

What Women Want 2012 Town Meeting FINAL REPORT

Cincinnati, OH | September 29, 2012

On September 29, nearly 150 women from around the Cincinnati area came together at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center for the YWCA USA "What Women Want" 2012 Town Meeting. Participants at the Town Meeting spent the day discussing issues of greatest concern to women, with the goal of creating a visible, national, and civic platform for dialogue leading into the 2012 elections. Ultimately, the YWCA hopes that the Town Meeting will inform active debate, and inspire more women to vote in November. Throughout the day, participants discussed four policy areas of concern to women: 1) *the Jobs Crisis*, 2) *Health Care Reform*, 3) *National Debt*, and 4) *Racial Justice and Voter Rights*. Participants also had the opportunity to hear about the results of "What Women Want 2012: A YWCA USA National Survey," for a better understanding of what women around the country selected as the most important issues. The day ended with a Candidates Forum featuring representatives from the two candidates in Ohio's Senate race: Senator Sherrod Brown and State Treasurer Josh Mandel.



Top: Gloria Lau and Charlene Ventura open up the What Women Want 2012 Town Meeting

Throughout the meeting, participants used keypad polling to register their views and engaged in facilitated group discussions. The Town Meeting utilized methodology from *AmericaSpeaks*, a nonprofit, non-partisan organization that engages citizens in the public decision-making that affects their lives. Data and results below are the opinions and suggestions provided by the women at the meeting.

Who Attended "What Women Want?"

Age		Household Income	
18 to 24	08%	Under \$24,999	28%
25 to 34	15%	\$25,000 to \$49,999	20%
35 to 44	11%	\$50,000 to \$74,999	16%
45 to 54	20%	\$75,000 to \$99,999	12%
55 to 64	25%	\$100,000 or more	24%
65 and better	20%		
Race/Ethnicity		How far did you travel to the meeting?	
African American/Black	35%	10 Miles or Less	61%
American Indian	00%	10-30 miles	23%
Asian American	03%	30-50 miles	01%
Caucasian/White	48%	50-75 miles	00%
Latino/Hispanic	05%	75 miles or More	15%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	00%		
Other	01%		
Two or more races	08%		

How do you describe your political viewpoint?

Democrat	73%
Lean Democrat	09%
Moderate	01%
Lean Republican	01%
Republican	08%
Independent	09%
Other	00%

How satisfied are you with the tone and quality of political discussions in our country today?

Very satisfied	06%
Satisfied	06%
Neutral	12%
Dissatisfied	31%
Very Dissatisfied	45%

What is the one thing you most want for the next generation of women?

- 1) Women have equal access to employment and equal pay
 - o "Equality for women so that everyone has opportunity"
 - o More opportunities to non-traditional jobs
- 2) That all women have an expectation of and access to quality education
- 3) Many more women as elective officials: "A woman as President"
- 4) Empowering women – more mentoring and peer support; women helping women
- 5) Access to affordable health care (i.e., maternity care, reproductive services, senior care, children)
- 6) Access to affordable housing and sustainability.



YWCA USA CEO
Dara Richardson-
Heron, M.D.

JOBS CRISIS: What do you like about the six potential policies to address the jobs crisis?

- Student loan repayment, via subsidizing the cost or volunteering
- Equal pay for equal work ("If there is not a bill passed there will never be equal pay")
- Invest in early childhood education ("Give a good start to children")
- Accessible, affordable education/job training for all ages
- Modernize and pass Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
- Collaboration between private and government sectors to save jobs
- Infrastructure investments = more jobs while building communities
- "Keep jobs at home in the U.S."
- Create job training programs that meet the needs of specific industry demands, i.e. construction
- Tax cuts for small businesses
- Invest in public sector and public safety jobs

What would you like policymakers to do in the next four years to address the jobs crisis?

- Improve education curriculum & adequately fund quality public schools from Pre-K thru high school
- "Remove tax cuts for companies that send jobs overseas"
- Provide improved rehab services for post-incarceration and reduce barriers to employment for ex-offenders
- Extend student loan deferment time period past 36 months
- Training for "non-traditional" jobs (i.e., construction)
- Reduce investment in foreign aid and focus efforts/resources domestically

Which of these actions has the greatest potential for positively impacting the jobs crisis during the next four years?

- 1) **Pass the American Jobs Act in Congress to stimulate job creation (50%)**
- 2) Pass initiatives to stimulate business growth and investment (18%)
- 3) Renew the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) (24%)
- 4) Enact legislation to promote student loan forgiveness (14%)
- 5) Invest in early childhood education programs (28%)
- 6) **Ensure women receive equal pay for comparable work (47%)**

New Ideas for Job Crisis Policies

- 1) **Improve education curriculum & adequately fund quality public schools (Pre-K - high school) (57%)**
- 2) **"Remove tax cuts for companies that send jobs overseas" (38%)**
- 3) Provide improved rehab services for post-incarceration and reduce barriers to employment for ex-offenders (28%)
- 4) Extend student loan deferment time period past age 36 (15%)
- 5) Training for non-traditional jobs (i.e., construction) (20%)
- 6) Reduce investment in foreign aid and focus efforts / resources domestically (21%)

HEALTH CARE REFORM: What do you LIKE most about the Affordable Care Act (ACA)?

- Coverage of children until age 26 (14%)
- Focus on preventative care (mammograms, health screenings, check-ups) (27%)
- **Accessible, universal health care for all, particularly the uninsured (39%)**
- Focused on needs of women such as reproductive care, children's health care (13%)
- **Coverage for pre-existing conditions (47%)**
- Removal of gender bias, such as higher premiums for women (14%)
- Saves lives, money by addressing health issues before they are life threatening (29%)

What is your greatest CONCERN about the ACA?

