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WEBINAR

THE 2022 AMERICAN FAMILY SURVEY

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Key Findings from the 2022 American Family Survey

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. REEVES: Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Richard Reeves. I'm a senior fellow here at the Brookings Institution. And welcome to the virtual Brookings stage. Today's event is jointly hosted between the Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institute. And we're jointly very proud to be helping to launch what is now the eighth edition of the American Family Survey. Eight sounds like a lot to those of us who have been involved. Can't quite believe that it's eight years. Of course, the pandemic years don't count because time went into a warp that we'll never really recovery from. But nonetheless, eight years strongly.

American Family Survey is a partnership between Brigham Young University and the Deseret News and has been from its outset. I count myself very honored to be on the advisory group to the survey. And as is one of our panelists today, Brad Wilcox.

The purpose of the survey is to look at many of the economic, social, political and cultural trends in our society, but specifically through the lens of family life. And to bring a distinctly family-oriented perspective to some of those questions. And so much of what you'll hear today will be of relevance more generally, but I hope you'll also hear the specific intent of this is to look at how those trends both express what's happening in American families and impact what's happening in American families. Hence, the title the American Family Survey.

So the order of events is that we're going to hear from the principal authors of the survey, Chris Karpowitz and then Jeremy Pope. And then we're going to move into a discussion with Chris and Jeremy, but then bringing in my close colleague, Elaine Kamarck, a senior fellow at Brookings Institution in Governance Studies and Brad Wilcox from the American Enterprise Institute and Institute Family Studies who I said is also an advisor to the survey.

Please join in. Please send your questions to at events@brookings.edu or online at social media using the #AmericanFamilySurvey. So I'll hope to get to those questions as well. But without further ado, let's get into the main event and hear the top lines from this the eighth annual American Family Survey from Chris and Jeremy. So, Chris, over to you first, I think.

MR. KARPOWITZ: Thank you so much, Richard. It's delightful to be here and we do want to review some of the main findings of the survey. It's a large survey. There's a lot to talk to about. And so, we won't be able to discuss everything, but we are delighted to talk about at least some of our main findings to this point.

So we have several slides and we'll just kind of run through them. As Richard indicates the American Family Survey is in its eighth year. It's a national survey of 3,000 Americans. And the sample is meant to mirror the general population of the United States. We want to talk a little bit about the challenges that Americans see facing American families as COVID recedes. We want to talk a little bit about what's happening with relationships and family life and then we'll turn to some policy issues that my colleague, Jeremy, will discuss those with a special focus on schools and the role of parents and schools and how Americans see that.

Let's start though with some challenges facing families. The New York Times today has some data about how racial and ethnic gaps in the response to COVID may have narrowed in recent years. But when we ask American families to look back on their experience so far with COVID, we do find the legacy of gaps that may have existed earlier or that continue.

Three in 10 black and Hispanic Americans say they have a family member either in their household or an extended family member who died from COVID compared to less than 1 in five white respondents to the survey. So certainly, we do see some evidence that COVID effected American families in different ways.

We also asked about the importance of both COVID-19 and racial inequality as important issues facing American families. We've been asking these questions about the most important issues facing families all eight years of the survey. But beginning in 2020, we asked half the sample to pick from a list of items that included COVID-19 and racial inequality. And you can see since 2020, concern for those two things has dropped rather precipitously. Although, there are still important divisions.

So more than 20 percent of black respondents continue in 2022 to say that COVID-19 and racial inequality are important issues facing families compared to about one and 10 white

respondents. There are also some important partisan differences in attention to racial inequality specifically. Again, around 20 percent or more of Democrats think that that's an important issue facing American families. For moderate and conservative Republicans, it's really not on the political agenda or they don't see it as an issue facing families in the same way.

Well, what is it that Americans agree on in terms of the challenges for families? One of the things they agree on is economic challenge and especially inflation. Nearly nine in 10 Americans say that inflation will affect their family finances in the coming year. And more than half say that they're very worried about this. More than half also think that their incomes are likely to fall behind prices in the coming year or two. And more than 80 percent say they've seen important increases in the cost of food and transportation especially. About six in 10 say that those increases have been large.

So in the face of those challenges, in the face of rising inflation what's happening in terms of family life? Well, more Americans are saying that they have experienced economic crisis. Since 2017, we've been asking respondents to the American Family Survey about whether or not they have experienced an important economic crisis in their life? And we list six of them. These are things like whether or not they paid an important bill or didn't pay it because of budgetary concerns. Or whether they have avoided going to the doctor, to the hospital because they couldn't afford it?

And what we want you to see from this chart is that there's essentially three points in time. So in the pre-pandemic era, levels of economic crisis were high especially for low-income Americans. Those crises decreased during the first two years of the pandemic. And so, we see that trough in 2020 and 2021. But now in 2022, we see increasing concern, increasing reports of economic crises and those increases are occurring across the income spectrum at roughly equal rates.

So we're not quite back to the pre-pandemic rates, but the trend is worrisome. And we think this is something to continue to watch in coming years.

What should government do support families? Well, we asked this in 2021 and 2022. We asked whether or not Americans would prefer that the government give money directly to families? In 2021 and in 2022, lots of families said that direct government aid was helpful to them. Low-income

Americans were especially likely to say that this was very helpful direct checks to families.

And in 2021, we saw more support for that than for spending money on programs and institutions. In 2022, that gap has narrowed. And so, we see support for both giving money directly to families and spending money on programs and institutions. And support for doing neither of those things has declined.

Well, what are we seeing in terms of relationships and family life? This may look initially like a very boring chart, but it's one of the most important things that we think we found over the eight years of the American Family Survey. What I want you to see is a decline since 2015 in the percentage of Americans who report being married. A decline of about five percentage points. And of course, an increase of about five percentage points relative to 2015 in Americans saying that they're not in any relationship whatsoever.

So it's not as though the decline seems to have been because people are cohabiting and in committed relationships. It's that they seem to have moved -- the decline is a decline in marriage and an increase in those Americans who are not in any committed relationship whatsoever.

Why does that matter? Well, it matters for several reasons. One of which is a sense of loneliness. Beginning just before the pandemic, we started asking about loneliness using a series of three questions about whether or not people said they felt a lack of companionship or felt left out or felt isolated? We never saw a gigantic increase through the pandemic in the percentage of Americans saying they felt lonely.

Instead, what we see is that loneliness is really related to having a committed relationship. And married Americans are the least likely to feel lonely. And in fact, relative to 2019, loneliness has declined slightly among married and cohabiting Americans while it has remained pretty constant among other groups.

