Worried, Invisible, & Unheard
She's the Difference: Focus Groups with Women Ages 50 and Older, June 2022
Transcript Group 1 - White GOP Women – May 23, 2022

MODERATOR:
All right. Let's dive in with introductions, then. We're going to do who or what lives with you at home and what you like to do for fun. So I will start off. I am MODERATOR. I am a focus group moderator. I live with my husband and my golden retriever. And for fun, I like to grow chili peppers and watch auto racing. All right, [PARTICIPANT 1], I'll come to you first.

Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)
Yeah, I am 68 years old. I like to spend a lot of time with my grandchildren. I actually live here with my husband and my 92 year old mother-in-law. We're taking care of her and I have 12 grandchildren and just had our seventh great grandchild. So that's what I like, family.

MODERATOR:
Fantastic. [PARTICIPANT 2] who or what lives with you and something you like to do for fun.

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
I am [PARTICIPANT 2] and I could just be you MODERATOR, only I'm in Arizona. I too live with my husband and a golden retriever, but I don't grow chili peppers. Instead I like to run and read and I just trained the puppy to run on a leash. So I'm excited to take advantage of that.

MODERATOR:
Oh, very nice. Very nice. [PARTICIPANT 3].

Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
I live here with my husband and our catahoula dog. She was a rescue and she's really not good for much, but letting me know when somebody's at the door, that's about it. What I do for fun. I like to bake. Doesn't matter what I just like to bake. Don't really care to eat too much of it. So I just give it away to other people when they show up.

MODERATOR:
Oh, you're the best type of friend to have [PARTICIPANT 3]. Janet. How about you?

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)
I live with my husband and my son and I have two rescue sisters from the New York city, ASPCA. And they're old girls. They're so charming and sweet and I love to go for walks and I like to be outside and I love to be with family and friends.

MODERATOR:
Nice to meet you, [PARTICIPANT 4]. [PARTICIPANT 5] T?
Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)
Hi, I'm [PARTICIPANT 5]. I live with my husband and my two kids and for fun, I like to garden decorate, entertain, and I like do it yourself kind of projects like fixing up old things and making them look fun and putting them in my home, my yard.

MODERATOR:
Fantastic. [PARTICIPANT 6], how about you?

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
I'm [PARTICIPANT 6]. I'm a medical auditor. I live with my husband and my daughter and her husband and my grandchild live here with us. We just opened our pool. So we love to swim and have family outings. My son lives next door, which is wonderful. So family is definitely my time and my kids. I love to cook for all of them. My husband tells me to stop feeding the neighborhood.

MODERATOR:
A lot of folks in this group who it would be intensive activity being your friend. All right. And last but not least, I think [PARTICIPANT 7] S.

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
Hi, I'm [PARTICIPANT 7]. I live in Missouri. I'm 57 and me and my husband and our fur baby Cookie. She's a Pekingese rescue dog and I have eight grandkids. Well part time I take care of my husband, he has dementia. And also I have eight grandkids and I enjoy writing. I'm a writer and I work with children with disabilities and I like to travel.

MODERATOR:
Well, it's wonderful to meet all of you. So my first question is going to be a fill in the blank exercise. I'm going to say a sentence, but I'm going to leave a blank. And I want you to fill in the blank with the word. Just one word that you would place in that sentence. And I'll go around and hear from each of you. And then go back and ask why some of you picked the words you picked. So once I give you the sentence, pick a word, I'll call on each of you to say it, and then I'll follow up after I've got everybody's words. Okay, so the sentence is "I feel blank about the way things are going in the country today. I feel blank about the way things are going in the country today."

[PARTICIPANT 2], what would you say is your word?

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
Baffled.

MODERATOR:
Baffled. [PARTICIPANT 4]?

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)
I say, I feel sad.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 3].
Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
Annoyed.

MODERATOR:
Annoyed. [PARTICIPANT 1]?

Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)
I'd say devastated.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 6].

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
Okay. Two of them took what I was say. So let me try to think of something-

MODERATOR:
You're allowed to repeat. No you're allowed to repeat. If you want.

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
I feel devastated. I really do feel devastated.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 7], [PARTICIPANT 7], I think you're still muted.

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
Sorry.

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
Sorry. Worried.

MODERATOR:
Worried. And then [PARTICIPANT 5].

Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)
Hopeless.

MODERATOR:
Hopeless. [PARTICIPANT 3], you were annoyed. I will start with annoyed. What annoys you?

Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
Well, I think that the government could have seen maybe this coming with all their-

MODERATOR:
What is this?
Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
The price of fuel, the price of food, inflation, they should have done something to figure out like back testing of what was going to happen if they did yada yada, yada, you know.

MODERATOR:
How long have you felt this way? How long have you felt annoyed about the way things are going?

Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
Oh, for the last couple years. I could just see it spiraling out of control when they were printing money and you knew inflation was going to come after that. And it's here.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 2]. I see you nodding. Your word was baffled. I believe. Tell me why you feel baffled.

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
Because I can't imagine how we got to this point. I'm aware enough of how we did get here. I follow the news. We talk about it in our household often, but I can't believe that these are some of the most brilliant minds in the world. And how did we get to this point? It seems to me that we're just not bringing our A game right now. And that to me is baffling. I don't understand why we are where we're at. Though like I said, I experienced the steps that we took to get here. So I understand that, but this is totally baffling to me.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 7], you said that you were worried, is that right? Tell me a little bit about what you are worried about.

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
Mostly because I have eight grandkids and I'm not worried more for me. I mean, I feel like I'm at the point in my life where I'm kind of going over the hill, but I'm just kind of worried about what the future will be for our grandkids and the inflation and just what will happen, just worrying about what will happen to them and their health and their lifestyle. Even though I watch the news, I kind of wake up thinking, what's going to happen today, because I'm very close to my grandkids. And even being 13, 12, 13, some of them pick up on things and they'll ask me questions. Well, why, why is this? You know? And you know, just even like, if we're at the price of gas now, what's it going to be when they get, I mean, you know what I'm saying? Just to worry about that as a mom and a grandma.

MODERATOR:
I have down that [PARTICIPANT 4], you said sad or pardon me? I believe you were sad. Tell me, tell me why you have sad.

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)
Well, because I say that I feel sad because in a nutshell, I think what's gone on in the last two and a half years since COVID is really sad in this world. The extreme right and left sides with political issues is horrible. That we don't have an opinion anymore. You should be able to like
one or like the other and not disrespect to the extent of calling the guy in the White House, everyone should be treated equal with that. I think our priorities are way off and the world's forgotten God and the American flag, what it really means. And what our forefathers fought for. It's really sad. I have a 27 year old son and he speaks smarter than people that are running this country. Everyone's like either afraid to say the real opinion anymore, that we don't have an opinion.

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)

Nobody has to agree with everyone, but everyone should be peaceful and kind to everyone, no matter what. It's everyone wants you to either like this or they don't like you. We don't have to agree. We can agree to disagree. There used to be. We live in a snowflake era. I come from a Catholic Italian background and we could crack jokes and not insult people. And I always have been friends with a wide variety of different nationality and races. I was never taught any of this stuff. They're imploding in our heads, all kinds of negative thoughts all the time that I think some of us never even thought of.

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)

Nobody ever remembers to just be kind to people and everything is the blame game. Just fix what's wrong and move forward. Like God made this America beautiful and we're ruining it. We're ruining it. They don't care about the mask and the garbage and pollutant environment or the 10,000 water bottles that people don't recycle and do anything with. They're worried about who did what wrong. Just fix it. I believe we're trying to be controlled, you know.

