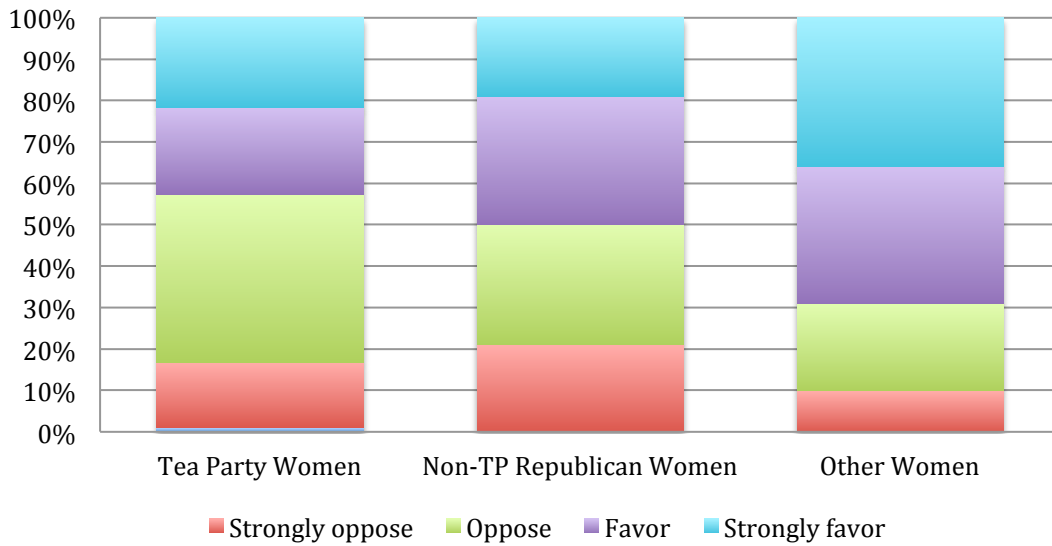
Source: 2014 Public Religion Research Institute's American Values Survey

Figure 3b
Views on Birth Control Mandate



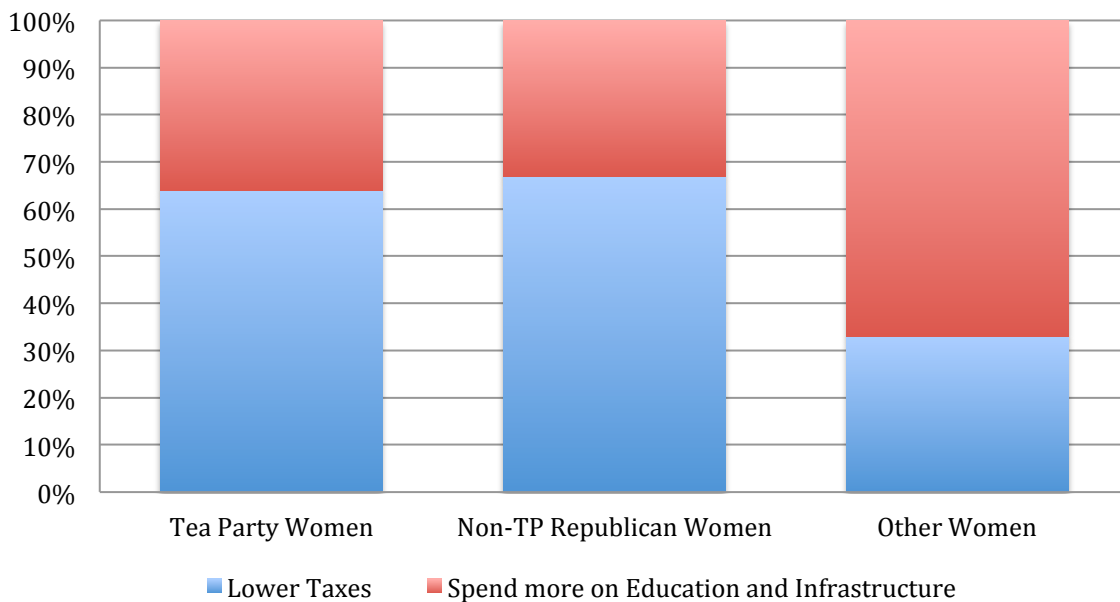
Source: 2012 Public Religion Research Institute's American Values Survey

