



RESPECTABILITY

How to Get Winning Media on Disability Issues

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi
President of RespectAbility
July 2015

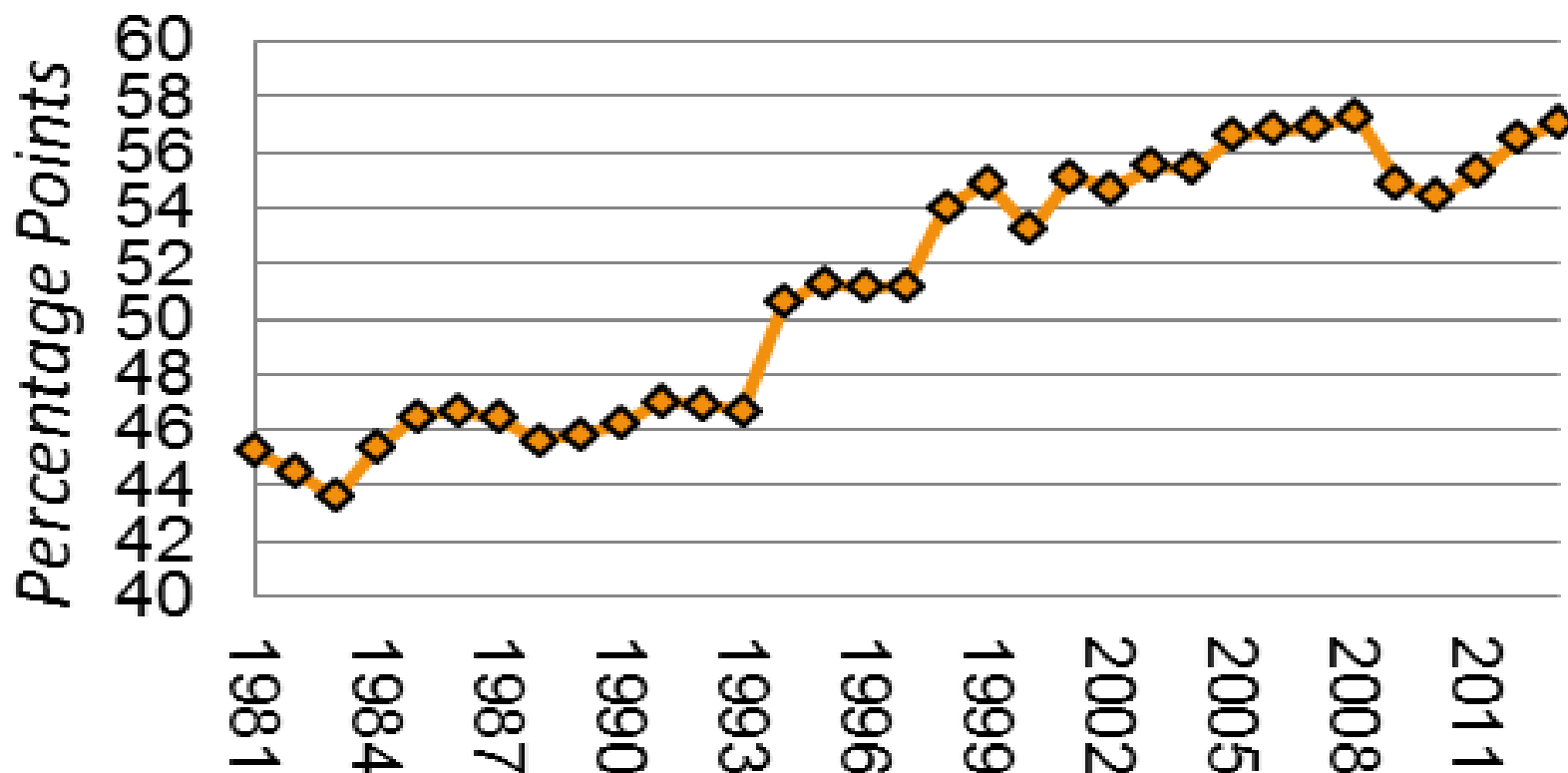
Winning Media on Disability

Speaker: Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi is President of RespectAbility, a non-profit organization working to empower people with disabilities to achieve the American Dream. She works regularly with national, state, and local policy leaders, workforce development professionals, media and employers, as well as with disability and faith-based organizations in order to expand opportunities for people with disabilities. She has met with teams from all 50 states, including 40 governors, on WIOA implementation. She has published more than 55 op-eds on disability issues, including in *USA Today*, *Huffington Post*, *The Hill* and other publications. Dyslexic herself, she also knows what it means to parent a child with multiple disabilities.

Why Media?

- To improve the lives of people with disabilities and all who want a welcoming, just and respectful world
- An opportunity to get your voice heard
- A chance to educate the public through facts and your personal experience
- An opportunity to change public opinion and improve legislation/policy/reality for people with disabilities and our communities