MODERATOR:

[PARTICIPANT 5], you had down that you were hopeless. Tell me why you said hopeless.

Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)

I really agree with [PARTICIPANT 4]. Every time I feel like something is going to be corrected or fixed, like nothing happens. The government pulls out and makes some excuse as to why it can't be corrected or they blame it on the liberals not wanting to pollute the world so they won't use our oil. So we have to pay a hundred dollars to fill up our gas tanks to take our children to school. It's so hopeless and I'm worried for my children. I don't know what it entails for them. I agree with [PARTICIPANT 4] again about you have to watch what you say.

Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)

I mean, people take offense to things that in the past they never did because their heads are-

Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)

You hear all over the media and this person said that's who you're supposed to think that they're trying to change the way people think, as opposed to people being kind and saying things out of jest, and not to hurt somebody just to be friendly or cordial.

MODERATOR:

[PARTICIPANT 5]. How long would you say you felt hopeless? When did this kind of begin?

Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)
I think I’ve been feeling hopeless for about a year or two. I always felt like I was a hopeful person, but lately it’s getting worse and worse and worse with everything that’s happening in the economy and the world and politics and the Ukraine. It’s so sad.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 1] and [PARTICIPANT 6], you both said devastated. [PARTICIPANT 1], I’ll hear from you first. Tell me why you said devastated.

Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)
Well, because I think about my kids and my grandkids and my great grandkids, and what’s going to be their future for them. I mean, we live in a culture now where everything’s woke. You have to be very careful what you say. You can’t really say what you think. I’m worried about my kids, my grandkids, great grandkids’ education. You’re afraid to even talk about what they’re being taught or you’re labeled radical, which most of us just want our kids and grandkids to go to school, to learn about core subjects, English, math, history, and they’re throwing all these other things that are strictly political views into a classroom. And I’m worried for my kids and grandkids. You know, I think-

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 6], how about you. [PARTICIPANT 6] tell me why you say you’re devastated.

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
I feel devastated. Not only I feel for myself as well as my children and my grandchildren and those around me. I mean, just the world in general. The reason for that is because I feel like we have no control, that the government’s just dictating to us what we’re going to do and how we’re going to do it. And we don’t have that say, it’s not freedom. This is not America for the free anymore. And I worry about where this is going to take us, even during my lifetime, we’ve gotten away from God and what that meaning is. Just love, peace. I was born in 1956 and it seemed like a really nice world back then. I just don’t know how it changed or how it happened, but as far as the economy’s concerned, I feel devastated this past year. It just keeps going down and down. I mean, are we going to be able to afford to eat or even put gas in our car to go to work? I mean, does it pay to go to work?

MODERATOR:
I want to ask the flip side of this because these words baffled, sad, devastated, hopeless. I want to know. Is there anything that’s going well? Is there anything that you say, look, I’m devastated or I’m sad, or I feel hopeless, but here’s something that I think is going in the right direction. Put up your hand if you have something that you want to throw in. [PARTICIPANT 6]?

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
I think in the right direction is my family. My family values are still here and we’re close. So I have that to be thankful for.

MODERATOR:
Okay. What about in the country as a whole? Anybody have something in the country as a whole. [PARTICIPANT 2], your hand is up.

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
We are showing our resiliency towards everything that's being thrown at us. Overall, as a population we are being resilient in that we are prepared to take steps to maybe change some of what we're being handed right now. Is it going to turn out as we hope? I don't know. Everyone says let's fix it. Let's fix it. I'm not hearing any plans. But I will say this, the American public in the last 30 years, we are a resilient group of folks and we will figure it out.

MODERATOR:
Well, I want to talk about some of the issues that have already come up a little bit and then some issues that have not yet come up, but I'd like to hear your thoughts on. The first is, we've talked a little bit about the economy, but I want to get your thoughts about how the economy is going. Is there anything in the economy that is going well? And what in the economy is perhaps not going as well? [PARTICIPANT 3], what's your take on how things are going in the economy?

PARTICIPANT 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
I think it's gotten worse between the price of vehicles and everything else we need to live with or live on. It just takes more to live. And I don't see incomes getting any higher. I think that needs to be fixed.

MODERATOR:
Okay. Who else wants to jump in, thoughts on the economy, how it's going right now. [PARTICIPANT 6], and then [PARTICIPANT 7], I want to hear from you on this.

PARTICIPANT 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
I just think we're going in the wrong direction. And every day it just gets worse and worse and nobody seems to be putting their foot down or, somebody at the left is blaming the right and right's blaming the left. But yes, I agree. Everything is going in the wrong direction at this point in time. And it's scary. And I really believe a lot of it is our police officers that we don't forget about them and defunding the police and not being able to handle crime in the right way anymore. It's devastating.

MODERATOR:
We'll talk about crime in just a minute. So hold that thought. [PARTICIPANT 7], I want to ask you about the economy. When you think about how the economy is doing, do you think it's doing well? Not well. What are the things that you think about when you're thinking about the economy?

PARTICIPANT 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
Well, it's kind of scary. I see so many signs these days saying we're short staffed, be patient with the ones that are working. I see a lot of jobs out there, but I don't know what's happening. I just see a lot of jobs available, but it's like, no one's being able to bounce back after the pandemic. You know what I'm saying? So I guess my thing is just wages alone aren't cutting it. You know what I'm saying? There's like labor shortages and that's kind of what I worry about for the future, as far as the economy for our kids. And it's kind of devastating. You don't know which way to turn.

MODERATOR:
What about an issue like student loans. That's one that hasn't necessarily come up yet, but I'd be interested in your thoughts on it. [PARTICIPANT 1], I'll come to you on this one. What do you think about the issue of student loans these days? And then [PARTICIPANT 4], I'll come to you next.

**Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)**

You know, I'm of an older generation and when we took out a loan, we paid I. And I know it's a struggle for kids to go to school, but not every kid goes to college. I mean if every kid went to college who is going to work on your car, who is going to do all of those type of things too. And why as American taxpayers are we supposed to forgive student loan? It'd be like I'd like you to forgive the loan on my car. I'd like you to forgive that. We've been hardworking people all of our lives on fixed incomes now. I believe in higher education, I don't want to pay for somebody else's kid who hasn't much as-

**MODERATOR:**

[PARTICIPANT 4]. What do you think?

**Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)**

About the student loans? Like what the forgiveness of the student loans.

**MODERATOR:**

Yeah, what do you think about that?

**Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)**

Well, I think that should not be done. I think it could be delayed or postponed or extended or the payments less until the economy gets better. It could make a lesser of a payment. You can't get water from a dry well, but I believe that our priorities are way off with money. And here's a classic example. My mother is 78 years old, lives up north by herself. And she worked until COVID and the school got shut down. What does this country do for the elderly people that have lived here and worked their whole lives on the books, pay taxes, we're tax paying people. And she can't even get government aid to get rental assistance, but we're just giving money away to everyone and everything, like first take care of your own, just like in your own family.

**Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)**

First take care of your own home, your people in your home. And then you can help others and do everything. We all try to help and do things. We want to do kind things, but like you said everyone goes to college now. You need a college education even be a cop. You never needed to go to college to be a cop years ago. And they're not even taking care of the elderly. What happens to these people that don't make enough money, a $1000 on social security. The average rent in New Jersey starts at $1,200 or $1,300 a month. And then you can't even get in on section eight. So I think that the priorities with that is way off. They should get an education, but delay the money.