Figure 4a
Raising Taxes on those earning \$250K or more



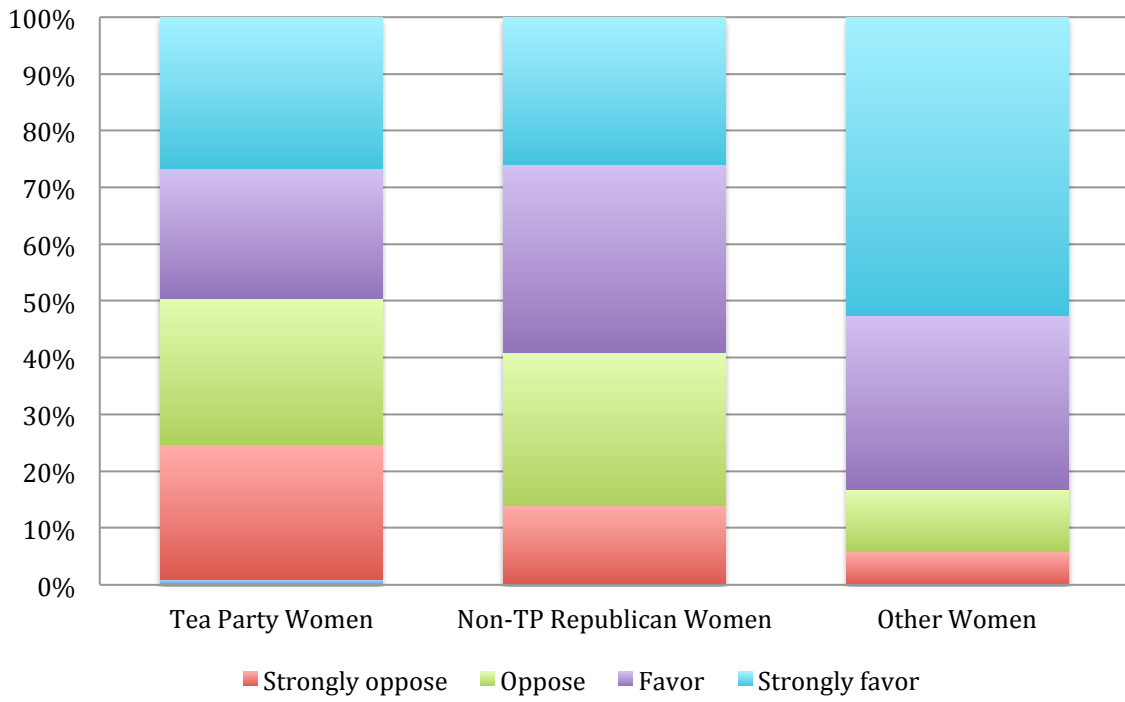
Source: 2014 Public Religion Research Institute's American Values Survey

Figure 4b
Best Way to Promote Economic Growth



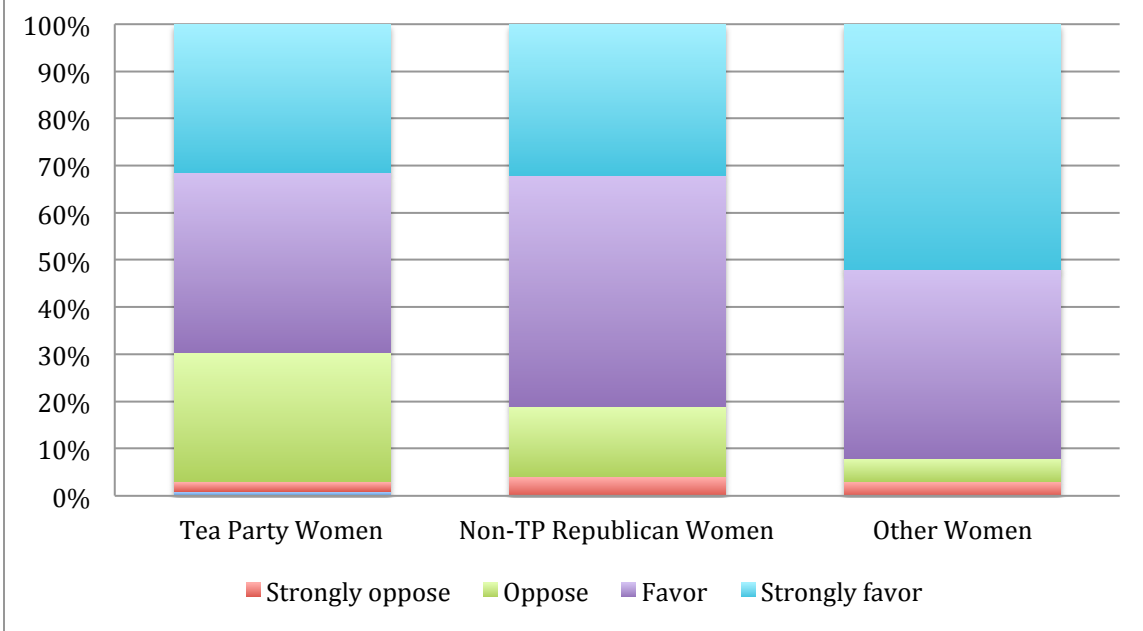
Source: 2012 Public Religion Research Institute's American Values Survey