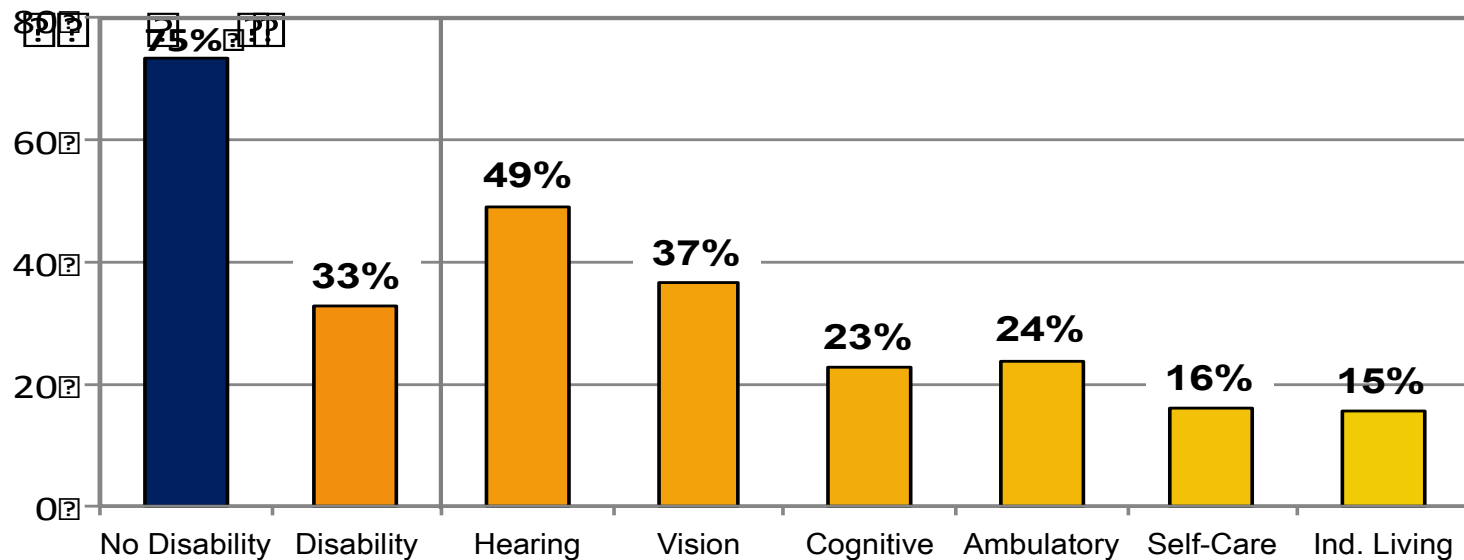
Post ADA: While women and minority groups have been able to enter the workforce, the employment gap between Americans with and without work limitations has expanded. (Civilians aged 16-64)



Trend line based on a “work limitation” measure of disability --- “Do you have a disability or health condition that limits the kind or amount of work you can do?”

Research conducted by the Disability Compendium shows a stark contrast between the percentage of people with and without disabilities who are outside of the workforce:

Employment Rate, 2012
By Disability Type



Source: Disability Compendium

Michigan: Returned \$19 Million to DC!



Gov. Rick Snyder (R)

- 73.4% of people without disabilities aged 18 to 64 are employed.³
- 29.9% of PwDs aged 18 to 64 are employed.³
- 48,500 people aged 16 to 20 have a disability.¹
- 684,000 people aged 21 to 64 have a disability.¹
- 148,000 PwDs aged 18 to 64 receive benefits.¹
- In 2012, MI's total expenditure on SSDI benefits was \$5,449,448,000.³
- Voc. Rehab. Received 462 blind applicants and 19,869 general applicants in MI in 2012.³
- Voc. Rehab. Obtained 7,816 jobs for PwDs in MI in 2012.²

1. 2012 Disability Status Report: New York, disabilitystatistics.org
2. StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes, 2013
3. [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#)

Michigan Data

		People with Disabilities (%)		People without Disabilities (%)	
		2012	2013	2012	2013
Poverty ¹	US	29.2	28.7	13.6	13.6
	MI	32.0	31.7	14.7	14.5
Smoking ¹	US	26.0	25.4	16.9	16.2
	MI	31.5	28.7	20.7	18.8
Obesity ¹	US	39.1	40.1	24.5	25.0
	MI	41.4	42.7	27.8	27.7
School Dropout ^{2,3}	US	20.1**	-----	3.3*	-----
	MI	26.9**	-----	7.2*	-----
Employment ¹	US	32.7	33.9	73.6	74.2
	MI	27.9	29.9	71.7	73.4

*The School Dropout Rate includes all students, including students with disabilities. (2011)

** Data for 2010-2011

1. [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#). Pg 53, 54, 72, 73, 29

2. [National Center for Education Statistics](#). Pg 15

3. [35th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2013](#). Pg 64

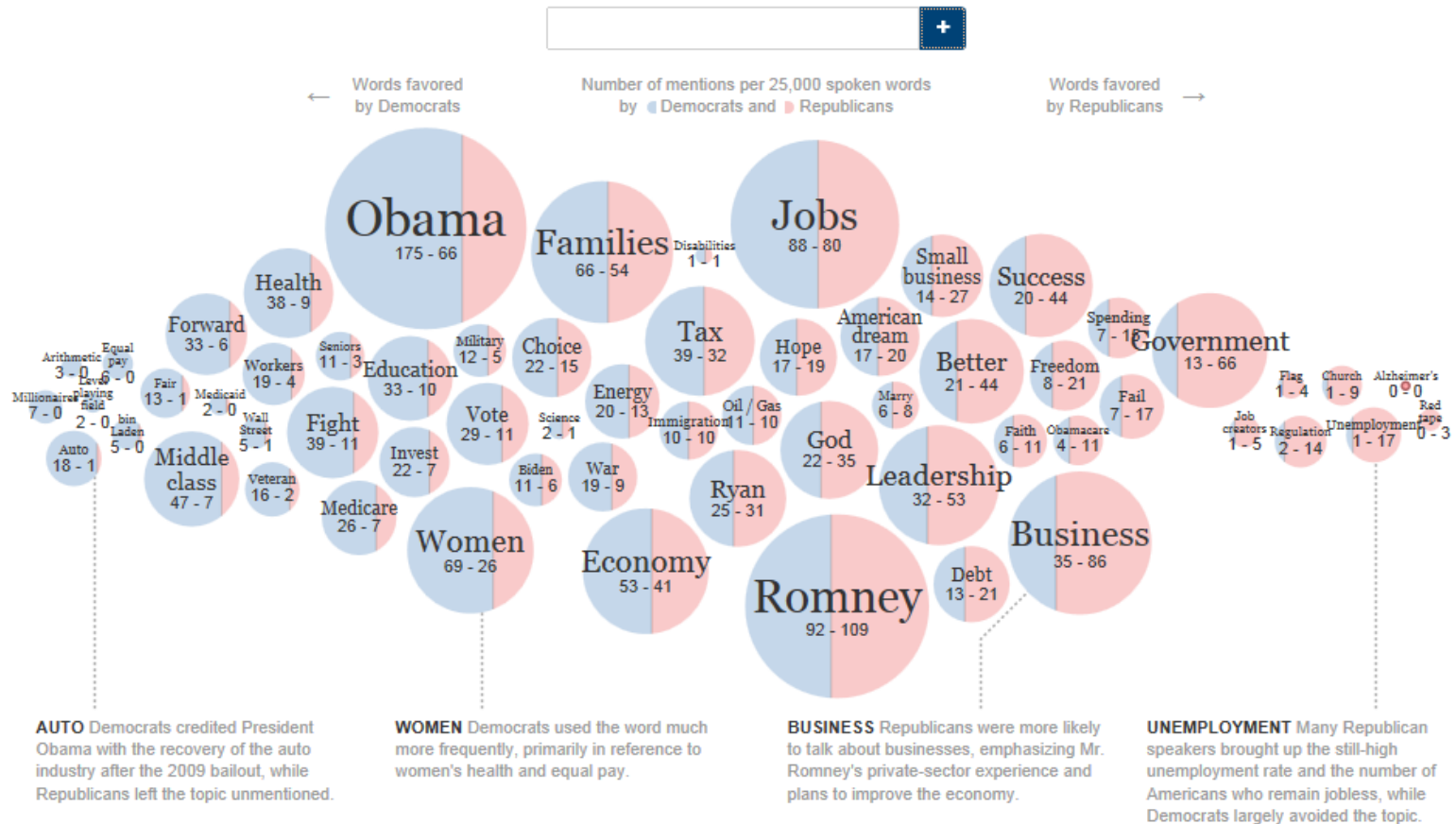
States Not Receiving Their Full Federal Match

