Steve Bartlett: This is Steve Bartlett. Welcome to the - we think a quite significant press briefing on issues relating to the disability community both in the general sense of the elections in 2020, but in a specific sense of the COVID crisis, what we proposed to -- My name is Steve Bartlett I'm the chairman of an organization called RespectAbility which I will ask the CEO to describe in a few moments. RespectAbility is in essence an organization devoted to de-stigmatizing those with disabilities and encouraging employment opportunities so today we have really a three-part briefing. One is to share with you some action steps that we have proposed to policymakers as to how to include the disability community in their thoughts as they develop policy. The second is that Stan Greenberg who is the CEO of literally a world-famous Greenberg research organization will provide an exact - a polling data that's really quite fascinating. He did a poll that polled those with disabilities but also the total population and then compared the results on a number of pretty significant issues. And then third, Jennifer Mizrahi will have some comments that we've aimed directly to those with disabilities as to how specific steps they can take to protect themselves. So let me start at this point with Jennifer. Would you give a 60 second to 120 second snapshot of RespectAbility the organization?

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: Absolutely. Thank you Steve and first of all just so honored to have Steve as our chairman. Many of our listeners know that Steve, when he was in Congress, was a leading author of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which we're now celebrating the 30th anniversary of, and many other pieces of legislation that impact people with disabilities. RespectAbility is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that is working to fight stigmas and advance opportunities for people with disabilities and of course there is nothing more important to us than civic engagement and ensuring that people with disabilities can fully participate in American civic life, including voting, including making a difference in our public policy, and so I'm just so thrilled to have Stan Greenberg do some polling with us but let me turn it back to Steve who's going to give us some other information first.

Steve Bartlett: Okay let me let me start with an overview of where we are as it relates to the disability community. At first I'll give you a little snapshot of the disability community in America. One in five people have a disability, either physical, sensory, or cognitive or mental health, or some combination of those. Next slide.

Now those kinds of disabilities can be temporary or they can be permanent. They can be visible or non visible. And they can start at birth or be acquired during a lifetime. Next slide.

Anyone can join the disability community at any point, either by accident or some kind of medical condition. And the disability community - with my involvement for the last thirty years or more. As the disability community, as they get organized, can be quite cutting-edge and quite innovative. One of the important parts of this is to recognize that people with disabilities are from all segments of the population. Very diverse, all communities, all segments of the population, there's no separate demographic separation other than the disability. And then of course what we do at RespectAbility is look for opportunities for those with disabilities to participate in the mainstream of American life. That is increasing and improving a lot. It was the exception back in the 1980s when I first got involved and it's now increasingly the norm. Next slide.

So here's some some messages that we've sent out at RespectAbility and I won't read these but I'll read the headlines. As we have encouraged policy makers to, as they develop policies, to always make sure that they provide some consideration to make sure the people with disabilities are participating. So one is in stopping the spread, it's important to be sure that the access to testing for persons with disabilities is available. Sometimes that means a reasonable accommodation to get the test to the to the person. Second is to protect the frontline responders and caregivers who are giving the protection because many of those are also providing care to persons with disabilities. Third is to enable people with disabilities who are living in the community to have access to food and support. So, for example, if you are non-mobile and you're told to either self quarantine or to stay home somehow you have to get food to you, so we need to have guidance and protocols to make sure that the various caregivers and institutions don't leave anyone out when it comes to making sure that they have food and support. Next slide.

We also want to ensure that people with disabilities keep their jobs and can get their jobs back when the crisis is over. One of the things that you hear in the disability community a lot with regard to employment is "last hired, first fired." And so we do everything we can to avoid that syndrome so that -- we understand there'll be a lot of job loss and we want to be sure that the job loss is not disproportionately shared by those with disabilities. And then accessibility and transportation. People with disabilities still need transportation and even with social distancing, if someone has to get from here to there they have to have those options to be able to get there. And then the last I think is quite important and that is to offer online mental health supports. People with mental disabilities - the social distancing has a disproportionate impact on their lives, and they need extra mental health counseling and support that can be done with online and with telehealth but it has to be done. Otherwise their situation will escalate and get much worse, again, much more than the general population. All of these things are important for the whole population but we're pointing out some ways they're particularly important to those with disabilities. So next slide, Eric?

