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Kansas: Sam Brownback's Focus on Restricting Reproductive Health Care Access Can Cost Him in The Race for Governor

New NARAL Pro-Choice America Poll Shows That Broad-Based Communications on Reproductive Health Result in a Net Win for Paul Davis

To: Interested Parties

From: Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research

A new survey conducted for NARAL Pro-Choice America by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research highlights several new and critically important findings with implications for the issue of abortion in the 2014 elections as well as in the broader national dialogue:

- **The Reality of Morality: A new, more accurate, and more authentic way of assessing voters' true opinions on abortion shows that nearly 7 in 10 believe abortion should be legal.** Understanding voter attitudes toward abortion requires assessing both the moral and legal elements of the issue. There is a significant bloc of voters in the Kansas City media market who say they would not consider abortion for themselves, but who also oppose restricting access for others. In fact, this bloc represents the plurality position, and when combined with the voters who say abortion is morally acceptable, 69 percent hold the view that abortion should be legal, regardless of their personal moral viewpoint.
 - This dynamic crosses party lines—90 percent of Democrats, 69 percent of Independents, and even a 53 percent majority of Republicans believe abortion should be legal once personal morality is accounted for.
- **Sam Brownback's focus on an anti-choice, anti-reproductive health agenda represents a significant vulnerability for him in the Kansas City media market, and a debate on the issue will provide a net positive electoral benefit to Paul Davis.** The abortion-based critique of Brownback results in expanding Davis' lead in this media market by a net 5 percentage points. And this is not just a matter of moving the liberal base in favor of Davis—in fact, liberal Democrats and strong pro-choice voters are already locked-in for Davis and all the movement toward him comes among blocs of more moderate voters.
- **The Kansas City media market trusts women: Davis' position of trusting Kansas women to make their own health decisions trumps Brownback's positive pro-life message.** In this balanced exercise, voters agree with Davis by a 23-point margin.
- **Davis' pro-choice position is the weakest attack on him tested.** The truth is that Davis is significantly more vulnerable on Obamacare than he is on the issue of abortion.

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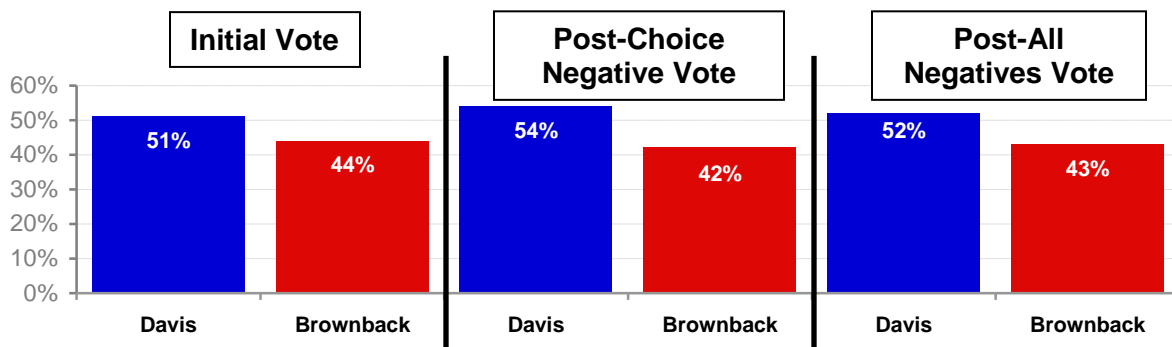
The following offers more detail on the points above, as well as several additional key findings from this survey:

- Nearly 7 in 10 voters in the Kansas City media market believe abortion should be legal.** When asked using a standard four-point scale, 55 percent of these voters say abortion should be legal in all or most cases (40 percent respond that it should be illegal in most or all cases). However, the following table shows that when the notion of personal morality is factored into the equation, 69 percent of this electorate—where registered Republicans outnumber registered Democrats by nearly double—actually holds the true pro-choice position that the government should not restrict abortion access.

I believe having an abortion is morally acceptable and should be legal	22%	} 69%
I am personally against having an abortion myself, but I don't believe government should prevent a woman from making that decision for herself	47%	
I believe having an abortion is morally wrong and should be illegal.	28%	

I am going read you some statements about the issue of abortion, and please tell me which one comes closest to your own view.