State	Agency Type	Award #	Formula Award Amount	Relinquished in Relotment	Received in Reallotment	MOE Penalty for Prior Year Deficit
Georgia	Combined	H126A140089	103,487,366	(42,581,367)	0	0
Idaho	General	H126A140016	15,559,926	(736,206)	0	0
Indiana	Combined	H126A140019	74,235,848	(14,500,000)	0	0
Iowa	General	H126A140020	25,355,920	(2,314,114)	0	0
Iowa	Blind	H126A140021	5,947,685	(596,085)	0	0
Kansas	Combined	H126A140022	27,757,480	(7,500,000)	0	0
Kentucky	General	H126A140023	47,125,958	(6,078,400)	0	0
Kentucky	Blind	H126A140024	7,671,668	(1,071,668)	0	0
Louisiana	Combined	H126A140025	53,132,592	(17,583,295)	0	0
Michigan	General	H126A140090	93,023,198	(19,558,448)	0	0
Missouri	General	H126A140036	56,493,391	(2,000,000)	0	(341,192)
Nevada	Combined	H126A140041	23,842,499	(5,200,000)	0	(1,300,761)
Ohio	Combined	H126A140052	127,715,538	(18,215,538)	0	0
Pennsylvania	Combined	H126A140056	125,831,214	(4,086,378)	0	0
Washington	General	H126A140071	45,967,372	(250,000)	0	(473,251)

Disability Issues – Not Even Discussed

At the National Conventions, the Words They Used

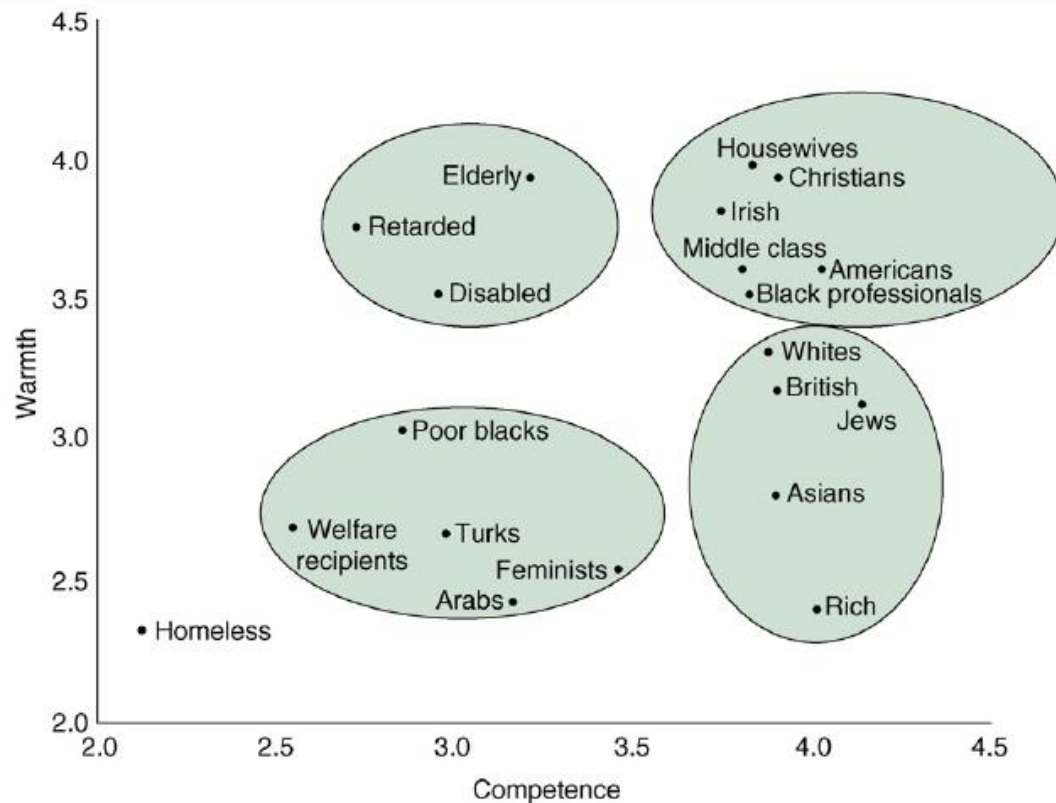
A comparison of how often speakers at the two presidential nominating conventions used different words and phrases, based on an analysis of transcripts from the Federal News Service.



Democrats mentioned **Alzheimer's**
0.0 times per 25,000 words

Republicans mentioned **Alzheimer's**
0.4 times per 25,000 words

People with Disabilities Seen as Warm, But Not Competent



TRENDS in Cognitive Sciences

Figure 1. Scatter plot and cluster analysis of competence and warmth ratings for 20 groups.

From *Universal dimensions of social cognition: Warmth and competence*
by Susan T. Fiske, Amy J.C. Cuddy, and Peter Glick

What are your media goals?

- Who specifically do you want to impact?
Governor? Employers? People with Disabilities?
- What do THEY read/watch?
- Whose opinions do they trust?
- What facts will move their brains?
- What “human interest” story will win their hearts?
- Picture your reader/viewer when you write or do interviews!