**MODERATOR:**

So [PARTICIPANT 4], you mentioned social security and that's the next issue that's on my list that I want to ask about. How do you think things are going when it comes to retirement, social security, those sorts of things. [PARTICIPANT 2], what do you think? And then [PARTICIPANT 1], I see you shaking your head. I'll come to you next.
Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
I was going to comment on student loans, but if you want me to comment on social security, I'm happy to do that as well.

MODERATOR:
Student loans real quick, and then social security, if you don't mind.

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
So I am a college graduate. I worked three jobs to get out of college without debt. I did it on an accelerated program and I'm here to tell you it can be done. My recommendation is, if you want to go to college, more power to you, but you should not be allowed to take out-

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:23:04]

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
Power to you, but you should not be allowed to take out more money in a loan than your position will earn your first year out of college. That, I think, is the type of oversight that particular program needs. I think that student loans should be not eliminated. I think that they should, be redone at more manageable interest rates. I understand that there's lots of businesses in play and then we're having government tell you, "Hey, you have to do your business this way," so I understand there's some flaws in my thinking, but moving forward, I think better oversight is needed.

MODERATOR:
Okay.

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
In the amount of money that you can take out. [inaudible 00:23:54] For social security, I have an elderly mother. I just visited her for mother's day. Oh my gosh, she lives on pennies a day and it's another one of those instances where I am baffled. She worked her entire life. She is 81 and in California, she cannot afford groceries. That is very discouraging to me. She's 81. She can't be growing her own groceries. She can't raise cows in suburban California. She doesn't have an additional food source that someone who lived in a farming community perhaps would have access to. I think we are definitely failing our seniors on a giant level.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 1], I saw you nodding your head when I mentioned retirement, social security. How do you think things are going with that?

Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)
Well, it's not going well. I mean, we got a raise, of course, every year they give you what a 2%. That's a big raise for social security, but then when you're paying for your Medicare, your Medicare goes up and really nullifies the raise that you got on your social security. Those of us that worked all of our lives to save enough money to retire with our social security and our 401ks, we are being killed with our 401ks right now. I have lost so much money. It took me all
my life to save that money out, to save that money for my retirement and it's getting wiped out within what, six months? [inaudible 00:25:42]

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 5], what about you? [PARTICIPANT 5], what do you think about retirement and social security?

Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)
I think it's very scary what's happening with people who are retiring and social security. My husband and I are getting close to retirement age and we don't even think that we can retire at a reasonable age and family members who do get social security, like [PARTICIPANT 1] said, the insurance part and the additional monies that they have to pay to just maintain their lifestyle is ridiculous compared to the minute social security increases. I feel that social security is kind of a joke because I think a lot of these people would rather be on welfare because they'll get more money than social security and just say they're low income, have no job as opposed to, I worked all my life and this is what I get. It's not fair. It's totally unfair and I feel that a lot of people are suffering and the criteria is so off base and nobody seems to care. I don't feel like we are being heard. Go ahead.

MODERATOR:
I want to get a show of hands from people. How many of you think that social security might not be there for you personally? That when you are retiring, that social security won't be there for you. Show of hands. I've got three hands. How many of you think that for your children, social security will not be there for your children? Every hand went up. Okay. Let me then ask about the issue of healthcare and prescription drugs. [PARTICIPANT 6], I'll come to you first on this one and then [PARTICIPANT 7]. Tell me a little bit about how you think things are going when it comes to healthcare in America these days.

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
I'm fortunate because I have a job that I get my benefits.

MODERATOR:
Yeah.

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
There's a lot of people out there I know of personally that don't have that luxury. The payout, I have a friend who's on dialysis and now she's having other issues and just keeping up with the bills, she can't anymore. There's no help out there for her, so she just pays what she can pay. There's no programs to really help offset, other than unemployment or if you're on welfare or something like that. I even know some people that have gone on welfare that really don't need to because it's easier. It really kind of pisses me off to do that. I know some, there's a breakdown in the system somewhere. There are some that get their medical taken care of and get food stamps and everything else, but yet, they're getting an income. I don't know how [inaudible 00:28:54]

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 7], what do you think about healthcare? How are things going with that issue [inaudible 00:28:57]?
Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
I always forget to unmute.

MODERATOR:
That's okay.

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
Well, I work with children with a lot of medical needs right now. My job is to help those individuals who fall between the cracks. They don't have the funding or they don't have Medicaid, Medicare, or any kind of funding, but yet, they still have medical needs. I know that some of the issues have been like the co-payments are getting larger, bigger and the cost of drugs have gone up. Some families have had to find ways to be very resourceful, which is part of my job is to try to help them find a way that they can afford their medicine or their medical needs being met or the equipment that they need. The co-payments that they're having to pay now being on insurance has gone skyrocket.

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
I mean, you see some families just struggling to figure out how to make it because their child has a certain need and the supplies $3,000 a month. Then, some of that also has to do with supply change, the supply chain demands and not having the ability to get the supplies they need. It's a big heartache and a headache for families. There's a lot of, I know that just in reading and watching the news and stuff, there's a lot of rising rates for the physician's malpractice insurance. It's just crazy.

MODERATOR:
I wonder then, I've got two more issues that I want to ask about briefly before we move on to the next section. The first was mentioned a little bit. I said, we'd come back to it and that's crime. [PARTICIPANT 3] tell me a little bit about how you feel about what's going on in our country around crime.

Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
Oh, that is truly scary. I don't have crime where I live because I live out in the country, but when I see news reports and I see the violence going on and the destruction, it just really scares me. I wouldn't want to live in town because of that. Actually, even going to a large city makes me nervous you. I just think it's horrible and scary.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 5], what do you think about crime? How are things going these days?

Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)
I'm very worried about crime because I live close to New York City and I haven't been into New York City since COVID because I'm terrified. I hear from friends how walking down the street is during the day is 50/50. They don't know what's going to happen with all the homeless people and all the mentally disabled people roaming the streets. They're not being policed. All these stores being broken into where they're just brushing into these high end stores. A friend was in the store when it happened and it's so scary. The thing is, they're just letting them get away with it. The government is telling law enforcement, "Just let it go. Let these people do what they want
to do," and it's disgusting and they're just not taking care of anybody. They're just letting everybody do what they want to do.

**Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)**

I just feel like it's like the devil and the angel. I think now, whoever's in politics is listening to the devil. He's not listening to the angel anymore. He's not even halfway. He's just saying, "All right, just do whatever you want to do." I'm really concerned. I mean, we lock our doors in our car at night and I mean, I live in the suburbs, but still there's a lot of crime because we have a lot of kids who have issues with drugs in the area and they're breaking into cars and going up to houses and ringing doorbells and just it's really scary. Something has to be done.

**MODERATOR:**

The last issue I want to ask about is political division. That's one that was mentioned by many of you when you were talking about reasons why you were worried or devastated or what have you about the state of our country. Just briefly, what do you think, how much of a concern is political division to you? What concerns you about it the most? Who wants to jump in on this? I'll take a show of hands. [PARTICIPANT 2] and then [PARTICIPANT 1], I'll come to you next.

**Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)**

There feels like there's no middle ground anymore. It used to be, the politicians felt a little more moderate than they are now. I think, I can't recall, but someone pointed out it's very divided now. There does not seem to be anyone willing to meet in the middle ground any longer. If you look at those that are upcoming in both of the parties, I don't foresee middle ground being reached unless there's some untapped star out there that's not making the news, but those that are featured prominently right now from both sides, I don't find any of those people palatable enough that they are going to bridge the gap that has definitely occurred.

**MODERATOR:**

[PARTICIPANT 1], how about you?

**Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)**

Well, I think it's a climate of fear now from both spectrums on the far left, the far right. Those of us in the middle stay silent because we don't really want anyone to know exactly, except close friends, family, to know where we're at, because it's scary. You post something on Facebook and you've got 5,000 peoples that have an opinion about why what you said is wrong and you're called names and everything else. I keep my political views pretty close to my chest, which I never had that in my life. I could sit down and the most liberal person or conservative person and have a great time with them. We could discuss things without anger. Can't do that anymore. I think most people are very careful about who they talk about politics with. I really do. I think it's that divisive. Scary.

**MODERATOR:**

Well, before I move into the next section, I want to just ask if there are any other issues that haven't come up yet, but that you feel really strongly about that are a big problem or a concern that you have. We've talked about the economy. We've talked about student loans. We've talked about retirement, social security, healthcare, crime division. Is there anything else that you think is really important that needs to come up? [PARTICIPANT 3] and then [PARTICIPANT 4].
Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
Taxes, taxes. I've heard so many people tell me that their property taxes have just skyrocketed. Even the price of all this land around here going for terrible high prices, well, that's going to have effects on all of us who are keeping our land and it's going to raise our tax rate, even though our income has never changed. I think that could be a real deal breaker for a lot of people. You can't earn a certain amount of money and then continue to watch your tax bill go higher and higher.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 4], how about you? What was the issue you wanted to throw in there?

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)
Well, I think that besides what [PARTICIPANT 1] was saying with the extreme right and the extreme left and that people are afraid, I think that I wish that us people in the middle would not be afraid and would speak up and say, because I think what [PARTICIPANT 5] said about the angel and the devil, I believe that it's like God and the devil right now going on. I mean, my friend's grandson came home from school and asked his father, "Am I a boy or am I a girl?" That's what your priority is when the world is a hot mess since everything with the COVID crisis. Everything is like a result of the COVID consequences, politically, financially, in every aspect, morally and everything. I think that we need to fix our priorities. Kids go to school, let them go to school, learn basic skills in school and let the families at home, teach at home, not the schools.

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)
Why are they saying it's okay that the schools are telling kids that you don't have to be a boy or a girl anymore when they were raised and thought that they were a boy or thought that they were a girl. Now, they come home confused. They just were wearing masks for two years. They weren't allowed in school. They saw a fear in our eyes, like September 11th wasn't scary enough for my kids' age group? Now these kids, it's like these kids today, all they do is live in trauma.

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)
My daughter's 31 years old and she's like, "Oh, you want me to have grandchild? I am not having kids in this world." That's what she says all the time because she's mortified of it. I think that everyone's forgetting what we're supposed to do, have a family, have children. I don't care if it's boy and boy, girl and girl, what anyone wants to do. Just be kind and let everyone have their own values, but don't go tell kids in school that they don't know whether they're a boy or a girl when they thought they were a girl till they're five years old in kindergarten. Now, you tell them, "You could be a boy or a girl, whatever you want to be." It's confusing.

MODERATOR:
Well, let me go ahead and I'm going to move into the next section where we can talk a little bit more about how experiences you're having in your own personal life and things that are concerning you or that are feeling positive or negative in your own personal lives. It will do the fill in the blank exercise again, except the last time it was, I feel blank about the way things are going in the country. This time around, I want to ask everybody, I feel blank about the way things are going for me personally. How do you feel about the way things are going for you personally in one word? I'll go around. I'll ask everybody for their word and then we'll do just like last time. I'll follow up with each of you about what made you pick that word and why?
[PARTICIPANT 6], I'll start with you. If you had to pick one word, I feel blank about the way things are going for me personally?

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
Stressed.

MODERATOR:
Okay. [PARTICIPANT 5].

Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)
Undecided.

MODERATOR:
Okay. [PARTICIPANT 7].

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
Unsettled.

MODERATOR:
Unsettled. [PARTICIPANT 4].

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)
I feel confused, overwhelmed.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 3].

Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
I'm going the other way, satisfied.

MODERATOR:
All right. [PARTICIPANT 2].

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
Optimistic.

MODERATOR:
And [PARTICIPANT 1].

Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)
I feel blessed.

MODERATOR:
Well, I'm going to start with my blessed, optimistic and satisfied folks first and then I will come to stressed and I'll go work in reverse order. [PARTICIPANT 1], blessed. Tell me why you feel blessed.

**Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)**

I feel blessed that I have a marriage that has survived 50 years. I feel blessed that I have beautiful children, grandchildren, great grandchildren. I feel blessed that God's in my life. The other stuff is stuff of the world. This is stuff of family. That's what makes me feel blessed.

**MODERATOR:**

[PARTICIPANT 2], you said optimistic. Why optimistic?

**Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)**

Well, one, it's the nature of my personality. I am seldom without a chewy word, but I know where to find sunshine. On the darkest of days, there's always something out there that I can find that will definitely bring a smile to my face and it can't always just be all doom and gloom. There's lots of challenges that we fight, but there is the optimistic rainbow at the end that it's all coming for us. I'm sure of it.

**MODERATOR:**

[PARTICIPANT 3], you said satisfied. Tell me why satisfied.

**Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)**

I've discovered I can do anything I set my mind to. Nothing holds me back. I know there's a lot of chaos going on in the world, but if I shut the TV off and don't get on the computer, I don't even know what's happening. I can go outside and mow my yard. I'm in charge. I do what I want to do. Nobody will bother me if I don't let them.

**MODERATOR:**

Okay. Janette, you said confused and overwhelmed. Tell me why.

**Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)**

Well, I feel like I am blessed. I thank the Lord every day for giving me breath every day, but I also, I am positive every day, but every single day, there's something else negative. I only put the news on in the morning on Fox Five for an hour and I listen to it then and then I have to shut it off. Every day, you start out positive and then there's another new thing, now monkey pox. It's hard. It's a battle, like you're being pulled. I am a good, I consider myself a person of strong faith and a good Christian and I am all about family and my friends. I have friends for over 40 years, but at the same time, you're being pulled. Every day, there's something negative. Somebody is saying something negative and there's something scary on the news and it's been nonstop. That's why it just gets overwhelming. You try so hard to do the right thing every day and be a positive person, but I'm only human. You can only take so much sadness too all the time if you have empathy for other people. It gets really sad and disheartening.

**MODERATOR:**

[PARTICIPANT 5], you said you felt unsettled, I think. Tell me a little bit about why unsettled.
Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)

I try to be optimistic and I try to think everything's going to get better, but I feel that my optimism is not being fulfilled because everywhere I look and everywhere I turn, it seems that so many other people are doom and gloom and I try to be the positive thinker, but after a while, it kind of beats you down. I don't know where I stand. I'm not sure if I'm happy today. I usually wake up happy, but by the end of the day, I might be unhappy or upset. I can't watch the news. I was saying I miss the morning where they had the Smuckers moment where they said something fun on CBS or something. Now, it's just all, this person killed that person. This person did this. The politics of this. I'm like, oh my goodness, can someone put something positive in the news, even for two seconds? I will be there every morning at 8:26 to watch it if I have to to make my day go better.

MODERATOR:

[PARTICIPANT 7]. You've said undecided. Tell me why you say undecided.

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)

No, I think I said unsettled, but that's okay.

MODERATOR:

Oh, you said unsettled. Sorry. I may have-

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)

That's okay.

MODERATOR:

I'm sorry.