So now I'm going to call on Stan Greenberg. He's been doing this for years. He's a trusted counselor and advisor to prime ministers and presidents and kings and parties and businesses. He's the head of Greenberg Quin Research Associates. So Stan, if you would share with us what you've done with this poll.

Stan Greenberg: Okay Steve. Thank you for that introduction and I wish I knew why they were taking me seriously but I do know -- but what I do do is respect what you're doing with RespectAbility and also Jennifer and -- when you go through the points that you outlined above you just realize how important it is that leaders get it right and it's hard to make sure with all the in this midst of this crisis that you have this double and triple layer of six points that you added at the beginning as you're addressing the problem. I will press my wife who was a member of Congress and shares that history with you, to deal with these kinds of issues. What I do want to talk about though is the political world where so many of these issues can be decided. Many of them will be done in the next few weeks to deal with major dislocations-- health issues obviously but also the kinds of social support that are necessary. They will become even more necessary and particularly if you're talking about a pathway back to employment which you'll see at the end of this survey data, and that's really the most important thing that needs to happen and has the potential for the most resonant political support across the board for both parties. I'm going to talk about a poll that we've just -- releasing today and tomorrow -- we put on the website but this is in effect the first release of this poll of the battleground/ This is a largely presidential battleground but a senate battleground because you can incorporate Colorado and Arizona. This is I would say very important what the future will look like and the key political decisions that will be taken. This is a thousand sample registered voter survey, was done with two-thirds cellphones so it's a very representative sample. So let's talk about the presidential race in the battleground and the role of the disability community and voters. Next slide.

The definition of disability and the link here includes people who self-identify as having a disability, have a family member with a disability or having a close friend with a disability. As you go to the next slide you can see the data on the key findings affecting them. First thing is, more than half of the electorate - almost 60 percent - self-identify as having a disability or have a family member with a disability or have a close friend with a disability. You know eleven percent --

Steve Bartlett: Stan, I might interrupt you there. So it's important to note that the disability community understands this well, and this is a good definition. Those of us who are in the disability community, we recognize that it's not just those twenty percent of the population has a disability but it's broader than that. But if you have a family member or close friend, then people really feel a part of the disability community. So this is a good definition. Of course what Stan is saying is that in the key battleground states, 59 percent of the voters feel that they are a part of the disability community so candidates should take note of 59 percent of the electorate. Go ahead Stan, sorry.

Stan Greenberg: It's important to identify because again, this is six in ten who identify. Now it comes out a very real thing as having a disability, having a family member with a disability, or having a close friend those are all very real things people are conscious of and affects their attitudes and their behavior. Now what we find in the survey is they lean more democratic than voters outside the disability community but that's very close and they're still very politically contested in the Presidential, Senate and Congressional level. This is a contested community. Now the top issues for them are health care and the economy. Disability community focuses more on Social Security and Medicare and prescription drug prices than voters overall and I think that's understandable. And both voters overall and within this community strongly believe campaigns should be accessible to people with disabilities. And both voters overall and those with disabilities believe more needs to be done to help people with disabilities to gain skills and education and integrate into the workforce. That's the most important finding in the end and the most important thing for them to address in the weeks and months ahead. If you look at the disability community and in the electorate the 59% is the total proportion. 32 - a third is a family member. 16% person themselves. Or a friend - 11%. If you look at the demographics of those who are part of the disability community, a quarter are people of color. A little over a third are college graduates. Sixty percent - quite important - are working-class, what we use as a definition of working-class - don't have a four-year college degree. Over half are in large and small metropolitan areas and 46% are outside the big metropolitan areas. Go to the next slide.

