>> Steve Bartlett: Good morning -- I'm calling from Texas so this is still the morning. Some of you may be east coast, in the afternoon. My name is Steve Bartlett and I'm chairman of RespectAbility. RespectAbility, as I hope you know, is an organization that is devoted to disability inclusion. We have three missions -- we're a national organization -- one is to destigmatize those with persons with disabilities. Secondly is to enhance and open up new opportunities, particularly for employment but also for education for persons with disabilities. And third is to develop a leadership cadre of -- sort of loosely entitled "nothing about us without us" -- of persons with disabilities who move into leadership of the non-profit world. We're very proud of those three missions, and we've been at it, and we've had some real successes. One of the successes, both this election cycle and the last two election cycles, is to communicate the disability messages -- disability inclusion messages -- to candidates, both in Presidential races but also with Congress and with Senate, and encourage those candidates to develop a position on disability issues, and to communicate that position as a way of gaining votes. So what we've said to candidates -- and many candidates have now understood it -- is that if you have a message aimed at disability inclusion and you communicate that message to the voters, a larger -- much larger -- number of persons with disabilities and their families will vote for you. This year in the Presidential cycle we did reach out to both campaigns quite vigorously, only Joe Biden's campaign responded, but they all -- they did have a message to persons with disabilities and we did notice that the disability voters did -- when they received those messages, it did affect their votes, and did affect the outcome. So we are non-partisan, so we want all candidates to connect with persons with disabilities and to our issues. We have pollsters today and we encourage all pollsters, the ones on the program today, we encourage all posters to add the disability demographic to their polls and track the disability vote, just like they do by race, gender, and education. We haven't quite succeeded in that with most of the national pollsters, but they're now aware of the request and I think in the next election cycle we will. There are approximately 38 million -- this is not a small number -- of eligible voters with disabilities. That's a big number, and while persons with disabilities vote with all the same reasons as everyone else, they do pay attention to candidates positions on disability issues. In addition to the 38 million, we estimate that about 50 percent of all voters are connected in some way to the disability community: either a neighbor, or a friend, or a family friend or family member. But the connections are real and there's an increasing awareness of it. People with disabilities want opportunities just like everyone else. So when -- we are seeking for elected officials and candidates to reach out to that community just like they do to other communities. Now today, we've done some polling -- or these organizations have done some polling after the election. And we have some -- I think, some interesting insights into what happened with the election as it regards persons with disabilities. I'm going to introduce all the panelists at once, and then we'll go down the line then we'll take questions. You have a Q&A box in your zoom, so use that Q&A box during this to ask questions in that box and we will take -- I'll then call out the questions at the end of the panelist, one at a time. So first up will be Celinda Lake. She is a leading political strategist in America. She serves as a tactician and a senior advisor to a number of institutions and progressive candidates and elected officials. Celinda and her firm are known for cutting-edge research on issues including the economy, healthcare, environment and education. She'll present data from a bipartisan national poll she did with Terrance Research. As a Texan, I have to notice that Terrance Research was founded by Lance Terrance, also of Texas. And then we'll hear from Stan Greenberg. He's a New York Times best-selling author and polling advisor to Presidents, Prime Ministers, CEOs and to RespectAbility. He is right now conducting deep research in a dozen countries. He's going to present a poll that he did in battleground states. And then will be Curt Decker, who's a long time friend and colleague of mine in the disability inclusion fight. He's executive director of the nation's largest non-governmental enforcer of disability rights, the National Disability Rights Network. Curt oversees all activities related to training and technical assistance, membership services, and legislative advocacy. He's past chair of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, a coalition that RespectAbility is a member of of a hundred national disability groups. And then there will be Lee Jones, who has made it her life's mission to advocate for the underprivileged, the destitute, and the homeless and the disabled. She's the founder and executive director of the non-profit organization Inspire Positivity. She develops programs, workshops, events that foster the concept of inspiring and encouraging disenfranchised and disabled residents of neighborhoods, encouraging them to take an active role in the revitalization and redevelopment of their neighborhoods. She's here from Georgia, the -- apparently the center of the political universe these days. She will talk about the work of the Georgia Disability Vote Partnership which is a non -- it's a bipartisan and nonpartisan volunteer group. So that will be the order today. So Celinda Lake, you are up first.

