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From: Kellyanne Conway, President and CEO
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Date: July 12, 2006

Re: *Executive Summary & Analysis: Results of Pre-Test Survey in Washington, DC*

Introduction & Methodology

the polling company™, inc./WomanTrend is pleased to present to the **Center for Education Reform (CER)** this analysis of findings from a recent telephone survey of 250 adult (18+) residents of Washington, DC.

The survey was fielded July 7-9, 2006 at a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility using live callers. The sample was drawn utilizing a Random Digit Dialing (RDD) method where phone numbers were generated by a computer to ensure that every household in the District had an equal chance to be surveyed.

Sampling controls were used to ensure that a proportional and representative number of people were interviewed from such demographic groups as age, gender, race and ethnicity, and Ward. All interviewees had the option of having the survey administered in either English or Spanish¹.

The survey was ten questions in length including six demographic inquiries and one open-ended question. The final questionnaire was approved by the President of CER prior to fielding. Topline results are attached as Appendix A to this report.

This "pre-test" survey was conducted in advance of a communications and outreach program planned by CER. The primary objective of the survey was to measure awareness and knowledge of the *DC Opportunity Scholarship Program* and the transfer options available to DC public school students by utilizing vouchers. Upon conclusion of the outreach effort, scheduled to run from July 2006 to March 2007, a "post-test" survey will be conducted to measure the impact of the campaign on residents' awareness of and support for the program.

The margin of error is calculated at $\pm 6.2\%$ at the 95% confidence level, meaning that the results obtained would differ by no more than 6.2 percentage points in either direction if the entire adult population of the District of Columbia were to be surveyed. Margins of error for subgroups are higher.

¹ Six respondents opted to take the survey in Spanish.

Analysis of Findings

ROOM TO MOVE: Only 11% of DC Residents Acknowledged Familiarity with the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program in the Baseline Test.

Washington, DC residents lack a fundamental knowledge about the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program. Overall, just one-in-ten (11%) of those surveyed were aware of the Program, and a paltry 2% claimed to be “very familiar” with it.

By comparison, 78% admitted they did not recognize the Program. **In fact, an eye-popping 68% of residents claimed a complete lack of knowledge, noting they were “very unfamiliar.”**

- An examination of the crosstabs revealed that among the demographic groups studied, 35-54 year olds were most likely than respondents overall to be familiar with the Program (17%-11%).

This full-disclosure of ignorance by DC residents is even more remarkable given that people are often hesitant to reveal that they are “out of the loop.” The fact that respondents so willingly acknowledged that they were wholly unacquainted with the DC Opportunity Scholarship suggests that the District is a true blank slate on which a compelling message can be written.

This nearly complete lack of awareness presents a challenge (starting at zero), but mostly an opportunity for CER. Rather than battling pre-conceived notions, stereotypes or misinformation, CER will be able to build an understanding of the Scholarship Program among residents “from the ground up.”

Even Those Who Think They Know about the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program Lack Specific Information about its True Intent.

Respondents who reported some level of knowledge with the Opportunity Scholarship Program² were then asked in open-ended fashion to describe it in their own words. **Despite their self-reported familiarity with the DC Program, only a handful of these residents were able to accurately explain it.**

Four-in-ten (40%) could not or would not elaborate on the Scholarship, saying simply that they did not know, while 25% thought it provided funds for DC students to go to college. Another 15% volunteered that the program provided some kind of financial assistance for schooling, but without clarification as to who was eligible or to what schools they scholarship monies were provided.

To begin, how familiar are you with the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program, administered by the Washington Scholarship Fund?

11% FAMILIAR (NET)

2% VERY FAMILIAR

9% SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR

78% UNFAMILIAR (NET)

10% SOMEWHAT UNFAMILIAR

68% VERY UNFAMILIAR

11% DO NOT KNOW (VOLUNTEERED)
REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

² Only respondents who said they were “very familiar,” “somewhat familiar,” or “somewhat unfamiliar” with the DC Opportunity Scholarship program in question 1 were asked this follow-up inquiry (N=52).

In total, only 7 of the 250 residents surveyed correctly described the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program as a voucher program to send public school students to private schools. Among them, three shared a neutral account, two offered a positive assessment, and two made their disapproval of the Scholarship plain.

SELECTED VERBATIM RESPONSES OF DC RESIDENTS WHO ACCURATELY EXPLAINED THE DC OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM:

POSITIVE

"They go by according by the parent's income and once you are approved then you receive a handbook of choices of schools from K-12 grade and they help pay for everything and it was a blessing and they also give me a weekly report card of my child's progress. I strongly approve of this program."

"Very good idea. Opportunity for students enrolled in public schools not working up to par to have an opportunity otherwise unavailable, by paying private school expenses."