- Service discrimination based on insurance type (18%)
- High overall cost burden for the country (17%)
- "Who is managing, who is paying for it and how will it be funded?" (21%)
- **Fear ACA will be repealed (42%)**
- Uncertainty about how ACA impacts individuals (7%)
- Mistrust of government involvement in healthcare (18%)
- Concern about the penalties for opting out (7%)
- "It's really confusing" (11%)
- **Dental & vision are not covered under employer-based health care (39%)**

What do you WISH had been included in the ACA?

- Expanded coverage for contraceptives/reproductive services (10%)
- Special provision for single parent/dependent coverage (14%)
- Provision for dental and vision (30%)
- **Comprehensive programs for addiction/mental healthcare (36%)**
- Regular cost of insurance premiums (24%)
- Provide incentives for wellness programs (19%)
- Regulations for health-care costs (17%)
- **Move toward public option or single payer system (31%)**



NATIONAL DEBT: What do you LIKE about the 6 potential policies to reduce the national debt?*

- Maintain safety net: *"It's imperative and humane"*
- Reduce defense spending: *"Utilize diplomacy, not might"*
- Maintain tax cuts for those earning below \$200/\$250,000 per year
- Tax people making \$200/\$250,000 at a higher rate
- Maintaining the current age for full social security benefits
- Raise the age for full social security benefits
- Do not cut benefits for vets, ensure safety net for military families
- *"Don't think we can cut our way out of this"*

*Some of the participants had varying viewpoints, which is why some of the themes may look competing

Which options would you most like to see included in legislation aimed at reducing the national debt?

- Extend all 2001 and 2003 tax cuts for everyone (14%)
- **Retain tax cuts for the initial \$200,000/\$250,000 earnings for everyone. (64%)**
- Reform Social Security by raising the full benefits to 69 years of age, limit benefits, and increase Payroll taxes. (13%)
- **Reduce defense spending (48%)**
- Maintain Pentagon programs, and do not cut provisions that assist veterans, service members and their families. (14%)
- Maintain safety-net programs and income support programs (39%)

New Ideas for Job Crisis Policies

- **Reform the tax code so there are not so many loopholes (i.e., overseas sheltering, limit tax credits) (52%)**
- **"Invest in jobs; when people work, they pay more taxes" (37%)**
- Encourage increased exports, decreased imports of goods (bring companies back to the U.S. (i.e., manufacturing jobs)) (29%)
- Strengthen the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to increase tax revenue (12%)
- *"Stop looking at social services as way to balance budget"* (25%)
- *"Accountability, stick to the budget"* (i.e., manage better, reduce fraud, streamline – eliminate duplication) (24%)

RACIAL JUSTICE

- POTENTIAL OPTION: Pass federal legislation to specifically address hate crimes
- POTENTIAL OPTION: Pass federal legislation to address the use and ineffectiveness of racial and religious profiling by law enforcement and government agencies when assessing, investigating, and prosecuting crimes

What would you like policymakers to do in the next four years to address hate crim

Examples of new ideas:

- Build community awareness around hate crimes
- Crime is crime; all should be punished equitably
- Provide education in schools on racial justice for all ages
- Highlight/promote positive interactions among people of different races
- Publicly model civility
- Expand definition of hate crimes to include bullying



VOTER RIGHTS

- POTENTIAL OPTION: Pass federal legislation that enables stricter voter ID laws in states in order to ensure that all ballots cast are legitimate

What would you like policymakers to do in the next four years to ensure voting rights are upheld?

Examples of new ideas:

- Consistent voting processes nationally vs. different state rules
- Easier access to birth certificates via a National Registry to expedite voter identification
- *"Alleged voter fraud is a smokescreen for voter suppression"*
- Review the Electoral College process
- *"Better support culture of voting"* (i.e., make Election Day a holiday...)

PERSONAL COMMITMENTS

What actions will you take to ensure policymakers know and act on “What Women Want”?

- “I will tell more women about what I've learned today and spread the word”
- Reach out to candidates more-get to know them and inform them of my thoughts
- Attend meetings like these and other community meetings (city council meetings)
- Volunteer at phone banks and help reach out to potential voters
- Vote!
- Talk to family, friends, employers, and young people
- “Keep the Human Touch” –create and continue the sense of community

How strongly do you feel that whoever is elected should be held accountable on these issues in 2013?

Very Strongly	70%
Strongly	23%
Neutral	06%
Not Strongly	00%
Not Very Strongly	00%

How optimistic are you that some of these potential policies will be addressed in the next year?

Very Optimistic	12%
Somewhat Optimistic	55%
Neutral	07%
Somewhat Pessimistic	23%
Very Pessimistic	03%

Did you learn anything new today?

I didn't learn anything new	00%
I learned a few new things	25%
I learned quite a bit	38%
I learned a lot	25%
I'm brimming with new knowledge and understanding!	13%

What is your level of satisfaction with the town meeting?

Very Low	00%
Low	03%
Medium	11%
High	39%
Very High	46%

What is your level of satisfaction with the use of technology at this town meeting?

Very Low	02%
Low	00%
Medium	02%
High	26%
Very High	70%

To what degree have your opinions or perspectives changed or shifted today?

Not at All	47%
A Little Bit	47%
Quite a Bit	03%
A Lot	03%

How committed are you to take action on items you discussed earlier?

Very Committed	59%
Somewhat Committed	29%
Neutral	03%
Most likely will do them	08%
Not Very Committed	00%