Focus on the Persuadables

The Choir:
Your Base



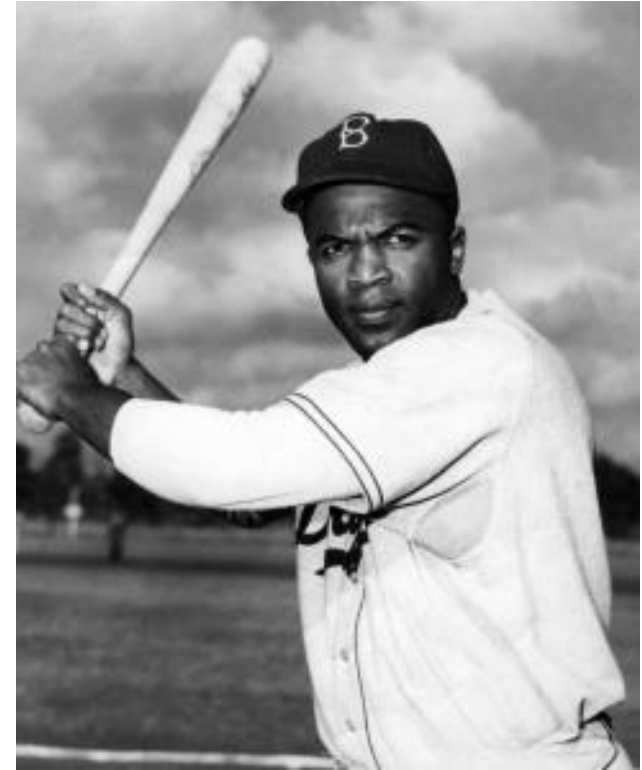
EVERYONE ELSE



Those Who Will
Always Be
Against You

Jackie Robinson Strategy

- First African American to play in Major League Baseball in the modern era, starting in 1947
- Brooklyn Dodgers ended racial segregation in MLB with the full support of the team
- When they hired Jackie Robinson, the Dodgers enjoyed more athletic success, sold more tickets, and gained a larger fan base: WIN-WIN-WIN
- Jackie's Athletic Awards:
 - Selected for six consecutive All-Star Games, 1948-1954
 - Won National League Most Valuable Player Award in 1949
 - Inducted in Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962



Young People with Disabilities

- 1,200,000 Americans with disabilities between ages 16 and 20.¹
- Every year, 300,000 people will age into what should be the workforce.
- Whether they will achieve competitive integrated employment, or collect and depend on government benefits, depends largely on your decisions.
- High expectations, eliminating stigmas, and connecting them to effective programs and supports can enable positive outcomes.

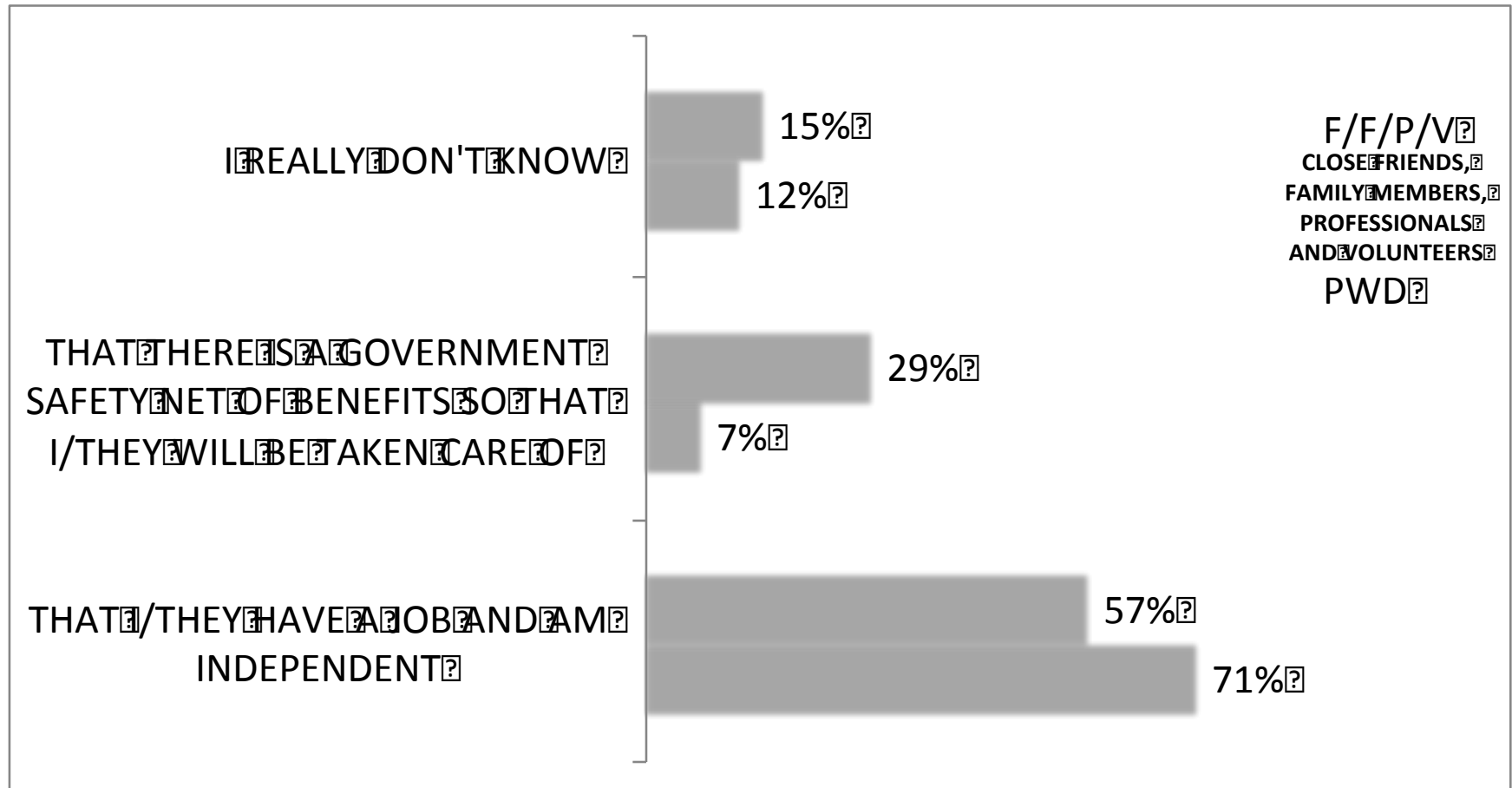


Project Search intern Haley McCormick-Thompson lends an attentive ear to a resident at United Hebrew New Rochelle.
Photo Cred: POSITIVE EXPOSURE