Figure 5 Raising the Minimum Wage



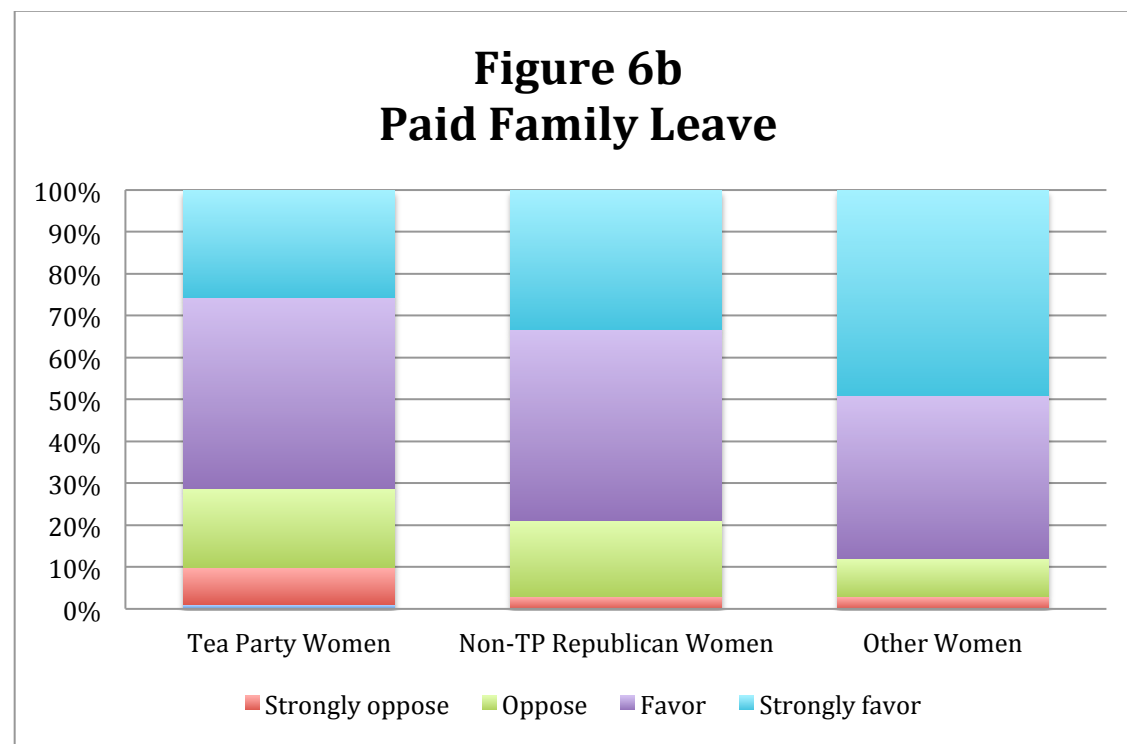
Source: 2014 Public Religion Research Institute's American Values Survey