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)

[inaudible 00:44:49] I wake up every morning, try to find something to be happy to be awake about and I try to stay pretty positive. Personally speaking, my husband's very young and he quit breathing for four minutes. He has dementia and he was active up until that point. He was in the hospital for two months. I guess, I rely on and praying person and I believe God has all the answers, but just as a person, it's hard to ... I'm fighting with insurance on this and fighting with the insurance on that and medically, he takes a lot of medicine. Then, they're saying, "Well, the next medicine's $782." When you have limitations budgetarily, it's hard to ... I lost my job. I had a really good job for eight years during the pandemic. When I lost my job, I lost all my benefits. I had to start over, which was devastating to me, but with a lot of prayer, I went back to a job I'd had previously, but what I see is I can't get him any nursing, so I have to help him.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:46:04]

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)

Getting any nursing. So I have to be his help him, it's all his memory. He doesn't remember things from yesterday so I'm kind of a caretaker and you just kind of feel devastated because you don't know. And when I say unsettled, it's not unsettled in the future, it's just unsettled for tomorrow or the moment. Because I can't just readily pick up and say, hey, to the insurance company, could you give me nursing for two weeks, because it's just doesn't work that way. And
so it's very unsettling that way that you don't really have the unity that I remember having with my daughter.

**Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)**
My daughter passed away 10 years ago. Just healthcare in general, I lost my dad and my mom both last year. My dad passed away from COVID in October. And I seen a difference in his healthcare being 90 years old than I did when my husband was in the hospital and he's 58. So it's just not the same and it's kind of as scary not the same.

**MODERATOR:**
[PARTICIPANT 2] I saw you put your hand up real quick.

**Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)**
Well, I just want to tell [PARTICIPANT 7] that I understand caregiving is difficult and I know it's hard work. And I just wanted to send out some strength from Arizona for you because there's people that are walking in your shoes that do understand.

**Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)**
Thank you.

**MODERATOR:**
[PARTICIPANT 6]. I want to come to you. You had said stress. Tell me a little bit about why you chose that word.

**Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)**
Well, I want to say too that I understand about caregiving. Cause I took care of my mother for eight years. I refused to put her in a nursing home. She had Parkinson's disease and that was a very tough job. So I often ask myself how I got through that and it was by the grace of God alone. Because you never realize how much they take from you until they're gone. But I do it all over again.

**Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)**
And as far as the stressful part, I just feel like my husband we've been together, been married for 48 years and he's older than I am. And I wanted to retire but I am unable to retire because of the way the economy is today. And we need our medical insurance. That's really why I work. And I just stress because we just enjoyed always going every year to see a different island of some sort on our anniversary and we would just take off for a weekend getaway and he's had a stroke and he's had cancer. So his health is not looking all that great here lately. So I don't know what happened to the golden years, but I don't see any golden years here and it's hard. So I try to stay positive. I really do. And I pray every day for those because I always look to see, I try not to dwell on what's going on in my household, but I try to think of others that are in worse shape than I am. So that makes me feel more blessed.

**MODERATOR:**
I want to ask you...

**Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)**
Can I say one more thing?

MODERATOR:
Oh yes. Go ahead [PARTICIPANT 7].

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
Sorry. My sound I think is ahead of me. It's not that I don't love taking care and I love being a caregiver and it's not that I don't love taking care of my husband. It's just that it used to be where you could just pick up the phone and call the doctor's office or call the someone that you could get care and you could actually get an answer then. They didn't have to make sure like what's your insurance company or is your doctor in the loop of getting when you make a phone call. It just seems like it's so many much red tape to get the care you need.

MODERATOR:
Okay. Thank you for that. And thank you all for being so open about your stories, about the challenges of caregiving and the role that's played in your lives. So one of the things that is a reason why you all are in this group is you all are women over the age of 50. Are there any particular issues, concerns, challenges that you think uniquely face women over the age of 50?

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
Definitely healthcare. When you're in your twenties, thirties, forties, unless some serious illness has befallen you, you kind of think, wow, that's not going to happen to me. And then it hits you and you're like, why didn't I know about this? Why did everyone keep it a big secret?

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
Healthcare is expensive and being preventative is not covered in any way, shape or form, unless you've got some sort of platinum insurance. But if you want to take the non-medicated route towards health, you're going to pay for that all out of your pocket because insurance doesn't think naturopathic care or preventative care, it doesn't appear. Insurance thinks that those avenues are worth it. And then you're on your own.

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
You can rely on your friends and you can rely on your family, but everyone has individual experiences. And I really think healthcare is kind of the thing for me because I just didn't realize how kind of difficult and on your own you're going to be. There's no person to call to say, hey, how do I make this work? Where do I get the coverage to be preventative so that I don't experience long term Healthcare crisis.

MODERATOR:
This sort of raises a question for me, you referenced, when it comes to healthcare, if you have a question it's hard to know who do you call to navigate it? [PARTICIPANT 7], you were talking about how, when it comes to caregiving, it can be hard to know who to call to help you navigate things. I want to ask all of you, who do you feel like is a good support or resource when it comes to trying to navigate things like healthcare or caregiving or some of these challenges. [PARTICIPANT 6].

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
Department of Aging.

MODERATOR:
Department of Aging?

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
Yes.

MODERATOR:
Tell me a little bit about what supports are helpful to you.

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
Well, when I was having issues, when I was taking care of my mother, they came and sat down with me and went over a lot of details of things that I wasn't made aware of that they made me. To be able to call this person or ask for this help. Because I was like, [PARTICIPANT 7], you can't even get help for an hour. And I knew people that were getting the help and my mother worked all her life. And then when it came to the point where she needed help, she couldn't get it. So I went to the Department of Aging and they directed me as to where to go and who to call and who to seek out help with.

MODERATOR:
Are there any other challenges? I want to go back to my question about sort of women over 50. Are there any other issues that stick out to anyone as particular concerns that women over the age of 50 really confront? [PARTICIPANT 6].

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
I think as a mother and a provider that I'm worried at my age now, how long is it going to be? That's where I get stressed about, am I going to wake up tomorrow and not be able to continue with the duties I've been doing all this time? My children depend on me, believe it or not. I mean, they're hard workers, but they're always like, what's you got to cook tonight, mom, what you have. That kind of thing or being able to drive myself to the store, go to my own doctor visits. When am I going to have to depend on somebody to do that for me? I think about those things as I age. Of course we can't change the aging process but...

MODERATOR:
Yep. Well, what you've just said, sort of sets up the next question that's on my list very well, which is we're going to do that fill in the exercise again. And I want you to think about how you feel about how things are going for your children. And if you don't have children, you can think about the children of people close to you. Just sort of thinking about that next generation and people if they're of close to you in that next generation. So I'll hear from everybody on this one. Just give me what your word is. I feel blank about how things are going for either my children or children who are close to me. So [PARTICIPANT 3], I'll start with you on this one.

Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
Mine's worried. They're all professionals, but it's like, no matter what they earn, they don't seem to have enough. And then dealing with the children, trying to get them through after COVID and everything, get them through the school and get them caught up and into their grades they're
supposed to be in. It just seems like they have a lot more stress. With that and the children don’t have as much freedom as we all did back in our day. They’re being watched and they’re not allowed to go hang out with their friends as often. Yeah.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 5], how about you? How do you think things are going for that next generation of people close to you?

Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)
Stressed when I think about my children and the way things are. I’m very stressed. I stress over, especially healthcare. I mean, my children are young, so I’m don’t know how I’m going to pay for their healthcare if I decide to retire. That’s going to be a big conundrum for me. Also, there’s so many different things going on, will they be able to support themselves? I’m so worried about so many different things.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 7], how about you? How do you feel about sort of that next generation?

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
Oh, I don’t know. Let me think one word. You want one word?