As we move out of the pandemic, whether or not we are completely out of it is not an issue we want to get into, but as we move into a new phase of the pandemic, we do see in 2022 an increase in Americans saying they're struggling to balance home and work life. And perhaps that has

something to do with, you know, going back to the office. But we think this is worth watching relative to the first two years of the pandemic more Americans say they're struggling with work/life balance in their lives.

The last thing I want to talk about is sort of family life in America. We're going to talk a little bit about partisan differences and Jeremy will have more to say about the different groups that we're showing here. But one of the things we want you to see is that even though there are differences across different partisan and ideological identities. There are also some similarities when it comes to family life.

Across all these different groups, families eat dinner together at least weekly. Many groups attend activities -- many families attend family activities together and socialize with friends together. There are some differences in terms of worshipping together, but even though there are these differences.

Family life, the day-to-day life of families looks awfully similar in liberal families and in conservative families to the extent that there are some differences. It's moderate Democrats and conservative Republicans who seems to be the most social in terms of attending activities, worshipping, socializing together.

And so, now we want to turn to policy opinions and my colleague, Jeremy Pope will take it from there.

MR. POPE: Thanks, Chris. We're going to talk about two general policy areas, abortions and schools. That's not because we didn't ask about a number of other areas, but let's start there.

On the slide that you see now, I want to talk a little bit about the way that we have constructed this. When we're talking about liberal Democrats, moderate Democrats, moderate Republicans and conservative Republicans.

We generally use these as categories this year because ideology is a bit of a moving target and things are changing as I'm sure anyone who follows politics and policy knows. We think it's useful to look inside of the parties. To be able to say, who is it that is more liberal, more moderate or more conservative within each of the parties. It leaves out independents, although sometimes we've

shown the independents in some of these charts and graphs.

And it certainly is the case that liberal Democrats are about two-thirds of the Democratic party. And by that we simply mean they labeled themselves liberal and they also describe themselves as a Democrat. The same thing for Republicans. Moderate Republicans make up less of the Republican party. Only about a quarter of Republicans see themselves as moderate.

But I want to illustrate why it's useful to think in these categories by pushing your attention towards that column about whether or not abortion should be legal in all cases? Thirty-one percent of the public agrees with this. And if you look across that row, whether it's legal in all cases, legal in most or illegal in most, illegal in all. This question that we asked was really one that's been replicated across a number of different surveys, and it replicates very well.

What I think is interesting to show here is that the moderates in both parties, the moderate Democrats and the moderate Republicans do stand out. They're somewhat closer to each other. They're distinct from the conservative members of each party. About one in five moderate Republicans think that abortion should be legal in all cases. This is in contrast to one in five conservative Republicans who think it should be illegal in all cases.

And when you stare at this chart and you think about it here for a second. You're going to realize there's actually quite a bit of nuance to opinion. And I hope that's something that comes out of our use of this category, liberal Democrats, moderate Democrats, moderate Republicans and conservative Republicans. To be able to show how there's nuance within each party. And the coalitions as they are constructed contain, as we will put it, opportunities for compromise in public opinion. I'm not trying to make a point about Congress or what will actually happen, just public opinion.

I want to show you another chart now that's about the number of weeks, right? And so, this is a question essentially at what point of the pregnancy do you think a woman should be able to legally obtain an abortion? And so, over there on the left you can see there are some people, a number of Republicans in red. Over a third actually think it should never be legal or at least they report that question that way.

When you look at the later columns you see, you know, well, some legality in the first trimester, second trimester, third and then essentially the category always legal all the way out through 40 weeks. Though, I emphasize the question was asked about weeks. And what you can see from this chart is that the weight of opinion is very clearly in the first trimester, maybe bleeding somewhat into the second trimester as well, right?

That is where public opinion thinks abortion should be. If you look at just the averages. So people who say it's legal in all cases, legal in most, illegal in most, illegal in all. You see that even those who say that it should be legal in all cases, actually on average want about 24 weeks. Even those who say it should be illegal in all cases, actually say, well, about five weeks. And this illustrates some of the problems with looking narrowly at a single-issue question.

I think issue questions like the kind we asked on the survey can be very valuable. But you have to look across a number of issue questions to really understand what's going on.

On this next slide, what we show here is I think probably the single most important slide on abortion. If you combine the questions about people who say that abortion should always be illegal and that it should be -- and consistently argue, yes, it should be available never, zero weeks of availability. And you compare them to the number of Americans who favor total access, legal through 40 weeks, always legal, they're in favor it. That is about 14 percent of the public.

Now, I don't want to -- this is a public opinion survey, we're describing what the public thinks. I'm not casting dispersions on anyone for holding any of those views. What I'm just trying to say is that 14 percent of the public holds the most common views that get talked about in the media. It's very clear that the parties do have some opportunity for compromise and dissent and complexity on the issue of abortion. Eighty-six percent of Americans favor some degree of access and some degree of regulation.

Now how that's going to work is actually intriguing. This next question is one that we asked. I've never seen this asked anywhere else and I really like this result actually. I think this says something quite interesting. If you ask people which of the following would you prefer?

A single national policy on abortion that is consistent across all states? Or variation in abortion policy with each state developing its own policy? It's split kind of 50/50. There's some degree of consent. I wouldn't say consensus. There are more people who say a national policy is better.

Once you look at the two parties, you begin to see that it tends to be especially liberal Democrats. Less so the -- this is less true of moderate Democrats. And it is certainly untrue of Republicans at all. They want a single national policy. Conservatives and Republicans, they think there should be variation in abortion policy.

I've ran sort of a little focus group with some students the other day trying to figure out what people were thinking about this. And the thing that came out of it for me is I think that people are on each side of the political spectrum. And I think this is consistent with the question.

Are interpreting the question the following way. The left would prefer to see a sort of floor on abortion that is as permissive as possible. Make sure that abortion is available in as many circumstances as possible. Whereas, the right to the degree they want any kind of national policy. They want local conditions to be able to restrict it.

I think this is a pretty interesting result. I don't know how this is going to play out. I don't know what strategy the parties will actually be using. But I think one of the things that we should have showed you here is that there is room for discussion and debate and compromise on the issue of abortion.

Now, let's turn to another issue of schools and parents. And I'm really going to emphasize parents in this section of the survey. We asked people about public schools. And we asked them when controversies arise -- I'll go through a few of the controversies in a second. Who was it that should have the final say about what is taught in public schools about each of these following issues?

Things like the books assigned, sex education, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, history of race and racism? And we found something that was overwhelmingly true virtually all of the time that the answer for everyone is always the parents.

Now, since my training is in political science and was originally more in institutions than

anything else. I feel sort of contractually obligated to note here. Public schools are controlled by the public. They are not controlled by parents alone. But I'm sure lots of people here are aware of the salience of this issue was used supposedly to at least some affect by Governor Youngkin in Virginia in that election last year.