This is our first look at the presidential race just as a firm. As the presidential race in the US has become defined and with Biden emerging clearly as the nominee of the Democratic Party the contest still goes on. So I'll focus very heavily on the Biden versus Trump question. Though what you see here is in the battleground Democrats are ahead in the presidential race and Biden versus Trump by four points. The battleground by the way is more Republican than the overall country. Donald Trump won the battleground by one point, so this four point lead for Biden is a five point swing against what happened in 2016. So that -- this is obviously still a real contest, but he begins with a relatively strong position. But it's even stronger for persons with disabilities very much close to what happens in the disability community overall and independents are slightly stronger at about six points. The Sanders voters - if Sanders were the nominee the race is dead even in the disability community, it's dead even overall with registered voters, and dead even with the disability community. With Biden it's close it's still contested. The margin with any of these communities matters a lot. It's not just whether it's contested so all of these communities can be affected and you'll see that there are issues that are very important to them going forward. Here we looked at the generic Senate race in the battleground as well as the congressional race. The Senate race is very close so when you think about how you're going to move to win these Senate races the disability community is very evenly divided and really at the center of these contests as well. The generic congressional is more democratic across the board here. Next slide.

You know we asked in this survey attitudes toward Medicaid. Medicaid is very important because everyone here will be automatically eligible based on their disabilities - I can be corrected by others on the call. But voted are very positive toward Medicaid. This is a thermometer score where you offer a zero to a hundred score. Fifty being in the middle, neither warm nor cool. If it was to a hundred anything over fifty is warm anything over seventy-five is very warm. And so you're dealing with Medicaid with 63 percent warm favorable, only 12 percent negative. But 41 percent strong with intensity. But look at Medicaid once you get to the disability community, and people with a disability. Both the sixty-five - two-thirds essentially. Two thirds of persons with disability and the disability community at large, with the huge intensity - 45 percent intensity - saying embrace Medicaid. And as you know Medicaid expansion and how Medicaid deals with disability is a very important policy area, and very important to what happens to people going forward, but even with this crisis facing the country. Go to the next slide.

And now what you'll see here is what the response on Medicaid is very much part of a response to Social Security and Medicare, which are at the top of the two or three top issues for the disability community. You see Social Security and Medicare was the top issue with them, as well as health care. And health care was a huge debate going into this moment. With this crisis I'm assuming health care is even a bigger issue. So that's the concern with Social Security and Medicare and health care parallels what is happening in the disability community where this is very strong. We tested Medicaid on its own. Had Medicaid been on the list I'm sure would have made it even stronger because it's very important to get these things right in this moment of crisis going forward. Go to the next slide.

Now we have campaigns going on. The campaigns have now pulled back in important ways given the inability to do rallies and door-to-door knocking, but as people watch the campaign, people wanted campaigns to be accessible to people with disabilities. 90 percent, 2/3 strongly. And there's no difference between the country as a whole and disability community. They want campaigns being accessible to them, reaching out to them, and I think also advancing policies that impact their future. Let's go to the next slide.

Here we asked a range of challenges and asking whether it would make you be more or less likely to support an elected official who made this a priority. And what you see is the two things that are very strong here: ensuring that children with disabilities get the education and training they need to succeed. The other, expanding job and career opportunities for people with disabilities so they can succeed just like anyone else. When you look at these numbers and you look at the much more likely it's a lot more likely to vote for a candidate with those priorities, you see that 59 percent are saying it overall, but it is 63 percent for a person with a disability. You go over to the job and career opportunities. It's 51 percent much more likely, but jumps to 59 percent for those with a disability. Also 54 percent with disability community overall and half with a friend with disability. This is almost half of the voters saying much more likely to vote for candidate who addresses those issues. We know how central those issues will be in the coming weeks and months and it's important I think for leaders to understand and media I think to pay attention to how important - not only how important this issue is but it's also important for voters overall. This is a politically impactful thing for leaders to do, policies for them to pursue both for their own electoral fortunes and for the disability community as well.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: So thank you very much Stan for walking through that very important data. The first slide where he did show the link to our website, you can get an awful lot more data because we have thermometer questions on how the disability community cares about or feels about abortion or guns or a whole broad range of leaders and issues and all of that is going to be in our website after the call. But I do think it's important to point out that the census shows that almost 20% of the country are people with disabilities and the CDC says it's one out of every four adults, but back earlier on you saw it's only 16% of voters. One key reason is this problem of accessibility. It's estimated that 14.3 million people with disabilities voted in the last election. That surpassed the number of Hispanic and Latino voters, nears the number of african-american voters, but actually the potential is even greater if campaigns are accessible. Next slide.