**Figure 6a
Paid Sick Leave**



Source: 2014 Public Religion Research Institute's American Values Survey

**Figure 6b
Paid Family Leave**



Source: 2014 Public Religion Research Institute's American Values Survey

Appendix

Multivariate Analyses

The following models are a series of logistic regression analyses. The major independent variable under analysis is Tea Party status among American women (1=Tea Party member; 0=not a Tea Party member). I employ the following coding as control variables: sex (1=female; 0=male); age is continuous; education (1=high school or less; 2=some college/trade school; 3=college graduate; 4=post college); income (1=earns less than \$25,000; 2=earns between \$25,000 and \$50,000; 3=earns between \$50,001 and \$100,000; 4=earns more than \$100,000); marital status (1=married or partnered; 0=not married or partnered); parental status (1=parent of kids 18 or under; 0=not parent of kids 18 or under); South (1=lives in South; 0=does not live in South); white (1=white; 0=not white); Party: I use dummy variables with Republican (1=Republican; 0=not Republican); Democrat (1=Democrat; 0=not Democrat); and Independent is the reference category; Ideology: I use dummy variables to measure ideology in the first model with conservative (1=conservative; 0=not conservative); liberal (1=liberal; 0=not liberal); and moderate as the reference category. In subsequent models, I measure ideology as follows: 1=very conservative; 2=somewhat conservative; 3=moderate; 4=somewhat liberal; 5=very liberal; views on Obama (1=very favorable; 2=mostly favorable; 3=mostly unfavorable; 4=very unfavorable); born again Christian (1=born again Christian; 0=not born again Christian); and church attendance (1=never attends church; 2=attends church several times a year; 3=attends church monthly; 4=attends church weekly or more).

Table 1 Determinants of Support for Role of Government in Helping the Poor (logistic regressions) among American Women

Predictors	DV: Agree that Government Poverty Programs Create Culture of Dependency (N= 1008)		DV: Agree that Government Should Do More to Reduce Gap Between Rich and Poor (N=617)	
	<i>B(S.E.)</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B(S.E.)</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Tea Party Member	.622(.254)**	1.863	-.941(.403)*	.390
Republican	.670(.185)***	1.953	.663(.902)	.902
Democrat	-.957(.204)***	.384	1.714(.267)***	5.553
Ideology	.285(.095)**	1.329	-.285(.119)*	.752
Education	.081(.075)	1.084	.059(.057)	1.060
Income	.113(.056)*	1.120	-.111(.070)	.895
White	.439(.241)	1.551	-.472(.290)	.624
Age	-.003(.005)	.997	-.008(.005)	.992
Married	.348(.175)*	1.416	-.208(.204)	.812
South	.045(.164)	1.046	.049(.196)	1.050
Born Again Christian	.023(.175)	1.023	-.027(.209)	.973
Church Attendance	.017(.061)*	1.017	-.161(.104)	.851
Constant	-2.780(.529)***	.062	2.560(.626)	12.941
Pseudo R-Squared	.169		.207	
Percentage Classified Correctly	74.0%		71.3	

Data for the first model are drawn from the 2012 American Values Survey and data from the second model are 2014 American Values Survey. Cells contain binary logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.01 (2-tailed tests).

Table 2 Determinants of Support for Role of Government in Helping the Poor (logistic regressions) among American Women

Predictors	DV: Agree that Children from All Income Groups Have Opportunity to be Successful (N=1259)		DV: Agree that Most People on Welfare Take Advantage of the System (N=946)	
	<i>B(S.E.)</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B(S.E.)</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Tea Party Member	1.074(.263)***	2.927	.663(.284)*	1.940
Republican	.358(.161)*	1.431	.704(.208)***	2.022
Democrat	-.327(.150)*	.721	-.943(.175)***	.389
Ideology	.121(.071) ^a	1.128	.282(.088)***	1.326
Education	-.184(.037)***	.832	-.425(.075)***	.654
Income	.029(.044)	1.030	-.425(.075)***	1.108
White	0.164(.163)	.849	.002(.004)	1.002
Age	.014(.003)***	1.014	-.002(.004)	.998
Married	.209(.131)	1.232	-.005(.165)	.995
South	.009(.124)	.939	.369(.159)*	1.446
Born Again Christian	.344(.130)**	1.411	-.327(.169) ^a	.721
Church Attendance	-.032(.064)	.969	-.120(.058)*	.887
Constant	-.609(.371)	.544	.962(.499)*	2.317
Pseudo R-Squared	.097		.180	
Percentage Classified Correctly	61.4%		69.0%	

Data for the first model come from the 2014 American Values Survey. Data for the second model come from the 2012 American Values Survey. Cells contain binary logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.01; a=p<.10 (2-tailed tests).

