



## VALUES, VOTERS, CONGRESS, AND OUR FUTURE:

### Values-to-Votes Webinar 6 Summary

#### Quick recap

The meeting focused on strategies for engaging persuadable voters, particularly parents and grandparents, through nonpartisan advocacy efforts and grassroots initiatives. Participants discussed the importance of understanding and addressing both rural and urban issues, including healthcare, education, and childcare concerns, while emphasizing the need for trusted messengers to influence electoral outcomes. The group explored various approaches for advancing children's and families' interests, including leveraging healthcare providers' influence, organizing community gatherings, and developing nonpartisan support strategies at the local and state levels.

#### Elections for Our Children's Future

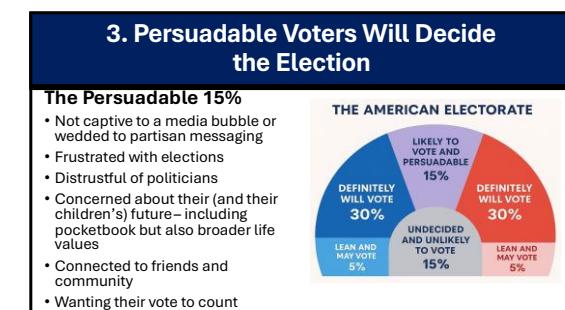
Charles presented his views on the importance of elections for children, parents, and families, emphasizing the need for a shift in electoral strategies to focus on the interests of parents and children. He highlighted that the 2026 congressional elections are up for grabs, with persuadable voters playing a crucial role in deciding the outcome. Charles also stressed the high stakes for children and the potential of 501c3 advocacy strategies to influence these voters at the grassroots level.

#### Political Campaign Strategy Insights

Charles discussed the challenges of political campaigns, highlighting how a small change in voter behavior can significantly impact election outcomes. He emphasized the need to focus upon persuadable voters, who are often disillusioned with politics and eager to make their votes count.

#### Federal Budget Policy Differences

Charles compared the budgetary approaches of congressional Democrats and Republicans, noting stark differences in tax policies and spending priorities, particularly regarding support for children and families. Charles discussed the specific differences in federal budget directions between Republican and Democratic policies from 2017 to 2025. Republicans enacted \$7 trillion in tax cuts, primarily benefiting the wealthy, while Democrats proposed \$4 trillion in tax increases on the



wealthy to fund \$3 trillion in health, nutrition, education, and family security expenditures. He emphasized that being nonpartisan does not always mean one can secure bipartisan support, and clear differences in partisan directions need to be described.

Charles also highlighted the contrast in child tax credit policies, noting that Republican changes largely canceled out, whereas Democratic proposals provided significant additional funding for families. He also explained President Biden's "care economy" agenda as the core for a child, parent, and family agenda, which aimed to support parents, provide childcare, and strengthen public health infrastructure, though this agenda did not receive much attention during the 2024 electoral campaign.

## 4. The Stakes Are Incredibly High for Children, Parents, and Families

### GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS IN CHILD AND FAMILY POLICIES AND SERVICES (Follow the Money)

- **Congressional Republicans Today:** Corporate and individual tax cuts to the wealthiest to spur growth and cuts to health, education, and human services to pay for them and conditions restricting support to those who deserve them (\$7 trillion in tax cuts and \$2+ trillion in spending cuts)
- **Congressional Democrats Today:** Corporate and individual tax increases to pay fair share and investments in health, education, and human services that reduce inequities and recognize special needs (\$4 trillion in tax increases and \$3 trillion in investments)

### GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO VALUING FAMILIES

- **Congressional Republicans Today:** Valuing only working, "traditional" families as the standard and legislating morality around them
- **Congressional Democrats Today:** Providing support enabling all families to get by, raise their children, and participate in society (DEI)

## Persuadable Voters: Key Influencer Groups

Charles presented data on persuadable voters, highlighting that parents, grandparents, and frontline workers are key groups, with parents shifting their support between 2020 and 2024 much more than the electorate as a whole. He emphasized the importance of 501c3 advocacy strategies and grassroots influencers in reaching and persuading voters, particularly working-class parents who are concerned about their families' well-being. Charles argued that these voters are more likely to shift their votes based on concerns about their financial situation and access to childcare and family leave and suggested that

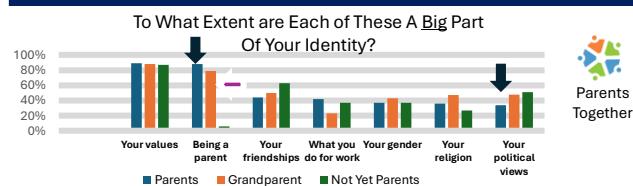
nonpartisan 501c3 organizations are well-positioned to engage and influence them effectively. He cited the excellent research and analysis conducted by ParentsTogether in this respect.