That is why we're suggesting to political campaigns and really urging something that 90% of the voters in this poll said they want, and that is for campaigns to be connected and accessible to voters with disabilities. So next slide.

So in order for that to happen one thing that needs to happen is candidates really need to understand the disability community which is over 56 million people living in communities. I will also add that there's people with disabilities who will live in a senior nursing home and that of the 2.2 million people who are incarcerated, 750,000 of them that we know of are people with disabilities. So this is a very large population of Americans. Again the CDC says it's one out of every four adults. And this poll that we just saw shows that it's the overwhelming majority of voters are in the disability community. Next slide.

So a key thing is that every campaign should include people with disabilities, and that's really important. It's nothing about us without us, that when you think about your disability policies, you want to be sure that knowledgeable people with disabilities are part of the team. So for example I myself, CEO of RespectAbility, am dyslexic. I have ADHD. The majority of our staff, the majority of our board are people with disabilities, as are our national leadership Fellows. So very very important to have people with disabilities on your team. Next slide.

And it's very important that the candidates make their issues known. So for example, we have a candidate questionnaire if you go to VoteAbility.com, we have the presidential candidates and pretty soon we're gonna have the Senate races and the Governor's races. And you can see where these candidates are on all the disability issues. We've been told by the Biden campaign that we'll be getting his answers very soon. Next slide please.

It's very important to use a good lexicon. Today there are words that you would never use to talk about African Americans and other minority communities. The same is true for people with disabilities so it's important to learn the lexicon. And if you have a question about how somebody wants to be identified, well first of all people want to be identified by their name, first of all. But we talk about ATP - ask the person. So some people want to be known as autistic and other people a person with autism. So different people want to be referred to differently, but they never want to be that autistic boy or that you know autism guy because that's really disrespectful and very prejudicial. Next?

On social media and websites we've seen a major problem that the campaign websites historically have not been accessible to voters with disabilities. So for example, at the beginning of the presidential campaigns, not a single one of the presidential campaign websites was accessible to people with disabilities. And we and others in the disability community reached out and today, most of those presidential campaign websites are accessible. But you can also very easily make your website and your social media accessible, and we have webinars on that that you can see the links to below that are free. Next?

Likewise, all of your events should be accessible. We did a major survey of the nonprofit community. We found that 40 percent of nonprofits are not even attempting to put their major public facing events in accessible locations. If a wheelchair user can't get into your event, can't use a bathroom at your event, you're gonna have a problem. You want to make sure your materials are accessible. Next slide.

There's lots of information on these slides that you can refer to later but a key here is that, again, you've got a free webinar where you can get information and a checklist on how to do that. Next.

Also, once you've taken the efforts to make sure that your events are accessible you want to make people know, so that people with disabilities know that they can attend your event. So you need to put it in your advertising and you also need to ask people when they're RSVP'ing for an event to let you know if they need an accommodation, so that if they need a sign language interpreter there's a place where they can request it and also you have a point person who will make sure that that happens. Next.

You want to always focus on intersectionality because as Steve Bartlett said earlier, the disability community is from every demographic and Stan showed that if you are an African-American with a disability, you're an immigrant with a disability - the intersectional issues are very important and we're very concerned at RespectAbility about the school-to-prison pipeline for youth with disabilities, and under-resourced schools that are not getting the early intervention, education and opportunities to succeed. Next.

This is just a link to a whole series of webinars and these are free ways for any political campaign, any organization to learn how to make their communications and their outreach efforts accessible to this very large number of voters and individuals with disabilities. Next.