MODERATOR:
I’d love one word. If it takes two, I’ll take two, but I prefer one.

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
Concerned.

MODERATOR:
Okay. Tell me what are you concerned about in particular?

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
I think maybe, if I want to say the next generation, but I think [inaudible 00:57:01] I see the difference when I was growing up and I think the younger generation now is trying to find their own identity. It’s like they’re lost. That’s why I see a lot of differences in when I went to school and even like my grandkids going to school, some of the different impacts that the kids have on each other.

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
The bullying, I’ve had some personal experience with that. And even in our own community, we’ve had some deaths with kids with bullying and so instead of I’m thinking, well, can it get better for our kids or is it just going to keep getting worse and worse from there? I always tell my grandkids to let God be in control, but it is also, they’re scared.

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
And I think even my own kids, my kids, they all have degrees. But they’ve had a lot of heartache with various, it’s like they’re taking on more, multiple jobs like two or three jobs, even if they
have a degree or having their degree in something and then not finding the job in that area and having the switch degrees. So there’s a lot of not normal. It’s no normalization. You know what I’m saying, it’s in their lives.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 6], how about you? What word would you choose to describe how you feel? And you’ve just referenced this a little bit when you were talking about your children. But tell me a little bit about what word you’d pick for, I feel blank.

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
Scary.

MODERATOR:
Scary.

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
My son is...

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 4]? Oh sorry, [PARTICIPANT 6], sorry.

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
My son’s a police officer and I worry every single day when he goes out, if he’s going to come home or something’s going to happen, and then he’s going to be arrested. Just because he’s trying to protect us. It’s scary.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 4].

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)
I feel worried. For different reasons, like I said. My daughter is 31 married and she has her own house. And she recently went out of work. She suffered from vestibular migraines and she was a court reporter and she tried to get disability. And she has gotten every kind of treatment that you could think of, including 60 something shots in her head of Botox, even acupuncture. All kinds of medicine had went an allergic reaction, had IV therapy. And the government is not even wanting give her disability. And she owns a home. Her husband is a ninth grade history teacher in Jersey. And they can’t even get disability because her court reporting job is not legit, but she paid taxes all these years that she’s been doing it. And she graduated even early from court reporting school and everything. So she has no income.

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)
It stresses me out and I have autoimmune disease. So if you see I fidget and move around a lot because I can’t sit still in one place for long I’ve circulated problems and all this stuff. But I worry about her and trying to help her. I don’t work anymore, but you try to help.

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)
And then I have my son who works hard since he was young for a 50 year old family business that his great grandfather started. That's hurting. He's saving to buy a house. How is a single man or woman adult supposed to even afford a house with the way the economy is? You need two incomes unless you're making like $150,000 a year, it's humanly impossible to afford a mortgage.

**Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)**

I worry about them. All you want for your kids is to grow up healthy, happy, and content. I don't care about being rich or that. Just be able to afford your cost of living and go on a vacation once a year and have a nice life. And you have to worry about all these things because this is how it is now. It's just a reality.

**MODERATOR:**

So [PARTICIPANT 2] and [PARTICIPANT 1], really quick for you. What's the word that you would choose to describe how you’re feeling about things for your children?

**Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)**

Underpopulated.

**MODERATOR:**

Okay, and [PARTICIPANT 1]?

**Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)**

Anxious.

**MODERATOR:**

Anxious?

**Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)**

Yes.

**MODERATOR:**

[PARTICIPANT 2], can I get 20 seconds from you on what you mean by underpopulated?

**Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)**

I personally have no children. I have stepchildren and I have grandchildren. But my friends that are my age have children that are all in that twenties age group. Not one of them plans to have children. And I find that interesting because they all come from families with siblings and for them to all make the conscientious choice to not have children. I’m sure it's not because they want to be like me and not have children. These people are really taking the time to think about, do I want to bring a child? Can I bring a child into this world? Can I afford it? They’re they’re being more mindful about what they’re doing. And I feel that's a big shift from previous generations. So I think we’re going to find some underpopulation coming.
Okay. Well I want to then shift gears just a tiny bit. And I want to do an exercise where you imagine that our country was run by women like you. So women with your values, perspectives, life, experiences, all of that. How would things be different? And your answer can be anything. It can be, how would movies and TV shows be different? How would work or the economy be different? How would your city or town be different? I'm just curious. Who wants to jump in on this? And [PARTICIPANT 3], I'm going to call on you first on this one. But then I'll jump to others if anybody else wants to jump in. Just for a couple minutes on this exercise. But I'm curious if our country was being run by women like you, what would different? [PARTICIPANT 3].

**Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)**
I think it would be more easygoing, less angry. There wouldn't be any burning down the CVS pharmacy because somebody would be in trouble for that. I just feel it'd be more gentler. I don't know, bake cookies. It could be just a simple thoughts. But, yeah.

**MODERATOR:**
I would like to live in that world. Yeah. I'd like how live in a world with good cookies.

**Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)**
And I think...

**MODERATOR:**
[PARTICIPANT 5], how about...

**Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)**
Oh.

**MODERATOR:**
Nope go ahead, [PARTICIPANT 3]. Sorry. I didn't mean to cut you off.

**Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)**
It's all right.

**Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)**
Oh, I think there would be less conflict because I feel that women have less of an ego than men and they work better together. I mean, although, there are some issues with women working with each other, but I feel that women working together in a political system, we're more experienced at having children, being the caregivers. So I feel like we bring a lot more experience to the table which needs to be addressed for the overall nation. As opposed to men tend to think of the bottom line, how much money they're spending, how to impress others, pounding their chest, I'm in charge. So I feel that, it wouldn't be a utopia but maybe, somewhat there.

**MODERATOR:**
[PARTICIPANT 1], how about you? What do you think? What would be different if women like you were running the country, what would be different?

**Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)**
Well I tell you, I think women have a lot of compassion, but I also think they have a lot of strength and they're not going to take the kind of, excuse the language, but the kind of crap that they're doling out right now. It's like when your kids came home you said, you do your homework, you don't do your homework you don't get to go play. Get in there and get your school work done. You got chores to do, blah, blah, and run the government more like that instead of, oh, you robbed and you went and did a smash and grab, well, no consequences? That's not the way I grew up. I will guarantee it's not the way any of these women grew up. I mean, just compassionate, but there's got to be some reignining in of the rules. I mean, we have to get this under control where anything goes that's not the way as a mother, I raise my children. And I have wonderful children, but they had rules. They followed the rules and I think the government ought follow the rules, really.

MODERATOR:
Well I think talking meant bringing up the government brings us to our next section of the group, which is about the November election, which we haven't really talked about a ton. We've talked a lot about issues and we've talked a lot about government itself, but we haven't necessarily talked about the election. So I want to just first hear from a couple of you when you are trying to decide who to vote for. What does that process look like, what are the things you're researching? What matters to you? I would like a couple of you to walk me through how you make that decision. [PARTICIPANT 6]?

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
Strength. I look at strength and how they come across. You know, you can be a really good public speaker, but it's what you back up that makes a difference. When I see things that have been done in the past or I don't really know how to explain it, but you look at their past history and what they've accomplished or what their values are. That's what I look for values and when I go to vote. I can't...

MODERATOR:
Where do you go to go look that up? If you wanted to figure out what somebody's values were, where would you go to look for that information?

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
Well, I watch a lot of the speeches on both sides. I listen to what both parties have to say and I go with how the one I feel has the most strength and the most offer to our country. I just feel like, I don't know if I should say this or not, but I'm going to, that someone can sit in a basement and now become our president. I mean, that just really bothers me. So...