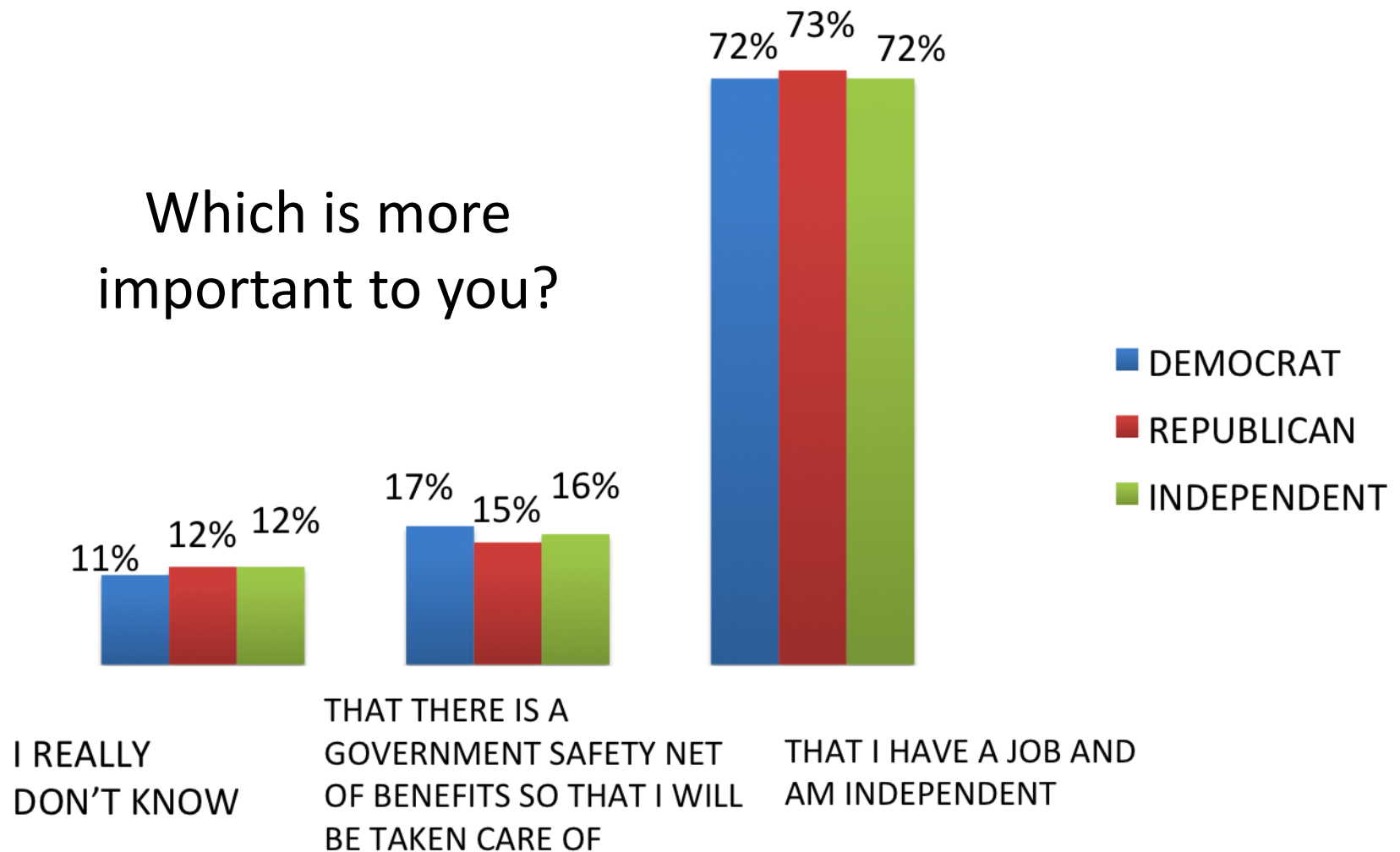
1. 2012 Disability Status Report United States, Cornell University. Pg. 16. Link: http://www.disabilitystatistics.org/StatusReports/2012-PDF/2012-StatusReport_US.pdf

Nearly Three-Quarters of PWDs Want Jobs and Independence Over Benefits

Which is more important to you?



No Partisan Split: Dems and Reps Want Jobs



What kind of media do you want?

- Op-ed = “Opposite the editorial page”
- News stories – Print, TV, radio

Both are:

- An opportunity to get your voice heard
- A chance to educate the public through facts and your personal experience
- An opportunity to change public opinion and improve legislation for people with disabilities

You Don't Have to Be a Professional Writer or PR Expert!

Your Most Important Tools:

- Your passionate opinion: People will listen when you speak from your heart
- A desire to share and educate: Help people understand why your issue is important
- The facts: Do your research and be accurate

Tips for Interviews & Op-eds

Number One Rule: Use the “KISS” Method

KISS = Keep It Simple & Straightforward

- Don't use jargon and technical terms
- Use your personal experience to help others understand and care
- Use facts – and double-check for accuracy
- Use “people-first” language – terms that respect people with disabilities. You are in a unique position to shape the public image for people with disabilities
- Take advantage of “news hooks” – and you already have one!