Table 3 Determinants of Support for Obamacare and the Birth Control mandate (logistic regressions) among American Women

Predictors	DV: Agree that Obamacare Should be Repealed or Replaced (N=638)		DV: Support the Birth Control Mandate (N=483)	
	<i>B(S.E.)</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B(S.E.)</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Tea Party Member	1.383(.433)***	3.988	-.220(.350)	.803
Republican	1.545(.262)***	4.689	-.394(.264)	.674
Democrat	-1.344(.247)***	.261	.780(.285)**	2.182
Ideology	.210(.115) ^a	1.234	-.501(.145)***	.606
Education	-.134(.063)*	.875	-.224(.109)*	.799
Income	-.075(.073)	.928	-.072(.079)	.931
White	.930(.285)***	2.535	-.483(.328)	.617
Age	-.002(.005)	.998	-.204(.007)***	.976
Married	.201(.221)	1.222	-.100(.246)	.905
South	.402(.207) ^a	1.494	.415(.240) ^a	1.514
Born Again Christian	.449(.211)*	1.567	.251(.260)	1.285
Church Attendance	-.075(.107)	.928	-.238(.092)**	.788
Constant	-1.062(.593)	.346	5.380(.815)***	216.942
Pseudo R-Squared	.325		.209	
Percentage Classified Correctly	76.7		75.8	

Data for the first model come from the 2014 American Values Survey. Data for the second model come from the 2012 American Values Survey. Cells contain binary logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.01; a=p<.10 (2-tailed tests).

Table 4 Determinants of Opposition to Tax Hikes and Support for Tax and Spending Cuts to Spur Economic Growth (logistic regressions) among American Women

Predictors	DV: Oppose Raising Taxes on those earning more than \$250,000 (N=634)		DV: Believe Cutting Taxes and Government Spending Will Spur Economic Growth (N=1221)	
	<i>B(S.E.)</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B(S.E.)</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Tea Party Member	-.779(.373)*	.459	.537(.262)*	1.711
Republican	-.439(.229)*	.632	.618(.165)***	1.856
Democrat	.863(.228)***	2.371	-.967(.158)***	.380
Ideology	-.361(.107)***	.697	.246(.074)***	1.279
Education	.065(.062)	1.067	-.072(.039) ^a	.930
Income	-.047(.064)	.954	.114(.047)*	1.120
White	.780(.242)***	.001	-.098(.171)	.907
Age	.008(.005) ^a	1.008	.012(.004)***	1.012
Married	.024(.188)	1.024	-.031(.137)	.970
South	-.164(.179)	.848	.296(.130)*	1.344
Born Again Christian	.050(.192)	1.052	.304(.136)*	1.356
Church Attendance	-.140(.095)	.869	.073(.068)	1.076
Constant	.714(.553)	2.042	-1.797(.394)***	.166
Pseudo R-Squared	.125		.159	
Percentage Classified Correctly	64.7%		67.9%	

Data for both models are drawn from the 2014 American Values Survey. Cells contain binary logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.01; a=p<.10 (2-tailed tests).

Table 5 Determinants of Opposition to Raising the Minimum Wage (Logistic Regression) Among American Women

Predictors	DV: Support Raising the Minimum Wage (N=638)	
	<i>B(S.E.)</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Tea Party Member	-1.131(.343)***	.323
Republican	- .850(.241)***	.427
Democrat	.604(.275)*	1.829
Ideology	- .271(.122)*	.763
Education	- .020(.062)	.980
Income	- .054(.072)	.948
White	- .440(.310)	.644
Age	- .013(.005)*	.987
Married	.240(.223)	1.271
South	.179(.207)	1.196
Born Again Christian	- .174(.212)	.840
Church Attendance	- .066(.109)	.543
Constant	3.480(.644)	32.447
Pseudo R-Squared	.150	
Percentage Classified Correctly	75.8%	

Data are drawn from the 2014 American Values Survey. Cells contain binary logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05; a=p<.10 (2-tailed tests).