MODERATOR:
Okay. [PARTICIPANT 7], how about you tell me a little bit, as you're trying to decide who to vote for, what are you looking for and where do you go looking for it?

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
Well, I kind of stay away from social media. But I'm not much of a social media person, unless I'm trying to see pictures of my grandkids. But I do turn to a lot of friends. Friends that talk over coffee, friends that you can talk to on the phone. And your friends can also help you or people that know, your coworkers. I just kind of did a lot of gathering information through the year or
through the time until that point so that I can make my best decision. We, as women are good mediators and negotiators and I'm a listener. I take a lot in, and then I remember...

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:09:04]

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
I'm a listener. I take a lot in, and then I remember things and kind of go by... I really don't turn. I do research on the internet, but I really depend more upon the people that I know in my daily life, church, school, community, work, just being around those.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 3], you mentioned earlier on that you turn off the news and go mow your lawn. Tell me a little bit about how you get information about candidates for office, and how you think through that decision of who you're going to vote for.

Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
Oh, I do read stuff on the internet, I just don't like too much TV. Also, like [PARTICIPANT 7], I talk to friends and family and get an idea of what the candidates have, that they're promising, and if they're honest, and get a feel for them that way. I get a lot of mail that the candidates, trying to get my vote and they'll tell me what they're going to promise, and I try to see if it's something I believe in, or if I just think they're blowing smoke. Just try to get an idea. Also, I watch the debates to see what they're promising and you could tell if they're lying or they know they won't be able to accomplish anything.

MODERATOR:
What I'm going to do now is post in chat, I'll also read the list, but this is in case some people like reading more than listening. A list of values, and these might all be things that you think are important, maybe some of them you think are important, some not. I want to hear from each of you, which one or two you think is most important to you when you are thinking about how to vote. I have posted the list, I think everybody should be able to see it. It is freedom, security, respect, safety, personal responsibility, equality, and morality. Looking at that list, if you had to choose one, I'm going to go through and I'll do just a show of hands who picks that one as the most important to them. You can think they're all important, but pick one that's the most important to you when you are thinking through who you're going to vote for in November. The first one is freedom, any hands for freedom. Okay. Security. Respect. Safety, one safety. Personal responsibility, three personal responsibility. Equality, [PARTICIPANT 7] you're equality. And then morality. All right. I think I missed somebody here, I'm only counting six. Who were my safety? Who is my safety person? That was you [PARTICIPANT 3], right? Tell me why you say safety.

Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
Well, like I told you earlier, I'm very nervous going into a big city and I want to feel safe. I want to know that there is law enforcement anywhere around, and I also want to know that there's not no any weirdos that's going to try to hurt me as I'm walking down the street. Just protected.

MODERATOR:
I had a lot of hands go up for personal responsibility, who were my personal responsibility people? Okay. [PARTICIPANT 2], tell me a little bit about personal responsibility, why'd you
choose that one? And then [PARTICIPANT 5] and [PARTICIPANT 6] I'll come to you quickly next.

**Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)**

That's what I look for, actually when I'm looking for a candidate to vote for, I look for their personal responsibility, and that is a value that I project out. I am responsible for all about me and if I want to be positive and bring light to the world, yay me, and that is what I can control. I want other people to take personal responsibility also for their thoughts, their actions. I don't want someone to just follow the line because that's what everyone else is doing. Take some personal responsibility for your actions. If you are going to bring about big change in government, tell me how you're going to do that, show me through your personal actions, how this is going to be accomplished. And real fast, if women ruled the universe or whatever the question was, it would be more efficient, right now.

**MODERATOR:**

More efficient, okay.

**Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)**

I didn't get a chance to answer that?

**MODERATOR:**

Thank you for adding that in there. [PARTICIPANT 5], you were one of my personal responsibility hands. Tell me a little about that.

**Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)**

Because I feel that they have to have a mind of their own and have a conscience and the ability to take responsibility for their actions. I feel a lot of the politicians now are just being guided or advised, and they're not thinking about what their personal responsibility is if something bad happens, or things they promise don't change, or if things they promise can possibly be accomplished. I want them to know that we are going to hold you personally responsible if you make these idle promises that don't come through. You will not be a candidate that I will ever vote for, ever look at in the future.

**MODERATOR:**

How much do you think that your elected officials are listening to women over 50 like you? To what extent, [PARTICIPANT 1] , you're nodding your head no, tell me why you say no?

**Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)**

Well, I don't think that they're listening to really anybody right now, but especially women, and men too, over 50. If they did, they would do something to try and control the cost of healthcare for seniors. My husband and I pay $500 a month on top of our Medicare every month so that we don't have huge medical expenses. I just don't think that they're listening to anybody except their own self-interest, their own pet projects. It's a mess like I've never seen, and I'm not a young woman, I've lived through a lot of things. Cuban missile crisis, recessions, you name it, lived through it. This is the worst I've ever seen it, ever.

**MODERATOR:**
[PARTICIPANT 4], what do you think? How much do you think elected officials are listening to women like you?

**Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)**

Well, I picked morality and stuff I think that I don't trust really any of these politicians or anyone, because in the last couple years, they've proven not trustworthy and going back far from, I don't know, someone will get mad at me, but the Clinton days, especially, seems like the ball got dropped there. Women being president is right, I think a woman president would straighten out this world, but the right woman, and if I wasn't 60 and still PMS, I think a woman PMSing would really straighten it out, but not like a woman like Hillary Clinton, set a bad example for girls that were teenagers. When her husband did what he did, that was okay to do and dismiss it and just act like it was okay to move on, sweep it under the rug.

**Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)**

My teenage daughter then, and her friends, they all used to go to a club and they used to think that what he did was not having sexual intercourse and that that was okay. I believe a president of morals, we might not always like everything that they say, but I wish Trump was more diplomatic because he was all about making America great again, no matter what anyone says. But he should have maybe zipped it a little bit so that they didn't dump on him. Now look at the way it is, and they just keep on dismissing everything. If you have good morals and they're a good person, they're going to do the right thing by their family, a president that doesn't even treat their family right, they're going to treat us right? We're not anything to them. I believe that it comes from a person of morals and good values.

**MODERATOR:**

I've only got a couple more minutes and I've got about four questions left to run through. Thank you [PARTICIPANT 4], [PARTICIPANT 5], I want to hear from you on this question of, do you think that politicians and elected officials are listening to women like you? If not, who are they listening to?

**Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)**

I feel like they're listening to whoever will give them the vote. They're listening to the majority that will hand it to them, to give them the vote, to keep them in office. They find these issues that are popular, and I don't think they're popular among women over 50, I think they're popular among probably the rich, the underprivileged, the unemployed, just the majority of the people who have the problem, they feel that we don't have a problem, [inaudible 01:18:46] is not loud enough and we're dismissed. They don't care. Like Janette said, they have no morality, they do whatever they need to do. They make a deal with the devil to get what they want and whoever will get them there is who they listen to. Unless we all come together and come up with a good issue that they're interested in, that'll keep them in office, they're not going to listen to us.

**MODERATOR:**

Do you think, and we've sort of danced around this, the whole group nobody's really come out and said it all the way, but is there a particular political party that you think does a better job of listening to someone like you or representing your values? Audrey you're saying no. [PARTICIPANT 3], you're also saying no. Anybody say yes, I think one of the political parties probably does better? [PARTICIPANT 6], you raised your hand. Tell me what you think.

**Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)**
I think the Republicans are more able to listen to what's going on, but we just don't have the seats to get the stuff passed that needs to get passed.