>> Celinda Lake: Than you very much, and thank you so much for all of the work that you all do. And we work extensively with NDRN and are so excited about their work and love the work of RespectAbility as well. And we had the privilege of being one of the two top pollsters for Biden in the last campaign. And so we're deeply aware of his commitment to the -- to inclusion and the disability community, and we're very excited to be part of that work. But what we're going to be showing you is survey data, hot off the press, a total of 2,400 voters nationwide in an exit poll, and the error on this is plus or minus 2. So if we look at the first slide we're looking at three different groups of voters in this survey. We're looking at the total disability community and then voters -- breaking out voters with disabilities, family members and close friends. And as Congressman Bartlett said, there are -- this is just a huge community and a very powerful one that we're talking about, that can have massive massive influence in the elections. And as you're about to see, it's a real swing constituency. People with disabilities and the disability community largely concerned about the economy and COVID like everyone else. We also saw a heightened concern about social security, medicare, health care and racial justice in the community. If we look at the next slide you can see that voters with disabilities -- almost all groups of voters with disabilities listed the economy as the top issue. And then for people of color in the disability community and for Democrats in the disability community COVID-19 was a very, very, very important issue. Voters with disabilities also more likely overall to list social security and medicare as an issue and then African-American members of the disability community are particularly intense about racial justice. Democrats focused on COVID and focused on health care and its relationship to COVID. If we look at the next slide, less than a third of voters overall remember hearing, reading or seeing anything from Congressional Presidential campaigns about issues that are important to the disability community and people with disabilities. And that's very important, because not only is this a huge constituency, but it is -- these issues are very very powerful for people who have disabilities, people who have friends and family who have disabilities, and people who do not have a direct connection with the disability community. So these are winning issues throughout, and candidates frankly are not talking enough about it. The African-American community and Democrats remembered the most people talking about the issues. Among those who had heard and read something about the issue, 53 percent voted for Biden and 46 percent voted for Trump, and 53 percent voted for the Democratic candidate in the congressional ballot, 46 percent for the Republican candidate. So in a swing constituency, talking about these issues was underdone frankly, and it influenced votes and it took votes in the direction of the candidates more likely to be perceived as talking about these issues - Biden and Democrats. Other folks that are particularly likely to -- if we look at the next slide -- to have heard and read and paid a lot of attention to these issues are people with disabilities, especially women with disabilities. And we don't think of a gender gap in the disability community, but women, particularly in the COVID era, are very very very focused on disability issues. And then people who have friends who are disabled. So the vote went far beyond just the immediate family to friends as well, particularly in the era of COVID. You'll notice that Trump and Biden voters about equally likely to have heard of things. The next chart is one of the most important charts and what it looks at is voters across demographic groups believe it's very important that candidates treat people with disabilities with dignity and respect. There is particular intensity for the disability community, older voters, white voters, African-Americans and Democrats, but the importance is overwhelming. And for Biden voters, Democrats, whites and African-Americans, people over 50, it is almost a core value. It's not even a discussion anymore. We also found that in battleground states, people thought it was even more important to talk about, to treat people with disabilities with dignity and respect, and to pay attention to these issues. If we look at the next chart, we see that people not only thought it was important generally, but they thought it was very very important to talk about the issues that are important to people with disabilities. And 86 percent of the people thought it was important, 60 percent thought it was very important and you'll notice on the right hand side there is universal intensity for this, with African-Americans again very very high, 77 percent saying it's very important and 68 percent of Democrats. Issues regarding people with disabilities are very important for persuasion and very important for turnout. If we look at the next slide, we see the greatest rating of importance for issues for people with disabilities among voters themselves with disabilities, people in battleground states, men with disabilities, older people with disabilities and Biden voters who had heard something about it. So when candidates talk about it, they are resonating with their voters and they are also increasing the intensity of these issues. And again, in some communities this is not even an issue. This is almost a core value. Speaking of values, if we look at the next chart, at least 9 in 10 voters agree that our communities are at their best when all people including people with disabilities have opportunities and that people with disabilities should be at decision making tables just like everyone else. They believe that disability issues should be included in national policies and that candidates and campaigns should include the constituencies in their efforts and fight against stigma and bias. The voters here in the community are so far ahead of the state of our political debate, honestly. And again, if you look -- you know, these numbers -- they resemble core values. So 80 percent saying they strongly agree, 92 percent agreeing that our communities are at their best when all people, including people with disabilities, have the opportunity to get skills, jobs and succeed. 