Table 6 Determinants of Support for Paid Sick and Family (logistic regressions) among American Women

Predictors	DV: Support Paid Sick Leave (N=634)		DV: Support Paid Family Leave (N=638)	
	<i>B(S.E.)</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	<i>B(S.E.)</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>
Tea Party Member	-1.429(.384)***	.240	-.428(.377)	.652
Republican	-.444(.305)	.641	-.482(.281) ^a	.618
Democrat	.637(.338) ^a	1.891	.303(.295)	1.354
Ideology	-.318(.155)*	.727	-.078(.133)	.925
Education	.007(.072)	1.007	-.026(.069)	.975
Income	-.174(.083)*	.840	.096(.085)	1.101
White	.502(.349)	1.653	.155(.321)	1.122
Age	-.014(.007)*	.986	-.029(.006)***	.971
Married	.423(.264)	1.527	.198(.243)	.451
South	.737(.263)**	2.090	-.433(.224) ^a	.662
Born Again Christian	.465(.263) ^a	1.527	-.006(.239)	.994
Church Attendance	.080(.128)	1.083	.161(.117)	1.174
Constant	2.727(.807)	15.293	2.788(.691)	16.247
Pseudo R-Squared	.097		.069	
Percentage Classified Correctly	85.7%		82.7%	

Data for both models are drawn from the 2014 American Values Survey. Cells contain binary logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.01; a=p<.10 (2-tailed tests).

¹See Tumulty (2008) and Elder and Greene (2012).

²See Weiner (2012).

³Commentators on the left were also critical of the infographic. As cultural critic Jill Lepore (2012) wrote in *The New Yorker*, the Life of Julia “borrows its aesthetic from *USA Today* and its narrative logic from Chutes and Ladders,” and is “a bad place to start a campaign.”

⁴See Malkin (2012).

⁵See Hawley (2012).

⁶In making this point, Tami Nantz links to a book by Deneen Borelli, an African American woman who is the author of *Blacklash: How Obama and the Left are Driving Americans to the Government Plantation*. Black conservative critics such as Borelli (2012) make the argument that government social safety net programs have been detrimental to the black community and take “old school black leaders” to task for perpetuating “a message of victimization among their black constituents (7).” Borelli continues, “We don’t need to live on the government plantation. We don’t need government handouts—in fact they’re bad for us. Remember one thing: there is nothing free about free money. Handouts engender dependency. They create and entrench poverty, not fix it. It doesn’t matter if you are a black or white president creating entitlement programs to attract voters, it is bad policy” (7-8). In this way, their criticisms echo what many Tea Party women say about women’s relationship to the federal government.

⁷See Deckman (2013).

⁸See Morello (2013).

⁹For more on progressive organization’s views on these issues, see Human Rights Watch (2011); Center for American Progress(2014); the National Organization of Women (2014); and the Shriver Report (2014).

¹⁰See National Women’s Law Center (2013).

¹¹See DeSilver (2013)

¹²For more on the gender gap, and how attitudes about the social safety net drive it, see Howell and Day (2000); Kaufmann (2002); Manza and Brooks (1998); and Kaufmann and Petrocik (1999).

¹³See Elshtain (1981); Sapiro (1983); and Ruddick (1989).

¹⁴See Carroll (2006).

¹⁵See Howell and Day (2000).

¹⁶See Gault and Sabini (2000); Toussaint and Webb (2005); and Croson and Gneezy (2005).

¹⁷The 2012 American Values Survey is a random, national telephone survey conducted in English and Spanish of respondents who were 18 or older conducted between September 13, 2012 and September 30, 2012 (1,201 respondents were interviewed on a cell phone; total sample size is 3,003). The margin of error for the American Values Survey it is +/- 2.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. For more specific details about the weighting scheme, see Public Religion Research Institute, “The 2012 American Values Survey,” <http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/AVS-2012-Pre-election-Report-for-Web.pdf/>; The 2014

American Values Survey is a random, national telephone survey conducted in English and Spanish of respondents who were 18 or older conducted between July 21, 2014 and August 15, 2014 (2, 253 respondents were interviewed on a cell phone; total sample size is 4,507). The margin of error for the 2014 American Values survey is +/- 1.8 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. For more specific details about the weighting scheme, see Public Religion Research Institute, “Economic Insecurity, Rising Inequality, and Doubts about the Future: Findings from the 2014 American Values Survey,” <http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/PRRI-AVS-with-Transparency-Edits.pdf>