- A winning political issue for Paul Davis.** When voters in the Kansas City media market—including those who self-define as personally anti-choice—are made aware of Brownback’s record of restricting access to reproductive health care, Davis’ margin expands from 7 points to 12 points¹. Further, after voters hear balanced additional negatives on other topics that may play out in this race², Davis continues to hold a 9-point advantage that is slightly larger than his current margin, suggesting that an early critique on reproductive health and choice has the staying power to have a lasting effect on the campaign.



¹ Each respondent to the survey heard a short, balanced positive positioning statement on reproductive health/choice about both Brownback and Davis, followed by a negative message on Brownback centered on the same topic. This was followed by a re-vote.

² Following the exercise on choice, each respondent to the survey then heard three balanced negative statements on Brownback (education, economic agenda, and Medicaid expansion) and Davis (Obamacare, taxes/spending, and liberal social issues) in order to simulate issues likely to come up later in this race and understand the impact of an early critique on choice.

- **This is not just a base issue—the impact occurs largely among voters toward the middle of the ideological spectrum.** As the table below indicates, Democrats and the liberal base are already strong Davis supporters, and attacking Brownback on abortion does not move them nearly as much as it does blocs of more moderate voters.

	Initial Vote (Davis-Brownback)	Post-Choice Attack	Net Shift
Total	51-44	54-42	+5
Democrat	92-5	93-5	+1
Independent	55-38	58-36	+6
Republican	18-78	20-75	+5
Liberal Dems	95-4	92-6	-6
Moderate-Conservative Dems	90-5	94-4	+5
Liberal-Moderate Reps	37-61	41-54	+11
Conservative Reps	8-88	9-88	+1
Legal in all cases	85-15	86-11	+4
Legal in most cases	70-25	75-21	+9
Illegal in most cases	23-73	23-74	-2
Illegal in all cases	7-86	10-87	+1

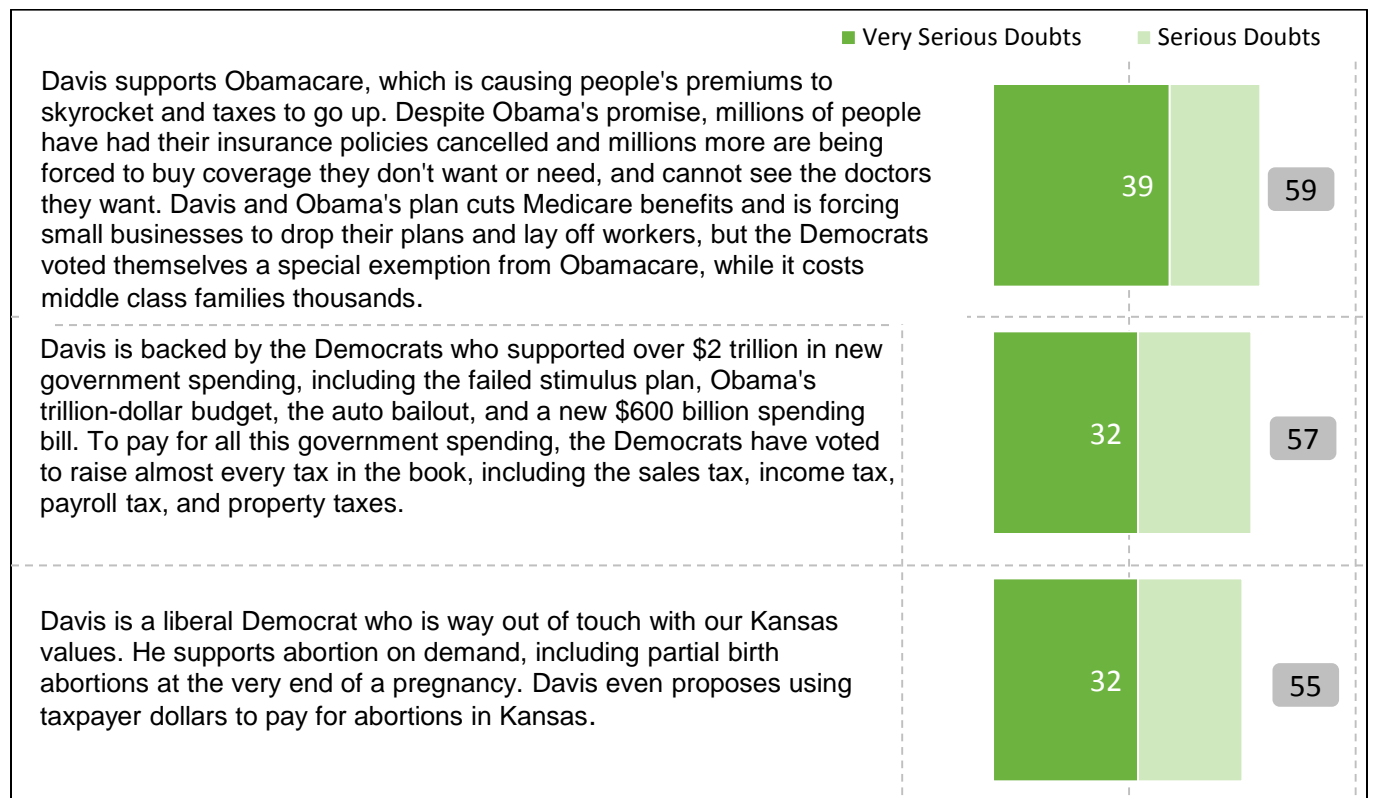
- **Kansas City Voters Trust Women: They side with Davis’ position on abortion that says we need to trust women over Brownback’s position by a wide margin.** The data below are among all likely voters in the Kansas City market—including those who are anti-choice.