July 26th is the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Structure/Components of an Op-ed

- First paragraph: Concisely introduce your topic
- State your argument
- Give 3-6 facts that support your argument
- Don't be afraid to use your personal experience
- Ensure each paragraph supports your argument
- Be your own critic: After each paragraph, ask yourself: "Why is this important? Why should others care?"
- Link your conclusion back to your original point
- How long? Typically 500-700 words but check the guidelines of your target population

Your Goal for Writing an Op-ed

Make people aware of the many benefits of employing people with disabilities

Strive to make these points:

- Most people with disabilities WANT to work: Nearly three-quarters of people with disabilities want jobs and independence more than benefits
- Hiring people with disabilities can make companies more profitable and saves taxpayers money

Some Facts You Can Use

- 56 million Americans – 1 out of 5 – live with disabilities
- 51 percent of likely voters say they, a family member, or a close friend has a disability
- 70 percent of working-age Americans with disabilities are not employed, leading to high levels of poverty, isolation, depression and financial dependency
- More Americans have a disability than are Hispanic, African American or Asian
- U.S. taxpayers spend more than \$350 billion a year on benefits to people who, in most cases, would rather have a “hand-up” than a hand-out

Benefits for Companies of Hiring PwDs

Benefits of Hiring PwDs (competitive advantage)

[Kalargyrou, 2014](#); [Kalargyrou and Volis, 2014](#)

- PwD's turnover rates are lower than people without disabilities (Grant, 1991)
- Increases psychological safety and productivity
- Improves innovation, problem solving abilities, ability to compete in all markets, react to expectations of diverse consumers
- Establishes positive company image and increasing customer satisfaction
- Positive effects on workforce
- Increases attendance of both people with and without disabilities (Grant, 1991)
- Improves corporate reputation (Grant, 1991)
- **Walgreens as a case study:** <http://www.kter.org/conference/materials/docs/SafetyManagement.pdf>
- **2010 Kessler-NOD Survey by Harris Interactive:** http://www.nod.org/assets/downloads/01-2011_Exec_Summary.pdf
- **Lowe's example:** http://nod.org/assets/downloads/NOD_Rutgers_Evaluation.pdf

Challenges

- Stereotyping/skepticism → New studies ([Kuo and Kalargyrou 2014](#))
- Productivity issues when there is a mismatch between position and abilities

Examples You Can Use

- Walgreens, EY (formerly Ernst & Young), and AMC Theaters are examples of companies with successful disability inclusion programs
- For a list of companies excelling at inclusive employment, see Disability Equality Index: <http://www.usbln.org/programs-dei.html>

Poll: American Dream Strongest Message

Now I am going to read you statements people who want to make increasing levels of employment among people with disabilities more of a national priority have made. After each statement I read, please tell me if you find it to be a very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing or not at all convincing reason to make increasing levels of employment among people with disabilities more of a national priority.

Total

(Very
Convincing)

**Disability
Community**

(Very
Convincing)

Our nation was founded on the principle that anyone who works hard should be able to get ahead in life. People with disabilities deserve to be able to work to achieve the American dream, just like anyone else

58

62

Companies like Walgreens, E.Y. which was formally known as Ernst and Young, AMC and others have shown that employees with disabilities are loyal, successful and help them make more money. If we find the right jobs for the right people it can and does increase the bottom line of companies

47

48

People with disabilities bring unique characteristics and talents to workplaces that benefit employers and organizations. Stephen Hawking is a genius who happens to use a wheelchair. People with disabilities can work in restaurants, tend our parks, and be super talents in developing computer software.

41

42

American Dream Strongest Message

Now I am going to read you statements people who want to make increasing levels of employment among people with disabilities more of a national priority have made. After each statement I read, please tell me if you find it to be a very convincing, somewhat convincing, not very convincing or not at all convincing reason to make increasing levels of employment among people with disabilities more of a national priority.

Government policies that help people with disabilities get and keep jobs are a win-win because they allow people with disabilities the dignity and financial benefits of work and also grow our economy and save taxpayer money.

We cannot afford to have more than 10 million Americans who are able to work sit at home and collect benefits when they could help make America stronger. Our current system costs 350 billion dollars a year and actually discourages people from working. It is not sustainable.

Progress in science, healthcare, innovation and better access to education has made Americans with disabilities more qualified than ever before. Americans with disabilities also have real abilities and want to work. Times have moved ahead - it's time for our workforce to do the same.

Total

**(Very
Convincing)**

**Disability
Community**

**(Very
Convincing)**

41

40

38

38

32

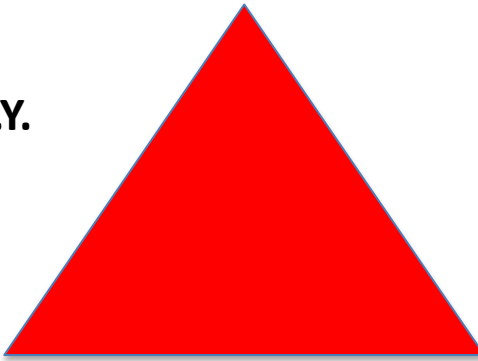
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Your 3 Messages

(a.k.a your “Message Triangle”)

1. **Our nation was founded on the principle that anyone who works hard should be able to get ahead in life.** People with disabilities deserve to be able to work to achieve the American dream, just like anyone else

2. **Companies like Walgreens, E.Y. which was formally known as Ernst and Young, AMC and others have shown that employees with disabilities are loyal, successful and help them make more money.** If we find the right jobs for the right people it can and does increase the bottom line of companies



3. **Government policies that help people with disabilities get and keep jobs are a win-win-win** because they allow people with disabilities the dignity and financial benefits of work and also grow our economy and save taxpayer money.

Mention Your Governor



Gov. Jack Markell (DE), Jennifer Mizrahi & Doc Sweitzer



Jennifer Mizrahi, Gov. Scott Walker (WI),
Lisa Derx and John Pare



Gov. Phil Bryant (MS), Jennifer Mizrahi
and other disability leaders



Gov. Dennis Daugaard (SD), Jennifer Mizrahi
and other disability leaders

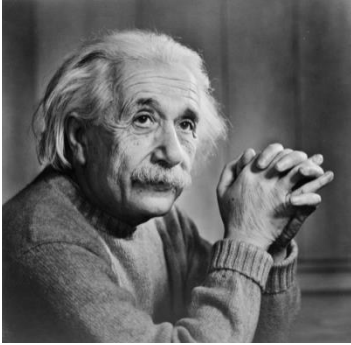


Gov. Terry Branstad

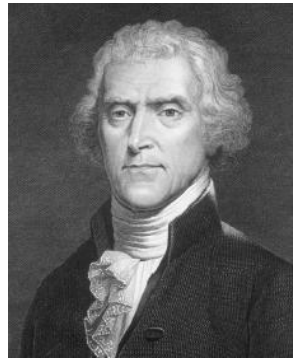
Use your local statistics and fact!