And it holds up really, really well. I'm not going to show you the other pictures or the other data that we've looked at. But if you try to push on this and find the areas where, say, liberal Democrats are more open to somebody besides parents deciding. There are a few maybe on the history of race in America, they might be interested in letting classroom teachers make some decisions. But it is a pretty overwhelming, pretty consistent finding that parents should be in charge.

Now, that doesn't really solve a lot of the problems, but if you look on this next slide what you're going to see is that there are controversies that are pretty significant. Let's just focus on the left for a second.

The question here is do you think that schools today spend too much time to (inaudible) out or too little time teaching about the following topics. And what we're showing you are the percentage who say, schools emphasize the topic too little. And it's broken down by the different ideological and partisan and categories that I've already mentioned. Obviously, on the left, they are very sure that schools are spending too little time talking about race.

And they're almost equally sure -- maybe not almost, but they're fairly sure that schools are spending too little time talking about sexual orientation and gender identity. So if look over on the right-hand side of the chart you can actually get the same thing on social and emotional learning. But I'm going to turn to the middle categories of math, government and science. This is an area where there's frankly more agreement especially on government and on science. Both conservative and liberal Democrats want to see more emphasis placed on those things.

Chris and I were just discussing this, this morning. We don't really know why conservative Republicans are the ones who are really into math, but that is the finding that is there. My point here though is there are areas of consensus. There are areas of reasonable disagreement. And I

think this slide highlights both of those actually.

On this slide, I'm going to talk about sex education for just a second. How much do you agree or disagree with these statements? You're satisfied with the level of sex education? There's a lot of non-opinion about this. There are a lot of people saying they neither agree or disagree. Some people are particularly dissatisfied with that. It is the case, if you look down at the bullet. Satisfaction with sex education, about four in 10 fathers are satisfied. Only about three in 10 mothers are satisfied. It's an interesting gender difference. Maybe we'll talk about that in Q&A.

Liberal Democrats are more likely than Republicans to believe it is a really important topic for schools to teach. In fact, it's really essentially twice as many Republicans. But I note again the nuance. Moderate Democrats and moderate Republicans are about equally likely to agree about the importance of sex ed. People wanted to be taught. They're worried about how it will be taught, okay?

I may say more about that in a second but let me talk about books before I turn to kind of a summary. One of the things that is becoming increasingly a point of debate in American politics is what kind of books are in school libraries? What kind of books are assigned?

We asked a number of different questions about this. I'll highlight three. The public schools in my area include books that should be removed because they're inappropriate. And then in that second row, if a parent objects to a book that book should be removed even if other parents like the book.

There really aren't that many people that strongly agree with that. Or even agree with it. It's 16 percent and 12 percent, respectively. It's really that bottom category. It is important for public school libraries to have books that represents a variety of perspectives about controversial issues even if some people are uncomfortable, two-thirds of the public agrees with that statement. There isn't a burning desire in the public to pull back on perspectives, to ban books and this sort of thing.

I just want to sum up quickly so we can get as speedily as possible into what I'm sure will be excellent comments and reactions to the survey. The American Family Survey, one of its great strengths is being able to talk about change. And Chris and I are united in this belief that economic change is likely to be something that is important in the next few years.

We're already seeing the first stirrings as we come out of COVID of people being very worried about inflation, people facing more crises. And we think that is likely to just get more and more complicated. The survey has long had and is going to continue to have, I think a perspective that there are areas of disagreement and there are areas where compromise is possible.

And maybe it's impossible because the parties are not going to be able to put together a compromise in Washington, but it's not impossible because the public doesn't see areas for compromise. We try to highlight that with abortion. The truth is we have findings in the survey about immigration and other areas as well where compromise is possible.

One of the things is if we look hard at school debates that we think is true is that one of the ways in which we compromise these things is by allowing lots of considerable local variation on issues. And I think that's what we get out of the survey on education. People believe that parents should control public schools. And what they mean by that in part is that parents locally should be able to control public schools.

They're hopeful that parents and their community values of what's going on in their community will prevail. Now, that doesn't mean that Tuscaloosa, Alabama is going to have the same public school system that Marin County, California does. But it does mean that parents are, in general, the ones that should be in charge.

These are just some of the findings that we have in the survey and some of the things that we hope are thought provoking and will push us towards a good discussion. Thank you for listening everybody.

MR. REEVES: Thank you, Jeremy. And thank you, Chris as always. Such a succinct summary of what is a huge survey. I strongly encourage everybody to dig further into the survey on some of the other issues. We going to get comments now from our two panelists and then I hope when we broaden this out, we can actually involve Chris and/or Jeremy in questions that arise.

But first, I'm going to turn to Elaine Kamarck who I will introduce. Elaine has written a good deal on the politics of reproductive rights and abortion. So I thoroughly recommend her recent

writing on this. I suspect Elaine is going to touch on that issues in her responses. But Elaine over to you to give your general responses. What are your main takeaways here? And then we'll come to Brad.

MS. KAMARCK: Great. Well, I have two comments sort of different, each one different.

I did have a look at your complete survey before we got on this webinar. And I was struck by the very beginning of it. By the dramatic drop in optimism among particularly nonparents in the United States. I mean why -- it didn't seem to me that there would be any particularly large reason for that to happen.

But nonparents seem to think that, boy, the next generation is really doomed, and parents had a big difference. And so, I'd like to, you know, throw this back to the people who did the survey and ask what they think about this?

On abortion, I think that you're absolutely right and your data confirmed what we've seen in many, many other surveys over the years, which is there is a very big middle in the abortion debate. The problem is that in the two political parties each extreme plays a bigger role within the party than it does in the nation as a whole.

So for instance, if you are a Democrat and you're running in a Democratic primary, you want the support of the most liberal Democrats because they are, in fact, the ones who are likely to come out and vote in the primary. And certainly, and even more so, frankly, because I want to make the point that I believe polarization has been asymmetric.

In the Republican party, you know, God forbid that you don't look extremely, extremely prolife because, in fact, that's what a large portion of the Republican base, particularly the evangelical portion wants. So the primary system itself exacerbates the extremes even though, as Chris and Jeremy have shown so well, even though the public is, in fact, a very few of them are at either extremes. So I think that's one thing about our political system.

The second thing I'll say is that -- and I wrote a little bit this before. You know, in politics intensity matters. And intensity causes people to vote. It causes people to give money, et cetera. I think that for women regardless of their age, and frankly regardless of their feeling about -- on that spectrum of

abortion. Issues of reproductive freedom are incredibly important in a way that they simply aren't to men.

You know, which is no reflection on men. It's just that men don't live this day to day, year to year the way women do from the time they menstruate until they are well into menopause. And so, this is a different political issue. And I'm not sure that it won't be a very much more definitive issue in this election than you can tell from the polling, okay?

