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## Unmarried Women and Iraq Unmarried Women Leading Charge Against Iraq War

**To:** Women's Voices. Women Vote.

**From:** Stan Greenberg, Anna Greenberg and David Walker

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Unmarried women in this country are not sitting back and watching the most important issue of the day unfold; rather, they are helping lead the fight against the war in Iraq. An analysis of public data not only shows unmarried women, like most Americans, deeply frustrated with the ongoing quagmire in Iraq, but also early opponents of the war and far less conflicted about congressional measures, including withdrawing funding, designed to force change on the Administration. Moreover, the Iraq War helped drive their choice for change in the 2006 election and remains critical to energizing this population looking forward.<sup>1</sup>

### Early Opponents of the War

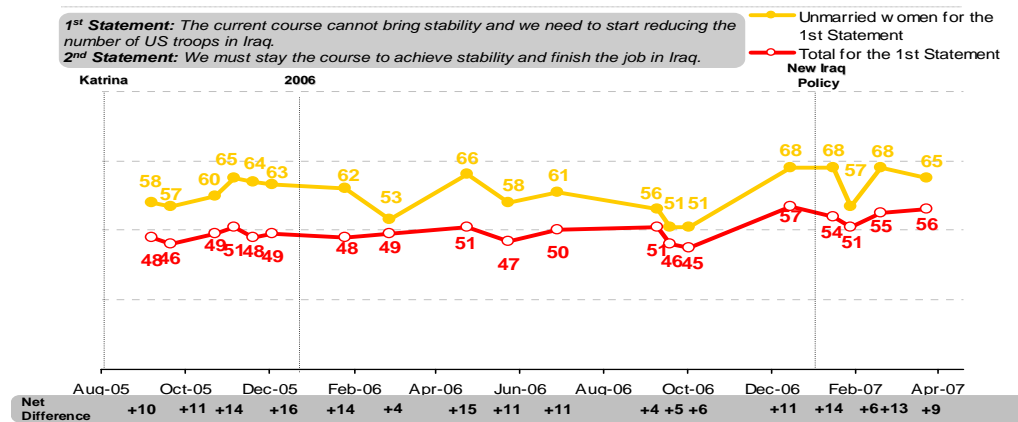
Overall, voters' reactions to the war have been complex and remain so today. While voters condemned the President's conduct of the war early on—along with dozens of Republican congressmen and senators—they generally believed in the mission or, at least, believed the cost of withdrawal too high. In fact, Democracy Corps tracking surveys did not show convincing and stable majorities supporting troop withdrawal until after the 2006 elections.

In contrast, there was never a moment since Democracy Corps started tracking this question where unmarried women failed to support troop withdrawal. As early as September, 2005, unmarried women supported the end of the mission by a 23-point margin. In contrast, all voters at that time divided evenly on this question.

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<sup>1</sup> It is also important to note that these voters' agenda may begin with Iraq, but it does not end there. Other issues, most notably the economy and economic squeeze, also need to be part of the outreach.

### Unmarried Women Early Opponents of War



Similarly, The Pew Research Center’s tracking of this issue shows Americans divided on keeping troops in Iraq throughout 2006; as late as January of 2007, the public divided 46 – 48 in favor of bringing people home. But unmarried women betrayed no such reservation (65 – 29 percent in January, 63 – 28 percent in favor of bringing troops home currently) and supported withdrawal as early as October, 2003.<sup>2</sup>

### Any Means Necessary

Americans have drawn important conclusions about the war and come to some consensus not only about its conduct but also about its need for an end. Where they sometimes divide is the means to that end, as some voters stop short of aggressive congressional efforts—requiring withdrawal, cutting off funding, setting time-tables, etc.—that may infringe on the Commander’s Constitutional authority or the conduct of generals on the ground. Unmarried women oppose this war and with less ambiguity about how it ends.

A recent Democracy Corps survey shows voters overall dividing on the statements, “I am concerned that the Republicans will wait too long to withdraw out troops from Iraq,” and, “I am more concerned that the Democrats will leave Iraq too quickly,” (49 – 45 percent in favor of the first statement). Unmarried women break 59 – 35 percent in favor of the first statement. Similarly, these women prefer (52 – 42 percent) their member of Congress “vote for measures that will force the President to change”.<sup>3</sup>

More directly, in January, only 42 percent of likely voters would have their congressman either vote to stop the President from increasing U.S. troop commitment in Iraq or vote to cut off all

<sup>2</sup> Pew Research Center for the People and the Press Survey of 1503 adults conducted March 21-25,2007 “Solid Majority Favors Congressional Troop Deadline”. Data can be downloaded at <http://people-press.org/dataarchive.Last> accessed April 30, 2007

<sup>3</sup> Democracy Corp Survey of 1000 likely voters conducted January 14-16,2007

funding for the war; among unmarried women this figure jumps to 51 percent, no doubt higher now.<sup>4</sup> The Pew Research Center has tracked congressional response to the Iraq issue as well. A March 26 survey shows 40 percent of Americans believing the Congress is not going far enough in challenging the Bush Iraq policy; among unmarried women, 44 percent believe Congress is not going far enough.<sup>5</sup>

## Conclusion

The Iraq war is the leading issue of our time and unmarried women are at the forefront of this debate. More so than most groups in the nation, they want this war to end quickly, not only because they tire of the waste and violence they see on televisions, but also because they understand the drain on precious resources represented by war. Unmarried women, as a whole, face enormous economic stress, ranging from the cost of health care and gasoline to jobs with fewer and fewer benefits and wages that do not keep pace with the cost of living. They want and need government to help make their lives just a bit easier. A January 2007 survey of unmarried voters conducted by Women's Voices. Women Vote outlines a very bold domestic agenda of investments in health care, energy independence and education. In this same survey, nearly half (47 percent) identified "getting out of Iraq" as the most important priority for the new Congress on an open-ended inquiry<sup>6</sup>.

Progressives do not face a choice in reaching out to this population on, say, health care, or domestic issues or Iraq. These issues are related. Unmarried women understand that every dollar we spend in Iraq is a dollar less for health care, a dollar less for schools and a dollar less for children.

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<sup>4</sup> Democracy Corp Survey of 1000 likely voters conducted January 14-16,2007

<sup>5</sup> Pew Research Center for the People and the Press Survey of 1503 adults conducted March 21-25,2007 "Solid Majority Favors Congressional Troop Deadline". Data can be downloaded at <http://people-press.org/dataarchive>. Last accessed April 30, 2007

<sup>6</sup> Women's Voices. Women Vote Survey of 1000 unmarried women adults conducted January 28-30,2007