- ❖ Alabama: Download the PDF [here](#). Download the PPT [here](#).
- ❖ Alaska: Download the PDF [here](#). Download the PPT [here](#).
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- ❖ Wyoming: Download the PDF [here](#). Download the PPT [here](#).

Use Superstars with Disabilities



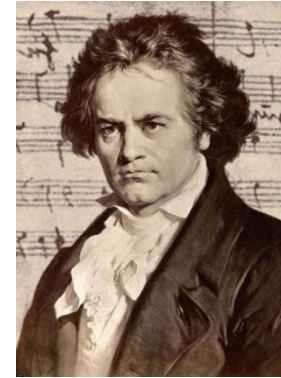
Albert Einstein:
Autism Spectrum



Thomas
Jefferson:
Dyslexia



Franklin D.
Roosevelt: Post-
polio syndrome



Ludwig von
Beethoven:
Deaf



Michael J. Fox:
Parkinson's
Disease



Derrick Coleman:
Deaf



Lauren Potter:
Down
syndrome



Stephen
Hawking: ALS



Marlee Matlin:
Deaf



Amy Purdy: Uses
prosthetic legs

Use the Power of Celebrities for Good



Find Your Employer Heroes

Every state needs “leadership employers.” EY, Prudential Financial, Procter & Gamble, IBM, KPMG, Merck & Co., AT&T, Sodexo, Kaiser Permanente, Comcast, Walgreens, AMC Theaters, hospitals, senior living among others have found they can “do good and do well” at the same time.

- <http://abcn.ws/1GCPssl>
- <http://nbcnews.to/1D4l0c3>
- **The Business Case of Employing People with Disabilities (Tourism Research & Hospitality Journal):**
http://scitechnol.com/business-case-of-employing-people-with-disabilities-nl3W.php?article_id=169
- **People with Disabilities: A new model of productive labor (Advances in Hospitality):**
http://www.ahtmm.com/proceedings/2012/2ndahtmmc_submission_71.pdf



Which Employers in Your State Must Meet 503 Rules (Hire PwDs)?

Top Contractors

- General Dynamics Corp.
- Emergent Biosolutions Inc.
- BAE Systems PLC
- Kelly Service Inc.
- Kellogg Company

Complete List: [Fed Spending Website](http://www.fedspending.org/fpds/fpds.php?stateCode=MI&sortp=r&detail=-1&datatype=T&reptype=p&database=fpds&fiscal_year=2012&submit=GO)

http://www.fedspending.org/fpds/fpds.php?stateCode=MI&sortp=r&detail=-1&datatype=T&reptype=p&database=fpds&fiscal_year=2012&submit=GO

Complete Federal Lists of 2006-2013: [Federal Procurement Data System Website](https://www.fpds.gov/fpdsng_cms/index.php/en/reports/62-top-100-contractors-report3.html)

https://www.fpds.gov/fpdsng_cms/index.php/en/reports/62-top-100-contractors-report3.html

How to Get Started

- Job Accommodation Network → <https://askjan.org>
- U.S. Business Leadership Network → <http://usbln.org>

More Information About ADA

- ADA Timeline: <http://www.dol.gov/featured/ada/>
- Non-Discrimination Guide:
<https://blog.dol.gov/2015/07/07/ensuring-equal-opportunity-at-american-job-centers/>
- Key Points on Disability and Occupational Projections Tables:
<http://www.dol.gov/odep/pdf/20141022-KeyPoints.pdf>

Disability Issues Important in Early Primary States

IOWA

- 357,730 people with disabilities
- 169,300 of these are of working age
- 44.8% of people with disabilities are employed compared to 82.1% of people without disabilities

SOUTH CAROLINA

- 630,038 people with disabilities
- 340,300 of these are working age
- 30.7% of people with disabilities are employed compared to 72.7% of people without disabilities

ONE IN FIVE Americans has a disability and the **MAJORITY OF VOTERS** have a loved one with a disability.

NEVADA

- 357,035 people with disabilities
- 171,600 of these are of working age
- 39.2% of people with disabilities are employed compared to 73.1% of people without disabilities

NEW HAMPSHIRE

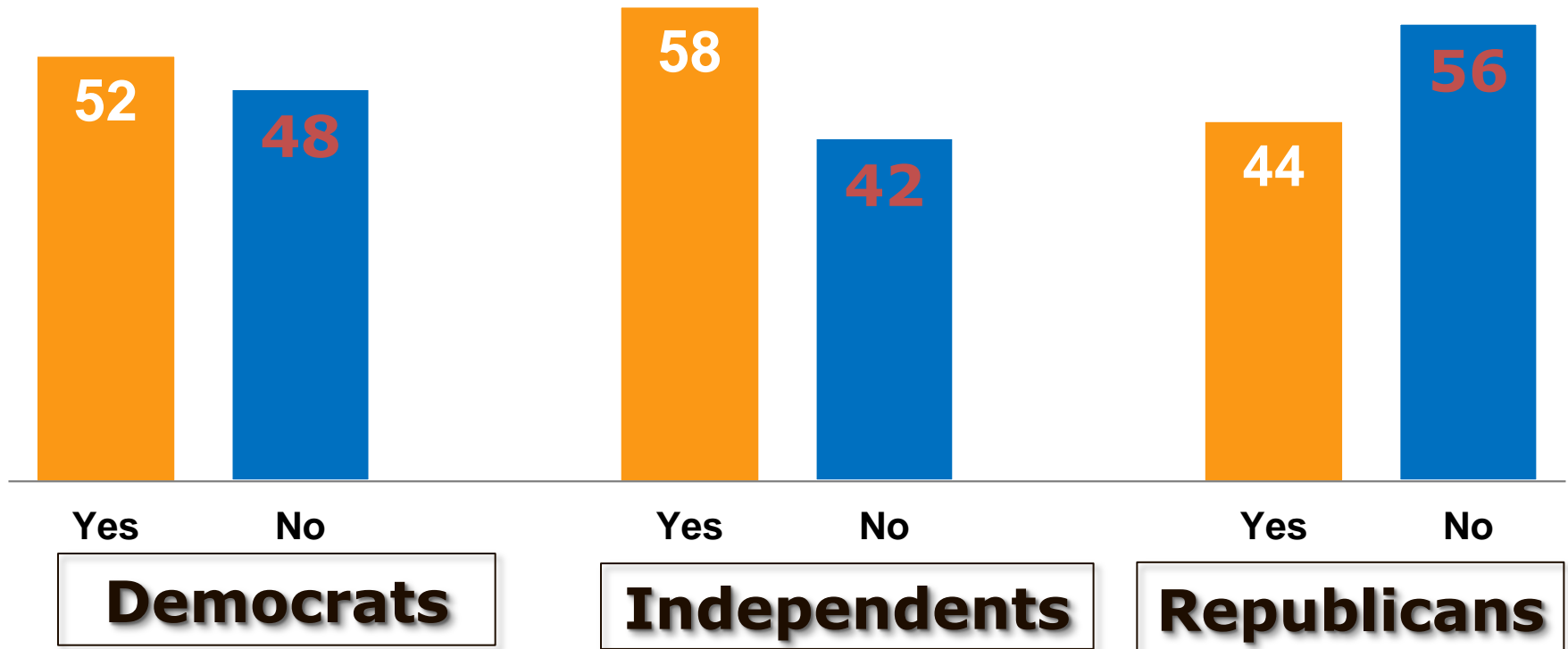
- 166,258 people with disabilities
- 77,800 of these are of working age
- 41.8% of people with disabilities are employed compared to 80.3% of people without disabilities