And what's happening is that there are things arising like the situation in South Carolina where a young woman who wanted her baby had a placental rupture. She almost lost her uterus. She almost died and the doctors refused to help right away because they weren't sure what the law was. She needed an abortion. She needed a medical abortion.

And the state rep in South Carolina who had voted for this very stringent law said, oh, wow. I didn't know this. Obviously, we have to write a bunch of exceptions into the law. So what do they do? The South Carolina legislature wrote 14 exceptions into the laws stating when a woman can have the medical abortion in an effort to try to, you know, make clear what the doctors could do and couldn't do.

Well, you know, you've got to ask yourself. How the heck do a bunch of guys frankly in the South Carolina legislature know the complete range of situations in which abortion might be medically necessary? That's something that only doctors know, and they know it case by case.

So we're beginning to see here just how difficult it will be to actually enforce these abortion bans. And men may say, oh, well, I don't get it. I don't get how did this happen, right? Women know this very well. And they know that their lives are on the line. So my prediction here is that polling is missing an issue of intensity that I think could have enormous consequences in this election and into the future.

MR. REEVES: Thanks, Elaine. I just want to briefly come back to you on this and then we'll go to Brad.

Do you think that that intensity though is on both sides? You've obviously stressed the intensity on one side, but there's a strong intensity on the prolife side too, right? Or are you saying

there's asymmetric intensity as well?

MS. KAMARCK: It's asymmetric. Look, we already had a case. We had Kansas. We had a very deep red state, and you had a 20 point. When the issue was just put to people, you had a 20-point difference.

And I believe there are plenty of women who would never have an abortion. Who are practicing Catholics like myself who would never have an abortion. Who understand that sometimes, you know, you just can't have the law getting into this. It just doesn't work. It's a mess. And people are going to die because of it.

So I believe that it is asymmetric. That all the people who are extreme in the prolife side are already in the electorate. They've been in the electorate for a long time, and they've done a good job electing people. And that now this has mobilized a kind of, you know, silent majority, if you will. And I suspect we'll see that.

The next referendum on this is in Michigan and Kentucky this Fall. So we will see if Kansas repeats itself. And then we'll see if there's a follow-on impact on to Democratic candidates.

MR. REEVES: Okay. Thanks, Elaine. Brad, over to you to pick up on anything Elaine has said or go in a different direction, but you're responsible for all of the survey.

MR. WILCOX: Yeah. I think I'm going to go in a bit of a different direction than Elaine was going in.

One of I think this sort of striking pieces of good news in this new survey is the way in which it basically shows that conservative Americans, more (inaudible) Americans today are much more likely to be flourishing compared to their liberal and secular peers in the United States.

So it is really kind of striking evidence in the survey. So conservatives are 16 percentage points more likely to be completely satisfied with their lives. Religious Americans who regularly attend, you know, church or other services are 21 percentage points more likely to be more satisfied with their lives.

And when you kind of look at these numbers and you kind of go behind the scenes to

kind of unpack it, what accounts for these kind of amazing differences between conservatives and liberals, between religious and secular Americans. You find actually appropriate enough that family is crucial. Understanding this set of divides.

What we see is that once you control for marital status, once you control for family satisfaction these conservative and religious advantages disappear. And that's because conservatives are about 20 percentage points more likely to be married and they're about, you know, 17 percentage points more likely to be satisfied with their families. And much the same story is true for religious Americans.

So again, what's kind of striking about this survey is that we can see that being married and having a satisfying family life is integrally tied to being happy with your life in general. And in this regard, conservatives and religious Americans have a major advantage. So that's in a sense from my more conservative perspective as compared to Elaine's perspective. You know, one of the pieces of good news in the survey.

And of course, the bad news coming out of the survey again from my vantage point is that our core social institutions continue to lose ground. You know, marriage is down in the survey to 45 percent of adults, it's important that they're married. We're seeing, you know, religious attendance down. We're seeing kind of support for marriage as an institution across the eight years come down.

So there's a kind of an erosion, I think in the values and the virtues of institutions that have kind of long given Americans a sense of meaning and direction and purpose. And that's in part, of course, I think because, you know, our progressive Americans who tend to dominate, you know, much of our legal institutions, I think are not as supportive of these core institutions. Things like marriage, for instance.

I can't tell you how many articles I've seen in the New York Times and Atlantic. I was most recently in Bloomberg kind of discounting marriage, for instance. If Bloomberg had this article just, you know, a month ago saying, "women must stay single and don't have kids are getting richer" compared to other women. Now, this is just completely false. I mean if you look at the American

community survey, for instance, you find the richest women in America are those who are married with kids.

In the American Family Survey, we see that women who are married with kids are markedly more satisfied with their lives compared to women who are single and childless. So this is kind of like this, you know, false standard that I think unfortunately too many progressives have kind of latched onto. Kind of embracing a kind of individualism that makes them more reluctant to, I think revisit our core institutions like family and faith.

So to wrap it up, I think the challenge for progressives as I wrote in the New York Times last Thanksgiving is just to sort of understand and appreciate that in their own way kind of, you know, family and faith are, you know, going to be integral to any kind of successful way of life.

And the progressives can't kind of check behind those institutions, you know, again on their own terms, they're going to continue, I think to sort of do relatively worse in any number of fronts, financially, emotionally and socially on average. And I think the challenge for conservative, of course, is to do a better job of articulating sort of meaning and the power of these institutions to find kind of new cultural platforms to communicate the value of the institutions that sort of work around, you know, much of the sort of standard platforms and the academy. Those platform unfortunately are not really hospitable to a kind of family or a faith friendly message these days.

And then also, I think for conservatives to revisit their aversion to embracing public policies that would make marriage and family life more accessible to working class and middle-class Americans. So that's I think where we stand and sort of my perspective on some of the results from this latest round of the American Family Survey.

MR. REEVES: Thanks, Brad. I want to ask a question. I know Elaine wants to come back too. And then actually, Jeremy and Chris, I'd love to pull you in on a couple of things on the optimism point and the intensity points. I'm talking to the tech people now. I think it would be great if we can have you back.

But, Brad, I'm very interested in this marriage thing because one of the findings that stuck

out to me was the one where you showed worship by moderate Democrats. And the percentage of moderate Democrat families who said that they're regularly worshipping together was what? Thirty-nine percent or something? It was obviously the liberal Democrats was really high. It was higher than for moderate Republicans. Am I remembering the chart correctly?

MR. KARPOWITZ: That's right.

MR. REEVES: And so, I wonder again if there isn't this slight issue here with, dare I say, overweighting what's on the New York Times editorial page in terms of how people are actually living, right? And actually, moderate Democrats are mostly getting married because college educated people are getting married and they're disproportionately Democrat.