NEGATIVE

"It takes tax payers' money and gives it to private schools rather than give it to public schools for improvements. It undermines the public school and it allows private people running charter schools to profit off the public's money and steal it."

"A support system for low income people to go to private schools (K-12) and I must say I am totally against the program because it infringe on the public school system."

NEUTRAL

"It's essentially the voucher program. The money that goes to DC children to pay for private school, often called vouchers."

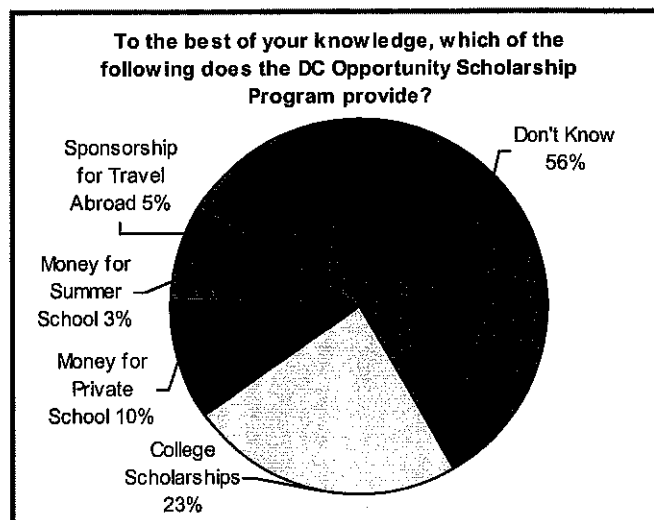
"It's scholarships for students in low performing schools to allow them to attend private schools with limited amount of money."

"Is provided by the federal government provided to families at 185% poverty level for their children to go to private school."

The Majority of Residents Don't Even Venture a Guess as to What the DC Opportunity Scholarship Provides.

The fundamental misunderstanding of the Opportunity Scholarship Program revealed in responses to the open-ended inquiry was reinforced and quantified by the findings from the next question – a closed-ended query which asked all respondents to select what the Scholarship provided from a list of four read answer choices.

A majority of residents (56%) freely admitted that they did not know what the DC Scholarship granted, even when given a list of possibilities from which to choose.



Just one-in-ten (10%) correctly identified that the Opportunity Scholarship Program provided “money for DC students to attend private schools.” The most common conclusion drawn by respondents was that it offered “college scholarships for DC students” (23%), while single-digits selected “sponsorships for DC students to travel abroad as exchange students” (5%) and “money for DC students to attend summer school programs” (3%).

- Residents aged 55 or older and those who reported that they were at least somewhat familiar with the Scholarship Program at the outset of the survey were more likely than most to know that it helped students afford private school.
- *Not a single respondent who identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino thought the DC Opportunity Program provided money for private school.*

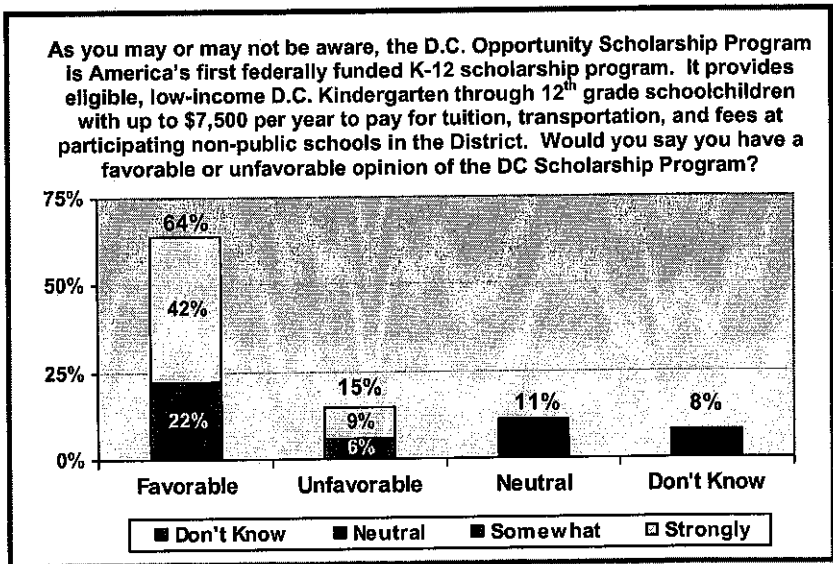
A Simple Explanation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program Nets a Favorable-to-Unfavorable Ratio of 4-to-1.

Education is a common path to engagement and acceptance. **An impressive 64% of DC residents responded positively to a straightforward, factual explanation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program.** The intensity of residents’ embrace of the Scholarship Program was notable, with 42% reporting a “strongly” favorable opinion, nearly double the 22% who held a “somewhat” positive view.

By comparison, 15% of DC residents met the description of the Opportunity Scholarship with a “thumbs down.”