MODERATOR:
Okay. [PARTICIPANT 3], you and [PARTICIPANT 2] both said no, you don't think one parties better than the other on this. [PARTICIPANT 3], tell me why.

Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
I think they're very similar. They do about the same thing, they do what they can to get along so they can get reelected. If they can't get elected in their party, they'll switch parties and hopefully get it by the other party. They're just technically, almost always, all the same. I don't think one parties better than the other, listening to women.

MODERATOR:
I see [PARTICIPANT 1] and [PARTICIPANT 5] kind of nodding as well. [PARTICIPANT 1], just real quick to you. What's your take on this?

Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)
Well, my take is that there isn't a lot of difference between the parties when it comes right down to it. I think the oligarch of both parties has got to go. Nothing is going to change until you get rid of the McConnells and the Pelosi's of the world, the Schumers. They all got to go. We got to start from scratch, the bunch we have in there, they scratch each other's back. They act like enemies, they're not. They're not, they're cast out of the same cloth and it's all no good. That's my take. [inaudible 01:21:11]

MODERATOR:
I'm sorry?

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
I just feel like they shouldn't be able to sit in a position that long, they get complacent and they just care about themselves, they don't really care about what's going on out in the world. They might act like it...

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
Three cheers for term limits.

MODERATOR:
Well, if you wanted to, [PARTICIPANT 6], your comment sets up my last question perfectly, which is, if you wanted to show an elected official something about your life, if you think they're too in a bubble and they don't care about what's going on in the real world, and you wanted to show them something from the real world, from your life, that you think would help them understand better, what someone like you is going through. You can bring them anywhere, you can have them shadow you for a day, doing something. What would you show them from your life that would hopefully help them understand better? [PARTICIPANT 6], real work?

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
Yes. Hard work. I don't think...
MODERATOR:
You'd want to maybe bring them to work with you for a day?

Participant 6 (66 yr old woman in Maryland)
Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 7], what would you want to show elected officials so that they would learn, get more perspective about what it's like to be you?

Participant 7 (57 yr old woman in Missouri)
My heart probably, just a day in my shoes, just come with me, care with me, just the softness, just really seeing how the real world lives. I don't know, because I'm not nothing, nothing special goes on here, but I give my all, and I would think that I would want them to do the same. Even going to the grocery store, that might be good too. It's hard to feed the family anymore.

MODERATOR:
Yeah. [PARTICIPANT 5], what about you? What would you show an elected official, from your life, to help them understand better?

Participant 5 (55 yr old woman in New York)
I would show them how I raise a family, work hard, take care of elderly parents, and still am not rich. How it can be rewarding, but how it's very frustrating when I have to find other ways to make the payments for a drug that's not covered, or to send my kids to a private school because the current school is teaching them the he/she/his/it/they, just show them everything in the world that is real, as opposed to what's not real, and what's not important. Some of these issues that are minute, how it's a struggle to live, and be a good person, and have a strong family values. You can still have a good life without being rich and you don't need to sell your soul to do it.

MODERATOR:
Janette, how about you? Oh, sorry, [PARTICIPANT 5], I didn't mean to cut you off there. Janette, go ahead. Tell me a little bit, what would you do? What would you show them about your life?

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)
I think that what they need to do, from listening to everyone here, most of us, it's not easy. Most of us are on a fixed income of no overtime, or this or that, or extra money and everything. There's people less blessed than us and more blessed than us, but I think that they need to be, and we're regular middle class people who suffer all the ups and downs of the economy. I think that a perfect thing, like that show undercover bosses, if a politician for a week can pretend that they're not the politician and come live in the life with the real family and see what it's like to make a call to the insurance like [PARTICIPANT 7] has to do to try to get these things approved, and how you take care, and your bills being paid, and then the gas bill went up, and then you get kicked out of budget, and the cable being a fortune, and the groceries are so much money.
Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)
You rob from Peter to pay Paul. That's how a lot of us have to live, and we're doing it, and we're tough because we were taught to survive and move on with our faith and our backgrounds and our upbringing. At the same time, we're only human, we're cracking now, we're all starting to crack I think. You get weak, it would be nice to have our golden years, and have things a little easier, but doesn't look like that's going to happen.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 2], what would you say? What would you do to bring a politician around?

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
First I'd put them in a room that's so hot that they have no way to cool off in because hot flashes are awful, and I think that is a big thing that they don't understand. Certainly there's women in Senate and Congress, yeah, they will get the gist of it, but the average man has no idea. Then I would show them what my husband and I bring in, and then I would show them the bill for the inhibitor that my husband has to take for the cancer that he has acquired, through serving our government and how we don't bring in enough money to cover that cost, and yet it saves his life. I am grateful for the grants that we receive so that he can take this lifesaving medicine, but he had to sign on for a clinic trial to get into it.

Participant 2 (51 yr old women in Arizona)
Right now it's saving him, next month is it going to save him still? I don't know, but there's no way... I just don't think that those congressmen and senators, I don't think they realize that we are devoting every penny we have to keeping our doors open, to staying afloat with our mortgage, we're shopping at one grocery store so that we can get fuel rewards, we're not shopping around. I just don't think that those currently seated, and previously seated, in our government, I don't think they understand those strife any longer, they're too far removed from it.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 3], what would you do to show an elected official about your life? What would you show them, bring them along to do, so that they could get a dose of good perspective?

Participant 3 (61 yr old woman in Kansas)
Well, like everybody says, have them walk a day in my shoes, but also remind them, we all don't live on the coast areas, us in the middle America, I truly feel we are forgotten. The population in my area is just disappearing, I'm not kidding, my nearest neighbors like four miles away, and they work all the time. No, I think we are just forgotten and what we have to do and say out here is not taken into account because we don't have the population to even get the voice out there. A lot of the people in my area are older people, and they don't listen to anybody older, we don't matter to them. It's like, you're fine, go away, you've had your life. We don't make enough noise, like younger people do, to get the attention of politicians. Those people are usually on the coast trying to work and make a living, us middle-aged in the center of the United States, like I said, were forgotten.

MODERATOR:
[PARTICIPANT 1], last words to you. What would you do to show a politician or elected official a dose of reality through your eyes?
Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)
I'd love for them to come on over and help my little 92 year old mother-in-law get into a shower, I would love to see that. I would love to see them try and put enough money together to make a meal for my family every night, which I do. But, not being able to go out to eat a lot, not going to their favorite movie, not going on Broadway and seeing some production, not doing the things that these people do. Regular people, we just tighten up our belts, we always have had to do that. But they don't understand with my 92 year old mother-in-law, there's no place to put her unless we put her in a nursing home. She doesn't deserve to be in a nursing home. It would be nice to get help, there is no help available, we are the caretakers. I did that with my mother, I did that with my father, I did it with my father-in-law, and now my mother-in-law, who's living with us. Take some time and try doing that Nancy Pelosi, Senator Chuck Schumer, Mitch McConnell, come on over, put my mother-in-law in the bathtub.

MODERATOR:
Well with that visual. Thank you very much, [PARTICIPANT 1]. I'm so appreciative of all of you being a part of this discussion tonight. Thank you, thank you, thank you, for your candor, for your humor, it's been a real treat. I believe you'll be followed up with more formally by the folks who recruited you for this group, to thank you more formally, but you all are free to go have a wonderful evening and thanks again.

Participant 4 (60 yr old woman in New Jersey)
Good luck to everybody, you're amazing women.

Participant 1 (68 yr old woman in Idaho)
Bye bye. [inaudible 01:30:45]

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:30:51]