These are just -- and I'm just gonna have these slides sort of scrolled through -- this is just to show you that we have previous polls that have been done by Stan Greenberg and others and that those slides are available to anyone who has questions. So now let me turn it over so that our audience can ask questions, and there is a Q&A in your zoom app, and we hope that people will put in questions. And we're gonna have Chad read those out for us as they come in. Let me ask Stan a question while we're waiting for any of them from the audience. How do you think this is different from other communities - the African-American community or the Latino community, in terms of having this data out here? It's very unusual that we're even seeing that in a poll so I wondered if you could just sort of comment about why it is that polls frequently will put out the demographics by race but won't put out the disability community?

Stan Greenberg: You know it's interesting that the society but also through a filter of the media gets into a framework on what identities are real and consequential politically. And so it wouldn't be any poll, there wouldn't be any exit poll that doesn't ask African-Americans, Hispanic, and millennial, at this point age, as well as white. But it's very hard to get them to get into another box. I mean, I know we worked for groups dealing with unmarried women, get them to ask a question whether they're married or not. It turns out being married has a huge effect on your ability to deal, to have the support of a spouse or a marriage household usually affects your needs. Just getting people to ask questions on disability, which is only a couple questions, provides so rich and relevant that I think it's actually part of the pressure campaign you have to do. And so part of this is with the politicians to pay attention, because the policies they pursue matters, but it's also getting the media to pay attention and to begin to bring into their analysis because people do identify with, it does affect their political behavior, and they will be more relevant as a media organization and politically elected leaders will be more relevant if they bring them into their scope.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: Right. So I wanted to remind all of our listeners that the PowerPoint that we're presenting is accessible -- screen reader accessible to people who are blind or have low vision, and that is on our website. Additionally, like all of our webinars, we have the live captioning. But there is a question from the audience that says Stan mentioned this briefly, but what do each of you view as the most important finding in this poll, and why do you find that to be most important both Stan and Steve?

Stan Greenberg: I'm gonna let Steve go first.

Steve Bartlett: The number one that jumped out at me is that the disability community -- two-part answer one is disability community votes and it's a very large segment of the voting public. In these battleground states, the disability community is 59% of the vote. So candidates should not take this lightly, to do so is at your own peril. But then the second thing is, even though it tilts slightly Democrat in this year, it's fairly close call, so the vote of the disability community is up for grabs. And I guess third is that it's still a very diverse community. It's -- the disability community is all of us and people in all walks of life. And so it is up for grabs, it's not monolithic, but some attention to disability issues will gather votes for candidates. Stan?

Stan Greenberg: Well for me it's healthcare and how high that is with voters overall but also with the emergence as the second issue along with Social Security and Medicaid and Medicare. But they are part of the overall health care debate which has become a searing issue, given the current crisis. And so that is very important that they play a central role in thinking about how to get there, how we come forward and making sure the disability community's needs are addressed as part of it. The second I will - I'll take the liberty of saying - and go to the -- one of the highest priorities of the organization is the making sure people can work and people are being trained and brought in to work, that that issue had such a intensity for all voters but it had even more intensity for the disability community themselves. That means they are more likely to make it a voting issue in closely contested elections. And leaders would benefit by setting this as high in their priorities.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: So I'm gonna jump in and add something that might be counterintuitive. I see it as incredibly important that approximately 90 percent of the voters, whether they have a disability or they don't have any connection to the disability community, think that campaigns should be accessible to and inclusive of people with disabilities. So as a member of the disability community myself and an activist on those issues, I see that a lot of my colleagues in the disability community are spending a lot of time, money and resources trying to sort of convince people that they should be inclusive. And what this poll tells us is that people already want to be inclusive so the money and the time that people are spending trying to convince people to want to be inclusive frankly could be better spent. We did a separate survey of the nonprofit community on these issues. We found the same thing. But what we found was that they don't know what they don't know. In other words, they want to be inclusive but they didn't realize that they should be putting captions on videos and that it's incredibly important and easy to do it and that YouTube has an algorithm that will make it instant and free. It's not nearly as good as the live captioning that we have on this webinar today but that it's instant and free, and so why are people not doing that? So it's very important for the disability community to understand that when we communicate we don't have to communicate that it's important to include people with disabilities, we need to communicate how to include people with disabilities. So that's very important to me. There's a question: I work with young people with disabilities and the trend I'm seeing is that many don't even want to identify as a person with a disability and some don't even know they have a disability because their parents haven't told them. I'm scared about rights being taken away. How can we get the next generation to vote in their interest when they refuse to even identify as people with disabilities? Well, it's true that people might not identify if they have a mental health condition, or -- I myself have a learning disability because of my dyslexia and my ADHD. So they might not think of themselves as a member of the disability community but they can certainly see when there are policies that offer training, inclusive education opportunities, or job opportunities - they can see what the policies are. So they don't necessarily need a label that says that they're a member of the disability community to know that there is a policy that applies to them. And likewise if they have a chronic health condition like diabetes or Crohn's or chronic pain, they know that the ability to have access to medical assistance when they have a pre-existing condition is very important to them. They might not say "I'm a member of the disability community" but they would certainly say "I have a pre-existing medical condition" and having access to healthcare with a pre-existing condition is important to them. But it is important to build disability pride. That's something that we in the disability community are working on, and at RespectAbility in particular, working with Hollywood to try and get more television shows and films to give accurate and positive descriptions of people with disabilities.