So on the one hand, you've got this sort of New York Times problem. Let's call it that. Apologies to all our dear friends on the New York Times who are listening to this. But then you've got everybody else who is actually just I mean worshipping and getting married, right?

MR. WILCOX: Well, Richard, I think in the moderate Democrats, and Jeremy and Chris can correct me if I'm wrong here, but that's partly a race story, right? So moderate Democrats are much more likely to be African Americans and they're also more likely to be regularly found in church on any given Sunday. So that's part of the moderate Democrat story.

But in general, we do see when you kind of put together both conservatives and liberals as a whole group. You know, and you can put together Republican and Democrats as whole groups. And, you know, you compare where they stand on being married to that. You do find these enormous gaps, you know. So I'm just saying on average, we are seeing kind of both major ideological and partisan and religious divides in terms of who's getting married today. And also, actually who is having children as well.

So, you know, I think these divides are actually growing larger. This is sort of part of the challenge I think facing the country is that, you know, we're just seeing dramatically different views on questions with things like abortion. And of course, there's extremes there but each (inaudible) to marriage as well.

MR. REEVES: I don't know. I mean this is an empirical question to which I should know the answer. But given that marriage is so much more common among college educated Americans and given that college educated Americans are increasingly associated with the Democratic party, it seems to be empirically it may well be true that controlling for age marriage rates are higher among Democrats than Republicans. Anyway, Elaine --

MS. KAMARCK: Yeah, that's exactly what I was going to say earlier. I think I mean I agree with Brad in terms of the social importance of marriage. I think it does make people happier. I think it does make people wealthy. You know, there's just a lot of good things about marriage.

But I also think that what we're seeing in this. I would like to you guys break it out by age. Democrats, liberal Democrats are younger than Republicans. They're simply -- in this day and age, they're simply younger. That's starting with Obama.

You know, of Obama had not had the under 30 vote, he would have lost, okay? That's how dramatically different this younger generation is. So as they get -- you know, so give them some time, you know? They haven't gotten married yet. They haven't found anybody yet. They haven't had children yet. I mean this whole business of family formation takes a while. And I think that what we've seen over the course of the 20th century is it just happens later and later. So I think that age is probably pretty significant here.

MR. KARPOWITZ: Yeah. I think that's exactly right, Elaine. It will be interesting to see what happens as younger, more secular, more liberal Democrats sort of grow older and whether they're forming, you know, family connections and relationships in quite the same way.

I mean I guess one of the things I would say is I see both sides missing one part of the equation. So when we look at, you know, what is the most important issue facing families? Liberals tend to say that it's economic. And that's a really important thing. And to the extent that conservatives downplay that, they're missing an important part of the story.

Conservatives tend to say that it's structural. That it's about forming families and being married, and they tend to downplay, right, the economic concerns. And I think that also is half the story.

Both of those stories together are important. The economic challenges facing families today are absolutely real. And the structure of family life is meaningful in doing things like reducing levels of loneliness as we tried to talk about.

And so, it worries me a lot that the decline in marriage is accompanied by an increase in not being in any relationship whatsoever. So being in some sort of committed relationship really does help. And I do worry if people are sort of opting out of any sort of relationship whatsoever. Or unable to find those relationships for whatever reason.

MR. REEVES: Yeah. I agree that stood out when I saw that top line. I thought, oh, well, it will be cohabitation and it wasn't. And I wondered a bit about the pandemic, of course. But I think the retreat from relationships is the story. Not just the retreat from marriage. Of course, it's singularly related.

Jeremy, do you want to weigh in particular? Maybe you can pick up Elaine's point. I was stuck by the sort of gloominess of the nonparents as well. And there is this whole local global problem with these surveys, right? If you say are your kids going to be okay? We'll tend to say, yes. If you say are kids in general going to be okay? We'll say no. So there is a local global thing here. Is that all we're seeing in the parent/nonparent thing there? Or is there something else going on?

MR. POPE: I'm pretty reluctant to say that it's the only thing that we're seeing in that. I think Elaine's point is well taken and it bears watching.

But the problem is doing this survey, we have eight years. And so, there are many comparisons that we can make. But we're coming out of the pandemic. I don't need to explain to anyone how destabilizing that was.

And we're not coming out of it into a new stable era. We're coming out of it into an era of fairly dramatic inflation. And we tried to emphasize this in the report, but I think it simply cannot be underplayed how important inflation is going to be in the next few years unless it abates more quickly than most economists that I read are telling me that it's going to.

And so, I think we're just going to need more time to figure out what that pessimism refers to. Is it a hangover from COVID? Is it pessimism that is more structural? Is it -- I'll admit I like this

hypothesis best, but I don't know that I could prove this. Is it something that has more to do with the gloomy economic outlook and the fact that it's harder to fill up my car in some places? Or to eat meat on a regular basis that I might want to?

All of those things are viable hypotheses, and I think it bears watching. But I don't know which one of those is true right now.

MR. REEVES: So feeling a general sense of more pessimism, yeah. Elaine, did you have any response to that?

MS. KAMARCK: Well, and some of this may simply be, I think as you pointed out, Richard, that parents are loathed to say, I'm doing a bad job. My kids are going to be a mess, right? Parents are going to have to have an optimistic point of view.

But I think overall that drop that you all showed, it is actually concerning because if I'm remembering this. There was a drop for parents as well as for the nonparents. It was just that there was a divide between the two. So I think that is concerning than it would be. I'm not sure that traditional surveys can answer that question very well.

MR. WILCOX: Well, I think on this sort of pessimism we're seeing in the survey about kind of sort of the prospects for our kids. It used to be the American dream. I think it certainly made sense in part, right, because, you know, given the trends we're seeing in American families.

Richard Longworth suggests that kids who are raised in stable families are more likely to realize the American dream. Raj Chetty's work comes to the same conclusions. So if we're seeing kind of high levels of family instability American kids then that does mean that, you know, many of them are going to be floundering financially.

I also wanted to note too that the irrepressible lime in stone is already just crunched the numbers in the American Family Survey with controls for age. And it finds that there is a significant relationship between being more conservative and being more likely to either be married in the first place or planning to get married in the second place even controlling for age in the American Family Survey.

So we can come back to the issue, but my hypothesis is that as you look at trends on a

different front, for instance. The general social survey finds no gap partisanship when show Americans who are married is 18 through 55 in 1999. Where the findings more recently about a 13-percentage gap between Republicans and everyone else in terms of who's married.

So I do think that as we go forward, we're going to see larger and (inaudible) as well. I just think that given the kinds of cultural currents that are now kind of -- especially since the (inaudible) Revolution of 2014 when it comes to things like gender for instance. I think we are going to see, you know, some divides on both partisan, ideological in terms of who's getting married and who is having kids and how many kids they're having. I could be wrong, but I think that the cultural divisions that we're seeing in our society will kind of be reinforcing these differences.