One-in-ten (11%) claimed neither a favorable nor unfavorable opinion of the Program based on the description, and another 8% said they did not know.

Combined, this suggests that almost one-in-five DC residents currently on the fence about the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program may be “gettable” if targeted with additional information.



- Blacks stood out among the demographic cohorts studied as among the most supportive of the Opportunity Scholarship Program (70% “favorable”).
- Men were more likely than women to have a positive opinion of the Program (68%-61%).

- Whites and 35-54 year olds were more apt than respondents overall to have an unfavorable view of the DC Program, though clear majorities of both groups offered a positive assessment.
- Hispanics and those without children at home emerged as the groups most likely to volunteer a neutral opinion of the Opportunity Scholarship.

It appears that the simple facts about the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program are enough to generate significant support. CER may find the greatest success by sticking to the basics and increasing understanding and acceptance of the Program with simple yet specific information that includes both “hard facts” (statistics about what is provided and who is helped) and “soft anecdotes” (testimonials from parents and children who have benefited).

the polling company™, inc. presents
DC Opportunity Scholarship Pre-Test Topline Data
to Center for Education Reform

Completed Interviews: 250 Washington, DC residents

Field Dates: July 7-9, 2006

Margin of Error: ± 6.2%

A. Are you 18 years of age or older and a resident of Washington, DC?

100% YES (CONTINUED)

B. Is there someone in the household I could speak with who is 18 or older?

100% YES (CONTINUED)

DC Scholarship Program

1. To begin, how familiar are you with the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, administered by the Washington Scholarship Fund? (READ RESPONSES, ROTATED TOP TO BOTTOM)

11% FAMILIAR (NET)

2% VERY FAMILIAR (ASKED Q 2)

9% SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR (ASKED Q 2)

78% UNFAMILIAR (NET)

10% SOMEWHAT UNFAMILIAR (ASKED Q 2)

68% VERY UNFAMILIAR (SKIPPED Q 2)

11% DO NOT KNOW (VOLUNTEERED) (SKIPPED Q 2)

- REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED) (SKIPPED Q 2)

2. Please describe, in your own words, the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program. How would you explain it to someone who had never heard of it? Anything else? (OPEN ENDED, RECORDED VERBATIM) N=52

25% COLLEGE RELATED (NET)

- * THEY PAY FOR THE COLLEGE
- * IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE, A CHILD WHO IS A RESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT QUALIFIES FOR ANY COLLEGE IN THE COUNTRY.
- * D.C. RESIDENTS CAN GET INSTATE TUITION AT STATE UNIVERSITIES
- * PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR D.C. HIGH SCHOOL GRADS TO ATTEND SCHOOLS OUT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.
- * D.C. COMPENSATES, PUTS MONEY UP SO PEOPLE CAN GET THE SAME TUITION AS PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES CHARGE.
- * I THINK IT'S THE IDEA THAT IF YOU'RE A DC RESIDENT YOU CAN GET IN-STATE TUITION TO ASSIST YOU IN COLLEGE
- * IT'S A COLLEGE TUITION PROGRAM FOR ANY CHILD, ANY AMOUNT OF MONEY, CAN GO TO ANY SCHOOL
- * THE PROGRAM IS FOR THE YOUTH (I HEARD ABOUT IT THROUGH MY SON'S HIGH SCHOOL) TO HELP FUNDING FOR KIDS TO GET INTO COLLEGE
- * IT IS THE COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAM.
- * IT HELPS KIDS GET THROUGH SCHOOL AND GIVES THEM MONEY FOR COLLEGE
- * IT'S A FEDERAL PROGRAM THAT ALLOWS DC COLLEGE BOUND STUDENTS TO TAKE CLASSES AT UNIVERSITIES AROUND THE AREA
- * IT'S A SCHOLARSHIP FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN GOING TO COLLEGE EITHER OUT OF STATE OR IN STATE.
- * THAT IT IS AVAILABLE TO LET THE COUNSELOR GIVE STUDENTS INFO ABOUT GOING TO COLLEGE

15% GENERAL SCHOLARSHIPS/FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (NET)

- * I ASSUME, IT WOULD BE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR RESIDENTS OF WASHINGTON, D.C. BASED ON THE NAME.
- * I THINK IT GOOD FOR THE BLACK COMMUNITY BECAUSE IT GIVE THEM GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE UP AND AHEAD IF THEY WANT TO BECAUSE THE FUNDS ARE THERE
- * THEY HAVE TO KNOW THE BASICS OF A SCHOLARSHIP FIRST. THEY NEED TO BE KNOWLEDGEABLE FIRST, AND THEN I CAN GIVE THEM MORE DETAILS.
- * IT IS A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR K-12.
- * IT'S A WAY FOR STUDENTS TO GET HELP FOR SCHOOL
- * IT'S A VERY GOOD PROGRAM IF YOU QUALIFY FOR IT
- * I THINK IT'S APART OF THE DODGER PROGRAM
- * OPPORTUNITY FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN

13% VOUCHERS/PAY FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL (NET)

- * THEY GO BY ACCORDING BY THE PARENT'S INCOME AND ONCE YOU ARE APPROVED THEN YOU RECEIVE A HANDBOOK OF CHOICES OF SCHOOLS FROM K - 12 GRADE AND THEY HELP PAY FOR EVERYTHING AND IT WAS A BLESSING AND THEY ALSO GIVE ME A WEEKLY REPORT CARD OF MY CHILD'S PROGRESS. I STRONGLY APPROVE OF THIS PROGRAM.
- * VERY GOOD IDEA. OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS NOT WORKING UP TO PAR TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY OTHERWISE UNAVAILABLE, BY PAYING PRIVATE SCHOOL EXPENSES.
- * IT TAKES TAX PAYERS MONEY AND GIVES IT TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS RATHER THAN GIVE IT TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR IMPROVEMENTS. IT UNDERMINES THE PUBLIC SCHOOL AND IT ALLOWS PRIVATE PEOPLE RUNNING CHARTER SCHOOLS TO PROFIT OF OFF THE PUBLICS MONEY AND STEAL IT.

- * ITS ESSENTIALLY THE VOUCHER PROGRAM. THE MONEY THAT GOES TO D.C. CHILDREN TO PAY FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL, OFTEN CALLED VOUCHERS.
- * IT'S SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS IN LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS TO ALLOW THEM TO ATTEND PRIVATE SCHOOLS WITH LIMITED AMOUNT OF MONEY.
- * A SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR LOW INCOME PEOPLE TO GO TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS(K-12) AND I MUST SAY I AM TOTALLY AGAINST THE PROGRAMS BECAUSE IT INFRINGE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.
- * IS PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROVIDED TO FAMILIES AT 185% POVERTY LEVEL FOR THEIR CHILDREN TO GO TO PRIVATE SCHOOL.

6% OTHER (NET)

- * I DON'T LIKE IT. IT TAKES AWAY FROM THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- * IT ALREADY IN PROGRESS
- * I HELPED MAKE IT

40% I DON'T KNOW

3. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following does the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program provide? (READ RESPONSES, ROTATED, ACCEPTED ONLY ONE)

- 23% COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DC STUDENTS
- 10% MONEY FOR DC STUDENTS TO ATTEND PRIVATE SCHOOLS
- 5% SPONSORSHIPS FOR DC STUDENTS TO TRAVEL ABROAD AS EXCHANGE STUDENTS
- 3% MONEY FOR DC STUDENTS TO ATTEND SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS
- 1% OTHER (VOLUNTEERED)
- 56% DO NOT KNOW (VOLUNTEERED)
- 2% REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

4. As you may or may not be aware, the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program is America's first federally funded K-12 scholarship program. It provides eligible, low-income D.C. Kindergarten through 12th grade schoolchildren with up to \$7,500 per year to pay for tuition, transportation, and fees at participating non-public schools in the District. Would you say you have a (ROTATED) a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the DC Scholarship Program? And would that be STRONGLY favorable/unfavorable or SOMEWHAT favorable/unfavorable?

64% FAVORABLE (NET)

- 42% STRONGLY FAVORABLE
- 22% SOMEWHAT FAVORABLE

15% UNFAVORABLE (NET)

- 6% SOMEWHAT UNFAVORABLE
- 9% STRONGLY UNFAVORABLE

11% NEITHER/NEUTRAL (VOLUNTEERED)

- 8% DO NOT KNOW (VOLUNTEERED)
- 1% REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

Demographics

Now I have a few more questions for statistical purposes...

5. Which of the following categories best describes your age range? (READ LIST)

16% 18-24
22% 25-34
19% 35-44
16% 45-54
11% 55-64
10% 65-74
6% 75+

1% REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

6. Do you have any children? (IF YES: HOW MANY?)

57% YES (NET)
25% YES, 1
18% YES, 2
14% YES, 3 OR MORE

42% NO

1% REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

7. Do you consider yourself a Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish American?

13% YES
85% NO

1% DON'T KNOW (VOLUNTEERED)

1% REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

8. Which of the following best describes your racial background? (READ AND ROTATED)

28% CAUCASIAN OR WHITE
57% AFRICAN-AMERICAN OR BLACK
* ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER
* NATIVE AMERICAN
* OTHER (VOLUNTEERED)

1% REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

* DON'T KNOW (VOLUNTEERED)

9. Gender

46% MALE
54% FEMALE

10. What WARD do you live in?

14% WARD 1
14% WARD 2
8% WARD 3
14% WARD 4
12% WARD 5
10% WARD 6
13% WARD 7
16% WARD 8