Steve Bartlett: So people with disabilities increasingly self-identify and are comfortable doing so. Some don't want to and that's fine. As we de-stigmatize disabilities, then the self-identification will become more common and less of a barrier or an issue. But even if you don't self-identify you still know that you have a disability or you have a friend who does and so you're aware of the way candidates, in this case, or employers treat you and you're aware of it constantly. And whether you self-identify or not is not as important as the fact that you recognize it. And in many cases you deal with it at the ballot box.

Stan Greenberg: There's a question about why the coronavirus questions scored so low. And I think it's timing but I also think that -- I think a lot of people believe this is exaggerated. I think a lot of working people who are watching what's happening with their jobs - they're not sure they're paying a price for something that's exaggerated. I think consciousness of this is going to change. I'm watching polling, not just here but in other countries. And I'm stunned by how many people both still believe this is exaggerated even as we're watching what's happening in Italy. And so I think that may be part of the problem and they doubt that they themselves will be affected by it, leads them to put it as a lower response, but it also put may have pushed up responses on health care. Where they're focusing on how this community is addressing the problem and health care is the main vehicle for that.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: Actually Eric if you can put up that slide again where we're competing the top issues again. I think that was a really important slide and I'd love for the audience to be able to look at that slide - that's it. Again, so this slide asked: Now thinking about the 2020 election as you think about elections coming up, which two or three of the following issues are the most important for you to decide who to support? So one of the issues that was listed during this survey which I believe ended on the 16th, which is very recent, is the coronavirus. And so that's what the questioner was asking about, was this particular question. So health care and Social Security and Medicare tested much higher in terms of saliency, as did access to prescription drug costs, that's a very important issue to the disability community, which is in the orange color on this, than the virus. But I will also say that until the President sort of changed his messaging around the coronavirus in the last couple of days, that people who were watching Fox News were getting one set of messages about the virus and people watching other networks were getting a different set of information, and we see that many of the members of the disability community, if you go to the full data of this survey which is on our website, are very conservative, living in rural areas, big supporters of the NRA pro-life - that I think that if you were to do this survey in the next few days that you might see a different answer. Stan, do you think that's the case?

Stan Greenberg: I think that's right and this community is contested even though it's slightly more democratic in the presidential vote, you're still dealing with about 45% who are voting for the president and he's probably an important filter for how they're interpreting what's happening.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: Are there more questions?

Steve Bartlett: If not we thank you for your participation. I would note that this survey is on our website in full, the total polling data and information is on the website and any of the three of us are available offline to answer any additional questions. We thank you for your attendance. Jennifer and Stan, thank you very much.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi: Thank you all so very much!