RESPECTABILITY
"Empowering People with Disabilities to Achieve the American Dream!"

RespectAbilityUSA is nonpartisan
and neither rates nor endorses candidates.

Party Identification: All Report Knowing Someone With a Disability

Do you, a family member, or a close friend have a disability?

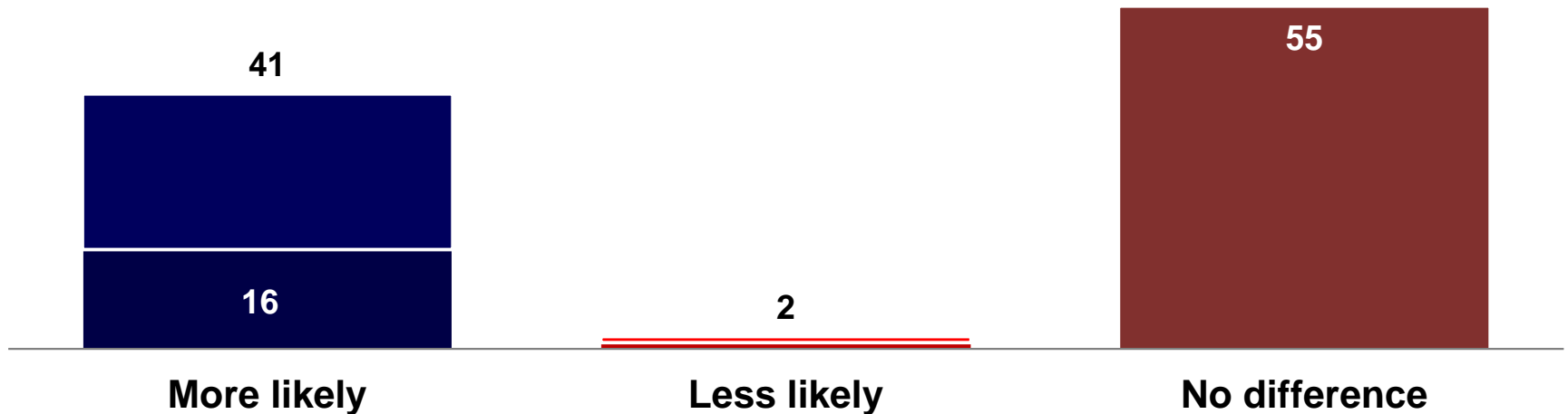


No Downside for Candidates to Support Policies For Those With Disabilities

Would you be more or less likely to vote for a Congressional candidate who is committed to making policies and programs to help those with disabilities a national priority, or would it make no difference to your vote?

■ Much more likely

■ Much less likely



And Finally...Pitching Your Story or Op-ed

- Decide where you want to get press/publish your op-ed. Consider regional/personal ties. It still counts if it's not in *The New York Times*.
- Who do you know? If you have ties to an editorial board member, email your op-ed or press release directly to them.
- If possible, send by email with a short note to introduce yourself, your topic and its relevance (the news hook). Do coffee!
- Include your full name, telephone number and email. Publications often call/email to verify your identity.
- Paste – don't attach – your op-ed or release into the email.

Where to send it?

- Check out guidelines for various publications & alternative publication venues: <http://www.ccmc.org/node/16179>
- Google your top media outlets and then do searches on their websites.
- See which reporters cover disability issues at that media outlet.

Examples of Op-eds

False Stereotypes of People With Disabilities Hold Employers Back

By Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, President of RespectAbilityUSA

Huffington Post, May 22, 2014

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jennifer-laszlo-mizrahi/false-stereotypes-of-peop_b_5353818.html

Why do President Obama's children go to a segregated school?

By Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, President of RespectAbilityUSA

The Hill, June 5, 2014

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/education/208066-why-do-president-obamas-children-go-to-a-segregated-school>

A Better Bottom Line: Employing Individuals With Disabilities

By Jack Markell, Gov. of Delaware

Huffington Post, Aug. 13, 2013

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gov-jack-markell/a-better-bottom-line-empl_b_3749414.html

Finding jobs for Cole and his peers

By Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.)

The Hill, July 1, 2013

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/healthcare/308499-finding-jobs-for-cole-and-his-peers>

Disability advocates laud governors' jobs focus

By Cindy Bentley, Daniel Bier, Joan Karan, Lisa Pugh And Beth Swedeen

Journal Sentinel (Milwaukee), Aug. 1, 2013

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/opinion/disability-advocates-laud-governors-jobs-focus-b9966299z1-217983671.html>

More Examples Op-eds

<http://www.abqjournal.com/610907/opinion/people-with-disabilities-deserve-the-dignity-of-a-job.html>

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http://www.idahostatesman.com/2015/06/07/3836845_guest-opinion-idahos-citizens.html?rh=1

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<http://www.d5coalition.org/2015/06/celebrating-ada-its-time-to-add-a-disability-lens-to-our-philanthropy/>

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Thank You!

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