MR. REEVES: Well, I'd love to hear from Jeremy and Chris on this. And maybe is Limen watching this and running regressions as we speak? Limen, can you control for education as well while you're at it? And it's not get in the peer review journal probably in the next 25 minutes.

LIMEN: Yeah, just control for education too.

MR. REEVES: Okay. Fine. Good. All right. So maybe just have him join the call. But on this specific question, Chris or Jeremy, I'd love to hear any thoughts you might have. And then I'll move onto another subject.

MR. KARPOWITZ: Yeah. Well, I haven't been in this situation where I've been, you know, where we're doing regressions on the fly like this. So I'd have to --

MR. REEVES: It's not necessarily recommended.

MR. KARPOWITZ: So I think you have it.

MR. REEVES: Everybody listening to this, you know, fair health warning.

MR. POPE: I have a thought about this. It's a bit of a tangent but it will circle back. And it speaks to -- I know this isn't what Elaine was talking about when she talked about partisan asymmetries. But I want to go back to that slide. We don't necessarily have to put it up. But the one that showed that it's the moderate Democrats and the conservative Republicans that are worshipful. And are sort of more connected to their families.

I just want to make the point that the interesting asymmetry to me between the two parties at the moment is that for Democrats the family enthused -- and I agree with Brad that this very much has to do with race. The family, you know, most engaged group of people who are also most religious tend to be nonwhite and tend to be moderate. They're on that wing of the party.

Whereas for Republicans, it's exactly the opposite. The most, you know, religiously engaged, most ideological committed, they're the conservative Republicans. And I think this asymmetry is one that I just don't know how it's going to play out. I mean maybe Brad's right that we're going to see sort of big differences and a gap opening up between the parties.

What I wonder about as a possibility is that you're going to see gaps opening inside of the parties that are difficult for the parties to talk about because when black and Hispanic Americans who have a much more moderate view of life, who are less friendly to be blunt on issues like transgender rights or sometimes economic policy and sometimes other things. They are not going to be simpatico with liberal Democrats.

It makes it a more difficult position for Democrats who are going to find in that group that they need to hold together to figure out what the party position is in a different place than Republicans for whom the most ideologically, most extreme group but are also most religious and most engaged with family are on the right of their party. I find that something to be hard to predict but it's a truth that I think is underplayed about ideology and partisanship in American policy.

MR. REEVES: And it means the building coalitions within the parties. So, you know, a chance to quick. I have Molly Reynolds, a colleague here at Brookings was talking last night in her event for Alice Rivlin about coalitions within parties becoming much more important in the context of all kinds of things including filibuster. And these differences within parties being somewhat overlooked right now in the debate about partisanship.

MR. POPE: And the parties having to sense asymmetric problems. The Republicans have a coalition that has to reach out to people that are more secular and very different to build the kind of coalition that they're looking for.

Democrats, their base is the sort of highly secular one where they want to get to a majority, they have to reach out to the middle. And the other part of the coalition inside of their party. Then it's just very different. Much more church attending, more family friendly. And I don't know really know which way this is going to go over time.

I don't really disagree with Brad. I just think it's probably a more complex story inside of each party.

MR. REEVES: You make it sound easy, Jeremy. But I think maybe it's not as easy as it sounds for the Democrats right now. But anyway, I know Elaine has views on that. Chris?

MR. KARPOWITZ: No. I think Jeremy is right and I think paying attention to the segments within the Democrat party who are more involved in worship, regular worship, I think is a really important thing to do going forward.

The other thing I would say is that, Richard, as you've pointed out, right? There are educational differences too in terms of the extent to which people are likely to get married. And so, I worry a lot -- the group I worry about the most is the group that is -- seems to have accepted this sort of cultural message that marriage isn't so great, and they are not doing it at all.

And we don't see that in better educated and higher income folks on the left too. They're going ahead and getting married. And so, I think part of the challenge on the left is how do you talk about marriage in a way that takes seriously gender equality and other commitments that are really important to the left? And I think sometimes the way it's talked about is sort of problematic because it is sort of lumped together with all sorts of things in the past that we haven't liked.

The other thing I will say is that in terms of the choice to get married. I think young people today see the economic bar as being much higher than previous generations.

MR. REEVES: For marriage specifically?

MR. KARPOWITZ: For marriage. The economic bar to get married and the number of sort of prerequisites that you have to check off before it's okay to married. That is a big difference across the cohorts. And so, I think that bears some attention as well. What should that bar be, if any, right?

So the oldest age cohorts when we've asked them in past American Family Surveys is they said, get married first and these other things will follow, right? But I don't think that's the way young people today tend to think of it.

MR. REEVES: Okay. Thank you. I want to come back to on a different topic now to Elaine and then Brad, which is this issue of how this might affect public policy with regard to families.

So there is this question that's been asked in the survey which was intended to get at the distinction between just giving money to people. Obviously, we can think of things like child tax credit and so on. And instead investing in services say through schools, say through job training programs or whatever. It was to get at like if we're going to support families, should we just give them money? Or provide services?

And this year the answer was, yes, please. If I understood it correctly. Yeah, we'll have all of that. And so, I wonder, you know, to the extent that could just be a certain recoil from the current economic situation. But how did you read that result, Elaine? Or more generally, how did you read the survey as someone who is thinking about the role of government? The role of public policy? These huge debates we've got right now about things like child tax credit? About investments in families? The role of just state transfers and so on too?

I guess particularly if we're thinking about it from, you know, maybe an intellect perspective. Like if you were advising a Democrat on this what would you say? But maybe also if you were advising, say, a moderate Republican on this. A Remny or a Rubio, what would you be saying in terms of the results here? What are the political implications do you think for policy?

MS. KAMARCK: Well, I think there's a critical balance here between giving money through, say, the child tax credit, okay? Which is a central issue here. To the child tax credit or through programs?

And the problem is that we tend to think that it's an either/or. You have to have programs because in fact there are, and there always have been, families mostly unmarried mothers with children who are in a mess, okay? A mess. There's illiteracy. There's drug and alcohol dependency. There's,

you know, irregular employment. There's a lack of a social structure around them.

Those are the people who end up in programs. You get rid of programs and you're going to have an awful lot of sad situations in the country. Even sadder than they already are.

For the vast majority of parents however who are kind of coping, et cetera. They need money, okay? They need help. They need a child tax credit. They need, you know, a childcare assistance. They need higher quality childcare or a childcare voucher or something like that. So you have to realize that the programs are, in fact, very carefully structured for people who are really have serious problems coping.