Paul Davis believes there are many reasons a woman may consider abortion and politicians cannot know the circumstances each woman faces better than she and her doctor do. He believes that the decision to have an abortion is a serious one, and he trusts Kansas women to make the best decision for themselves and their families. **60%**

Sam Brownback believes that every life is equal, has potential and deserves respect, and that abortion is ending a life. He personally supports alternatives to abortion, like adoption, and says we need to show women respect at a difficult time, with the ultimate goal of making abortion a thing of the past. **37%**

Now let me read you a pair of statements the candidates running for governor might make. After I read the statements, please tell me who you agree with more.

- The anti-reproductive health, anti-choice critique of Brownback elevates excitement among voters who believe abortion should be legal.** Before any information is introduced, 72 percent of pro-choice voters report they are highly enthusiastic about voting in November (76 to 100 on a 100-point scale where 0 means not at all enthusiastic and 100 means extremely enthusiastic). After hearing the negative anti-choice message on Brownback, this number climbs 8 points to 80 percent.
- Davis is much less vulnerable on being attacked on abortion than he is on Obamacare.** The following figure indicates that voters are much less troubled by Davis' belief that abortion should be legal than they are about other issues, such as Obamacare or taxes. This is particularly true among Independents and moderates—the negative reaction to Obamacare is stronger than that to abortion.



- The Message Frame: Brownback’s Values and Priorities don’t work for people in Kansas.** The following chart shows all messages on reproductive health tested against Brownback in this survey. While all of these messages elicit strong negative responses toward Brownback, the top two—highlighted in red—are most strongly correlated to support for Davis in a regression analysis, while also scoring highest among key target audiences such as voters who shift to Davis and voters who want abortion legal but are not strongly supporting Davis.

	Very Serious Doubts	Total Serious Doubts
Brownback's values don't reflect those of regular Kansans. He wants to let government and politicians interfere in health decisions that should be made by women, their families, and their doctor and does not trust Kansas women to make the choices that are best for themselves.	36	63
While Kansas' economy lags behind the rest of the country, Brownback's top priority is outlawing abortion. Brownback even used more than a million taxpayer dollars to pay a law firm to defend his new restrictive abortion laws.	35	64
Brownback talks about morality, but while he was trying to outlaw abortion he was also denying access to health insurance coverage for thousands of low-income Kansas children by opposing federal funding to expand Medicaid in Kansas.	35	62
In an already-tough economy, Brownback's agenda will make the financial situations of women and families even harder. He wants to tax health insurance plans that cover abortion, make birth control more difficult and expensive to access, and cut health coverage for abortion care and maternity care.	35	62
Brownback's obsession with banning abortion is moving Kansas backward and drawing negative attention to our state. This makes it harder for Kansans to live here and prevents many people and businesses from wanting to locate here.	32	56

About The Survey

This survey among 501 voters in the Kansas City Media Market who are likely to vote in the November 2014 election was conducted by live professional interviewers between April 22nd and 27th, 2014. Thirty-one percent of all interviews were conducted on a cell phone.

The sample for this survey was drawn randomly from a list of registered voters and stratified by the counties and towns within the Kansas City Media Market. Quotas were assigned to reflect the expected contribution of these areas to the total electorate. The sample reflects the demographic composition of the likely November 2014 electorate. Party registration is 28 percent Democratic and 52 percent Republican.

The sample is subject to a margin of error of +/-4.6 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval; margin of error is higher among subgroups.