¹⁸ In all analyses, Tea Party women are defined by their response to this question: “Do you consider yourself a Tea Party member?” Those who answer yes are coded as part of the Tea Party while those who say no or don’t know are coded as not part of the Tea Party. I code women who identify as Republican but who do NOT consider themselves as part of the Tea Party as Non-Tea Party Republican Women. Lastly, “other women” refer to women who do not identify as either part of the Tea Party or as Republicans.

¹⁹ I use dummy variables for party affiliation in the controls for the models: Republicans and Democrats with Independents (including independents who lean Republican or Democratic as well as the relatively few respondents who identify as “other”) as the reference category. The appendix contains full details about the variables included in the analysis. In the 2012 American Values Survey, 9 percent of American women identify as part of the Tea Party (N=149); 20 percent of American identify as Republicans but NOT as part of the Tea Party (N=323); and 70 percent of American women identify as Democratic, Independent or not political AND not part of the Tea Party (N=1112). In the 2014 American Values Survey, 7 percent of American women identify as part of the Tea Party (N=139); 23 percent of American identify as Republicans but NOT as part of the Tea Party (N=465); and 71 percent of American women identify as Democratic, Independent or not political AND not part of the Tea Party (N=1448).

²⁰ Author Interview with Amy Jo Clark (by phone). June 21, 2013.

²¹ I use pseudonyms for local activists; the pseudonyms, when they first appear, are italicized.

²² Author Interview with *Jennifer Jacobs*. Annapolis, MD. November 8, 2012.

²³ Author Interview with Gabriella Hoffman. Arlington, VA. June 24, 2013.

²⁴ Author Interview with *Elizabeth Reynolds*. Chevy Chase, MD. February 26, 2013.

²⁵ Here is the text of Romney’s full quote: “There are 47 percent of the people who will vote for the president no matter what. All right, there are 47 percent who are with him, who are dependent upon government, who believe they are victims, who believe that government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you name it. That’s an entitlement. And the government should give it to them.... These are people who pay no income tax. Forty-seven percent of Americans pay no income tax. So our message of low taxes doesn’t connect. And he’ll be out there talking about tax cuts for the rich. I mean that’s what they sell every four years. And so my job is not to worry about those people—I’ll never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.” (Quoted in Berman 2013).

²⁶ Author Interview with Janice Shaw Crouse. Laurel, MD, July 23, 2013.

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- ²⁷ Author Interview with Colleen Holcomb. Washington, DC, April 30, 2013.
- ²⁸ Author Interview with Carrie Lukas (by phone). June 18, 2013.
- ²⁹ See Jessup (2012).
- ³⁰ See Loesch (2012).
- ³¹ For a summary of its major provisions, see the Kaiser Family Foundation, “Summary of the Affordable Care Act.” <http://kff.org/health-reform/fact-sheet/summary-of-the-affordable-care-act/>.
- ³² The Supreme Court struck down the requirement that states expand their Medicaid programs or face the penalty of losing their current Medicaid funding. However, it upheld the constitutionality of the individual mandate component of the Affordable Care Act, citing it as an exercise of Congress’s taxing power. See *National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius* (2012).
- ³³ For a summary about the specifics of the birth control mandate, see Kliff (2012).
- ³⁴ Author Interview with Janice Shaw Crouse. Laurel, MD, July 23, 2013.
- ³⁵ Quoted in Nantz (2011).
- ³⁶ See Crouse (2010).
- ³⁷ See House Republicans (2014a).
- ³⁸ See Crouse (2010).
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ See Young (2011).
- ⁴¹ See Lukas (2014).
- ⁴² See Heath (2013).
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ See Ponnuru and Lukas (2014).
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Author Interview with Colleen Holcomb. Washington DC. April 30, 2013.
- ⁴⁷ See Schlafly (2012b).
- ⁴⁸ See Heath (2013).
- ⁴⁹ See Bjorklin (2012).
- ⁵⁰ See Zurita (2013).
- ⁵¹ See Schlafly (2012b).
- ⁵² Author Interview with Tami Nantz. National Harbor, MD. March 14, 2013.
- ⁵³ Author Interview with Stacy Mott (by phone). February 23, 2013.
- ⁵⁴ Data are not reported graphically.
- ⁵⁵ Those respondents who strongly or mostly oppose raising taxes on those earning more than \$250,000 or more annually are collapsed into one category (coded=1) while those who are strongly or mostly in favor of raising taxes are coded into the other category (coded=0).
- ⁵⁶ See, Meckler and Martin (2012).
- ⁵⁷ Author Interview with Whitney Neal. July 11, 2013.
- ⁵⁸ Author, Interview with Kristin Soltis Anderson. Washington DC. June 23, 2013.
- ⁵⁹ See Lukas and Schaeffer (2012).
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ⁶¹ See Schlafly (2012a).
- ⁶² See Jenkins and Black (2014).