And that's why you can't say it's either/or because you will have people who need social workers in their lives. Who need social workers to say, do this, do that, you better go to this drug rehab program. Here's what your kids should be doing, et cetera. You know, that is not fortunately the vast majority of American families who just need a little financial help.

So I think you've got to -- you always have to do both as a matter of public policy. And you have to make sure that the real problem group that you're dealing with that the programs actually are effective or else the first thing you get is people saying, why should we have programs?

MR. REEVES: Yeah. So there's a cash on the care element too. And I think it's worth saying and Chris and Jeremy will tell me if this is wrong. The question is very vague. And so there could well be some differences in terms of what they mean. Like when they say yes, you should spend. They might have very different views on that.

But nonetheless, Brad, I'd love your view on this because you have been quite outspoken on the need for a conservative profamily policy which does include significant income transfers. It does include a very active role for government in supporting families, which obviously is not the view how by some of those on the right. So were you pleased to see that? I mean obviously more left than right, but --

MR. WILCOX: So let me just say two things, Richard. I think on the first point, I think I would say I think it's a challenge now with conservatives. I think Americans more generally I think there's kind of a new kind of hesitation when it comes to spending on programs and spending on, you know, just

giving families a generous child allowance, for instance because of this issue of inflation that we're confronting.

I think that's one sort of challenge that's going to be -- especially for us Republicans who like -- or conservatives who like, you know, for the Republican party to become more active on family policy.

There's one thing I wanted to mention though is when you look at trends, Richard, as you and Bill did in your book on the middle class. In terms of kind of family income. You know, what you see is the group that sort of is seeing the most stagnation in the last few decades and sort of that working- and middle-class segment. And both the rich obviously have done very well. But the poor have done comparatively well too because of all the programs that Elaine was commenting on just a few minutes ago.

And so, I think from my perspective just some of this interesting kind of thinking about making working class spending more attractive, more successful, more stable. I think that's sort of a tragedy. And we should be sort of rethinking our tax and transfer programs so that they are linked more to work and marriage being, you know, basically pathways to prosperity. The lower of people of the income distribution.

So we need to be thinking about reforming programs like Medicaid, for instance, in ways that don't penalize working that extra hours and losing your Medicaid. Or marrying the father of your kids. Like I talked to one couple in Virginia who weren't getting married because they would lose Medicaid in Virginia.

So when we think about how do we look at our programs with an eye towards making working marriage more appealing or attractive in financial remunerative for the working-class couples and families.

MR. REEVES: Yeah, I agree. I think between the safety net and the people who benefit from the salt deduction. So everyone in between those two groups essentially are the ones where you do see this kind of being common. I'm not suggesting the safety net is perfect by any means, but you're

right.

From a lower base, you have seen more support going to those at the bottom. But it is right in the middle. And in fact, this comes back a bit to Chris' point about marriage. The word from Heather Boushey and others shows that the only thing that's propped up the middle-class incomes has been the rise in the earnings employment of women, which is obviously in and of itself a fantastic thing. But it has already really come to the rescue of middle-class family incomes. Men's earnings in employment would actually have been a drag down on the unemployment.

So I want to build something up. Elaine, did you want to respond to that? I wasn't sure if you wanted to?

MS. KAMARCK: No, I think it's good.

MR. REEVES: Okay. So I'm very interested. So obviously you've got these questions on education. Let's talk a bit about that because that's obviously a hot issue. You know, these great questions about like who should be in charge? Parents? I had the slight sense that that was particularly at the moment a bit of a yea saying question in a way. Which is like who is going to be against the idea of parents having a say?

So I didn't honestly know quite how to interpret that result because you have parents and then had like special government, state government. You had a list of bureaucrats or parents. And so, I don't know. I'd love to let Elaine or Brad think about that. But I looked at that and I thought, you know what? I don't really know what to make of that answer honestly given the way it was framed. So tell me if I'm being unfair. And if I'm being unfair then tell me what this means politically other than just like people like parents especially if they're parents.

MS. KAMARCK: Listen, Richard, I had the same reaction you did, right?

MR. REEVES: Okay. Fine. So I wasn't being unfair. Okay.

MS. KAMARCK: Yeah. No, I don't think you're being fair. I don't know what that means. And the fact of the matter is that, you know, listen. I always go back when it comes to education to an experience, I had in the 2000 campaign where I was traveling with Vice President Al Gore and he was, of

course, against George W. Bush.

And the two of them spent much of the campaign talking as if they were running for president of the school board instead of President of the United States. You know, the amount of time in that campaign they spent on education pre-K through 12 was really sort of funny if you think about it because, of course, Al Gore knew full well as did George Bush that the President of the United States spends about almost zero time in an average day on education.

Education is very local. So obviously, when parents get excited about something, pro or con, right? They are a big force to be dealt with locally because it's easy to -- for them to assess, you know, local situations and local school boards as opposed to say, the U.S. Department of Education. So I mean I do think that, yes, parents say that because, in fact, they want to be able to get in there if need be.

Most of the time, however, they're not. Now, there's been a research that's on the right of parents who are going to school boards and far right activists taking over school boards, et cetera. But again, there are tens of thousands of school boards in the United States. And so, I kind of think that that's a tough one, that's a tough one.

MR. REEVES: Yeah. Brad, I'd love your views on this too and then maybe Chris --

MR. KARPOWITZ: Well, I think Elaine was right and I'm prolife and I'm Catholic so, I don't agree with her on substance. But I mean she was right on the politics about her comments regarding the way in which this whole Dobson thing is played politically. I think she's exactly right. It's helped the Democrat party.

But I think one reason we're talking about a very competitive race coming up in November is because these issues, whether it's to race and gender in the schools, the way much of our schools are handling these issues play to the Republican advantage. I mean most parents, you know, when they see some of these new curricular just either roll their eyes or they're jaw drops in horror.

I mean I've been, you know, the parent of kids in public schools in Marion County, Virginia which was for a very long time a very strong, you know, school system. But there's been a dramatic shift in our local public schools in the directions of stressing a very -- I would say radical,

progressive gender and racialist ideology and deemphasizing, you know, more meritocratic education.

And, you know, I think a lot of parents in the middle have become uncomfortable with, you know, what's happening and have given people like, you know, Len Young Chang support to put him over the top. And I think the same thing has happened also in Florida with Robby Sims as well.

So I think here we have a different cultural issues that has been pushing, you know, a lot of people in the middle in the direction of the Republican party. And unless and until the Democrats kind of cool it with some of this, you know, stuff related to the more racialist and kind of very progressive gender agenda and focus on things like math and science and English where our kids are not actually doing all that well.

You know, if the Democrats can muster kind of the strength that return to the basics when it comes our schools, I think they'll do a lot better in these, you know, political context. But right now, they haven't been able to shift gears in local schools.