## Advocacy Funding for Child Policy Education

Charles discussed the need for increased investment in grassroots and state-level education and advocacy for children and families, highlighting the current lack of funding in this area compared to partisan electoral campaigns. He emphasized the importance of mobilizing persuadable voters through trusted messengers and the potential impact of philanthropic support in shifting policy priorities.

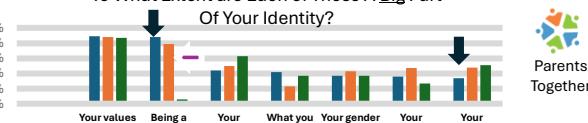
## Electoral Advocacy and Rural Issues

## 5. Parents (and Grandparents) as Core Persuadable Electorate



Of all voters, parents say they are most likely to change their votes and party preferences based upon their values and what candidates say. Grandparents are the second most likely.

Parents were much bigger "swing voters" than nonparents in their choices for President from 2020 and 2024. ABC Exit Polls of Shift – Men with children 10% swing to R, Women with children 9% swing to R; Men without children 6% swing to R, Women without children 0% swing.



Parents Together

Charles discussed advancing electoral education and advocacy, emphasizing the importance of understanding the positions of both major parties and focusing on values-based support for candidates who prioritize children and families. Mike highlighted the need to address rural issues, environmental concerns, and the rising cancer rates linked to agricultural runoff in Iowa, urging action on these kitchen table issues. Both agreed on the importance of addressing rural and small-town communities in electoral campaigns and mentioned issues like the child tax credit, paid family leave, health care and childcare as important to rural voters.

### **Rural Healthcare and Education Challenges**

The group discussed education issues, with Charles emphasizing the importance of grassroots initiatives and local-level education concerns. Deborah highlighted the need to focus on education as a key issue for local advocacy, while Ralph noted that many non-profits have been intimidated since Trump's inauguration, leading to decreased public engagement and increased fear of speaking out. The discussion touched on the challenges of balancing federal and state funding for education, as well as the ongoing fight against voucher programs and education privatization. Charles emphasized the importance of creating opportunities for nonprofits to respond to others' requests for information a way of engaging them and combatting intimidation.

### **Grassroots Anonymity and Voter Engagement**

Ralph discussed a grassroots letter-writing group that guarantees anonymity and offers alternative ways for individuals and 501c3 organizations to engage in political activities without fear of retaliation. Charles emphasized the need for a broad state network to support these informal or formal groups and ensure their voices are represented and heard. Deborah, representing the Coalition on Human Needs, shared their experience using Vote Forward for nonpartisan letter-writing campaigns to increase voter turnout, particularly in blue states, and expressed uncertainty about continuing these efforts given the upcoming election.

### **Nonpartisan Advocacy Strategies Discussion**

The group discussed strategies for nonpartisan advocacy and communication, with Charles sharing his experience managing ValuesToVotes.com and emphasizing the need to present competing visions from Republicans and Democrats while avoiding direct partisanship. Deborah noted their previous efforts to connect issue positions to voting decisions but expressed interest in potentially taking a more direct stance on party differences. The discussion ended with Charles suggesting that while nonpartisan organizations must adhere to certain policies, individuals can still engage in personal advocacy, and Diane was invited to share her perspective on the "decade of the child" initiative.

### **Nonpartisan Healthcare Worker Engagement**

The group discussed strategies for advancing nonpartisan initiatives, with Charles highlighting the importance of engaging frontline healthcare workers as a persuadable constituency. Diana shared updates on the Decade of the Child initiative, which aims to promote whole child health and well-

being, noting challenges with budget constraints and political obstacles. The conversation touched on the need for local-level engagement and the importance of building trusted messengers to support these efforts.

### **Bipartisan Support for Children's Initiatives**

Diana discussed the need to offer a bipartisan opportunity to support children and families, emphasizing the importance of finding compelling narratives and community voices to influence local and state representatives. She mentioned working with Charlie and exploring opportunities at the state level, particularly in Florida and North Carolina, as Congress is currently in a stalemate. Charles highlighted the potential for nonpartisan 501c3 activities to convene and educate around electoral issues, while also advocating for the need to encourage candidates to be bold in supporting children's initiatives. The discussion touched on the importance of trusted messengers, potentially from current and former nonprofit board members and staff, to drive these efforts.

### **Pediatric Advocacy Strategy Discussion**

The group discussed strategies for engaging pediatricians and other healthcare providers in political advocacy, particularly through the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Darcy suggested leveraging AAP's trusted relationship with families to subtly influence messaging around children's health and family issues. Emily proposed a two-step approach involving training 501c3 organizations to organize community-level gatherings where local concerns could be addressed and mobilized. The participants agreed that while the approach isn't complicated, implementing it requires effort and commitment from both healthcare providers and community organizations and support for grassroots engagement that fosters such dialogue.

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<https://valuestovotes.com/vtv-webinar-series> webinar series slides, videos, and summaries

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