⁶³ The Child Tax Credit Improvement Act was opposed by Democrats, who argued that the new measure failed to extend part of the child credit that was passed in 2009 to help impoverished parents who earn as low as \$3000 annually to claim some of the break on their taxes. As proposed by House Republicans, individuals earning less than \$15,000 annually would not qualify for the credit. Many Democrats also argued that many military families would no longer qualify for the tax credit as written. Although the bill passed, largely along party lines, in the U.S. House in 2014, the bill was never introduced in the Senate (See McAuliff 2014).

⁶⁴ See House Republicans (2014b).

⁶⁵ Those who strongly oppose or oppose raising the minimum wage are coded 1; those who strongly favor or favor raising the minimum wage are coded 0.

⁶⁶ See Jones, Cox, and Navarro-Rivera (2014).

⁶⁷ See Frey (2013).

⁶⁸ See Vale (2014a).

⁶⁹ See Borowski (2013).

⁷⁰ See Lukas (2014).

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² See IRS (2014).

⁷³ See Currie (2014)..

⁷⁴ See National Organization for Women (2014).

⁷⁵ See Blades and Rowe-Finkbeiner (2006)..

⁷⁶ See Moms Rising.Org. (2006).

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ See Gillibrand (2014).

⁷⁹ See Schaffer (2014): 78.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 80.

⁸¹ See Davis (2013).

⁸² See Zornick (2013).

⁸³ See Greenhouse (2007) for a summary of the decision.

⁸⁴ See National Women's Law Center (2013).

⁸⁵ See Whitehouse.gov (2014).

⁸⁶ See Deckman (2014).

⁸⁷ Quoted in Lieve (2014).

⁸⁸ Quoted in Woodward (2012).

⁸⁹ See Shaffer (2014).

⁹⁰ Quoted in Bassett (2014).

⁹¹ See Vale (2014b).

⁹² See Gretzler (2014).

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Bendery (2012).

⁹⁵ Quoted in Everett (2014).

⁹⁶ See Fischer (2014b).

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ See Fischer (2014a).

⁹⁹ See Lukas and Shaffer (2012).

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- ¹⁰⁰ See Sommers (2010).
¹⁰¹ See Kafer (2014).
¹⁰² See AAUW (2006): 3
¹⁰³ See McCarver (2011): 22.
¹⁰⁴ See Shaffer (2014).
¹⁰⁵ See Gretzler (2014).
¹⁰⁶ Author Interview with Kristin Soltis Anderson. Washington DC. June 23, 2013.
¹⁰⁷ See Shaffer (2014).
¹⁰⁸ See Republican National Committee (2014).
¹⁰⁹ See Deckman and McTague (2014).
¹¹⁰ See Vale (2014a).
¹¹¹ Ibid.
¹¹² Author Interview with Amy Jo Clark (by phone). June 21, 2013.
¹¹³ Author Interview with Robert Boland, Washington, DC. June 23, 2014.
¹¹⁴ Ibid.
¹¹⁵ Author Interview with Carrie Lukas (by phone). June 18, 2013.
¹¹⁶ Author Interview with Kristin Soltis Anderson, Washington, DC. May 20, 2013.
¹¹⁷ Ibid.
¹¹⁸ Author Interview with Keli Carender (by phone). April 1, 2013.
¹¹⁹ Author Interview with Kristin Soltis Anderson, Washington, DC. May 20, 2013.