MR. REEVES: Well, I mean Youngkin did win big among parents. As to whether that's COVID, race. I mean there was a lot. Elaine?

MS. KAMARCK: I would say to that, Brad, I think the lesson has been learned. Whether it will get affect. We just surveyed -- we didn't survey. We just coded 2,360 congressional primary candidates in both parties. And we asked about all of these issues including the education ones, critical race theory.

We found almost no Democrats. I mean under ten Democrats even mentioning the issue. They just stayed away from it. They didn't talk about. They said, you know, more money for education, this, that and the other thing. They did not talk about it.

Now, the Republicans do a very good job at making this an issue. But it is not there in the candidates of the party. It simply wasn't there nor was, you know, defund the police. That was gone too. So I think what's happened is that the Democrats allowed a fringe of the party to have their say and in doing so created an opening for the Republicans to say, this is the whole Democratic party. It simply isn't. I mean it just simply isn't.

MR. REEVES: Chris and Jeremy, let's hear from you now.

MR. KARPOWITZ: Yeah. I would say that we also wondered exactly what to think and what the right set of response options was for this question about parental control and who are the other figures that we should put on that question?

And I would agree completely with Elaine that most parents even if they sort of in a general sense say, yeah, parents should ultimately have a say are not actively sort of engaged on most of these issues. And most wouldn't be prepared to do that even if they -- so I think there's more work to do to really understand what parental control might mean.

Certainly, as Jeremy pointed out, it means that because schools are local, we are likely to find very different solutions to these issues in Mississippi, down in Massachusetts. And where I think there really are deep differences across the party and these aren't just racial differences. They're differences between white Democrats and white Republicans is how do we talk on the issue of race?

How do we talk about the nation's fraught history on this? When we ask people what should schools teach about race? There's overwhelming agreement that we should teach that there's been progress on race. But there's gigantic disagreement about what that means in terms of confronting the past and the continued legacy of the past today.

And that's where I see the fault line. It's just enormous. There are also fault lines in terms of how to handle issues of gender identity that I think are important to understand and that worry me, frankly, in terms of the support that transgender students might feel in public schools and a variety of places. But those are the fault lines that I would see.

MR. REEVES: Yeah. I'm now wondering like it's my fault that we spent a lot of time on some of these cultural issues because they're obviously kind of salient. But it's a silver lining of the economic -- what's the word? The economic difficulty that we're currently facing that in some sense is like for the families that -- the charts on inflation and interest rates.

So we're talking about this now, but, you know, it seems like from the survey that a lot of American families have sort of bigger fish to fry right now. It's not that they don't care about these issues.

I mean I'm not saying that's not a reason to have runaway inflation, high interest rates and a potentially huge recession. It's not the best way to end the culture war.

But is there some sense of that? That, you know, we're talking about it now but everyone else is like what you just said. I can't fill the car with gas, and I'm worried about food. And you're talking about abortion and critical rights theory. Is there any truth to that?

MR. POPE: This doesn't have anything to do with the data that we have in front of us today, but other data --

MR. REEVES: We're in the last few minutes so you can freelance for a bit there.

MR. POPE: Okay. Then I'm going to freelance and say I think that the ideological character of American politics is shifting. And I think that one of the strange things that's going is that -- especially the Republicans and the conservatives are shifting in a much more ideological cultural grievance direction.

Now, you may be right that once inflation kicks in, right? Once we go through yet another year of the kind of economic pain. Once people are looking at their yearly budget and resources that this will change their attitude about things. I think that's entirely possible. But it does seem to me that there's this whole set of new issues that animate Republicans that Democrats don't want to talk about as much and are as not as interested in.

The problem is the other party gets a vote. And I think both of these parties are going to sort of push each to talk about these issues. Even with the issues are sometimes don't necessarily make any sense.

To bring it back to schools for a second. I totally agree with what Elaine said that -- I'll put it this way. It's delusional for parents to believe that they are actually going to control schools, right? Because they're not going to. When there's school board night election or even like input shows up. They have better things to do. They're going to be out to dinner. They're going to be watching Netflix. They're going to have other things on their mind.

But something I always remind my students is public opinion is always worth being aware

of even when it is delusional. And so, I think that this is an issue that the left need to face up to, which is the public broadly like when asked wants parents to be in charge. That maybe unrealistic but it is definitely a current out there that I think is important.

Chris is right. We're going to come up with new questions probably over the next few years to push on this and see where it goes. But it was so pervasive across both parties in both directions that I just have this feeling the right political entrepreneur will figure out a way to make that an issue in elections.

MR. REEVES: Yeah. And as Elaine says for now, certainly on the left it is true in the up runner to the midterms, the Democrats used to lean into reproductive rights, for example, post-Roe. And so, at least for now you might be seeing that both sides to some extent are seeing advantages in leaning hard into those cultural issues, but different ones. Is that fair, Elaine?

MS. KAMARCK: Yes. And let me just make a separate abortion from the other cultural issues. It's different. It is life and death and health for half the population, okay? That's what this is about.

This is about state interference in essentially what are in very, very often medical decisions. For most of human history, women died in childbirth. And they still do or are damaged in some way. So this whole notion that it is sort of a cultural, religious issue, dah-dah-dah. No. It's an actual real issue for 51 percent of the population which constitutes 55 percent of the electorate vote. So it's a different thing than the other cultural issues. And I think that's important to remember.

MR. REEVES: And again, the other side would say something --

MR. WILCOX: Elaine, here again I was talking to a friend from Virginia and she's prochoice. And she's outraged by the Dobbs decision, but she's a leaning Republican right now because she's also a mother. And she has seen what's happening in her schools.

I mean just a dramatic difference. We're not talking here, Chris, about just sort of how do we talk about history? We're talking about like just incredible ideas about gender coming to the schools. We're talking about gutting hierocratic programs in the schools. These are like huge changes that are

xunfolding.

So I don't care if a Democratic candidate is running for Congress or trimming their shares to be deemphasize issues. On the ground in many public schools across America, there are radical changes that are happening that are leading folks including prochoice women to reconsider their kind of orientation to supporting the Democratic party. So unless until or again the Democratic party shifts away from this kind of agenda on the ground in schools and gets back to looking at things like math and science and reading.

I think they're going to be facing some real challenges including among Hispanic and black working-class Americans who also often don't like these new ways of approaching education.

MR. REEVES: That's a great way to think about it. Is that people are being torn in different directions maybe on a lot of these issues, right?

Well, we've hit time. So I want to thank Chris and Jeremy again for your presentation. It (inaudible) BYU for doing this survey. It always creates rich conversation, and you were very open to the conversation. I know I see to my colleague, Elaine and Brad, for your comments there too. So thank you everybody. Watch this space. And thanks for joining us all today. Be safe.

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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