76 percent saying it's very strong agreement and 90 percent agreeing that people with disabilities should be at decision making tables, just like anyone else. On the next slide, with less intensity but still quite strong, at least two-thirds of voters also strongly agree with statements that center people with disabilities and highlight their contributions to the workplace, that underscore historical biases they have faced, and that talk about how important voting on issues important to this community can bring about change. Individual issues -- it's going to influence my vote, I'm motivated to vote -- are lesser intensity. It is actually stronger when we talk about the whole community than when we talk about individuals, and interestingly that's not always true, so that's a very interesting finding here. On the next chart we see across gender, age, education race and party identification people agree strongly with the idea that our communities are at their best when people with disabilities have opportunities and there's inclusion, agree with inclusion at decision making tables, agree with inclusion in policies, particularly health care, and think that campaigns should talk about these issues. And again, African-Americans and Democrats and Biden voters, especially intense. These are just core values for these folks. So the people that determine the president really sending a call for action in this area to the new President-elect and I think you will find both the new President-elect and the new Vice President-elect very very committed on this, on these issues. If we look at the next slide, we see that people with disabilities and also people with family or friends and all of the disability community very committed, men and women committed, older voters extremely committed, and people in battleground states. Interestingly, these issues make even more of a difference and these values even more of a difference in the battleground states, where both parties are fighting for the elections. On the next slide, we find that a majority of older, African-American, Latinx, Democratic and Biden voters also found that these motivated how they voted and that they motivated how they personally voted. This is an issue that is really powerful in primaries as well as general elections, because the Democratic base is extremely committed to voting these issues in their own personal votes. If we turn to the next slide, voters with disabilities strongly agree with all of the statements at higher rates than the community overall, and Biden voters, particularly Biden voters who heard about these issues, really really respond. So interestingly, talking about these issues and candidates talking about these issues makes the difference, it increases the salience of these issues, as well as gaining votes. On the next slide we see that these issues are on the move. We see that in 2020 there was a 10 point increase among people with disabilities of being motivated to vote by candidates who talked about these issues -- 70 percent motivated, 50 percent strongly motivated and for the whole community a more modest five-point gain. But still - 41 percent saying I strongly agree that I'm motivated to vote by these issues and 66 percent saying I'm at least somewhat in agreement on that. On the next slide we see that again people with disabilities, women with disabilities, people that are concerned about cuts in health care and people that say that cuts in healthcare may have a negative impact on people with disabilities are really really concerned about these issues. And healthcare and the future of ACA and cuts on spending in health care is a major major issue that people with disabilities want to see addressed, and all voters want to see addressed as soon as there is a new administration. This is a top-tier agenda. The next slide shows you the power of this community and we have 43 percent of voters -- well 42 percent who are in the disability community, 15 percent say I myself am disabled, 25 percent say a family member and seven percent say a close friend. And of course there are some overlaps here, but this is a huge constituency, and thanks to all of you, candidates are getting more aware of it, but still have a ways to go. If we change to the next slide, we see that voters with disabilities tend to skew a little bit more female - 54 percent, older - 57 percent, and with household incomes under 50,000. And this is a -- it's something that we have seen for quite some time. In fact, because this is voters, it's actually muted. As you know people with disabilities -- hard hit economically and this is a huge impact on the community as well. And even when you look among voters, the people who are voters with disabilities tend to be more lower income and lower household income. Voters with disabilities on our last slide -- also more likely if we look at the next slide -- they are less likely to have college education and less likely to have a job. And we can turn to the last slide here to look at those numbers. And there's a lot of data on that, but you can see that people with disabilities -- 52 percent have only some college or less, no degrees, and you can see that only 24 percent of people with disabilities are employed full time. Now some of that is higher retirement and the age distribution, but a lot of that is how hard hit people with disabilities have been in the economy in general and also during the COVID era. So that is a very fast tour of the landscape and I'll turn it over to Curt and looking forward to Q&A later on in the webinar. Oh, I'm turning it over to Stan, sorry.

>> Steve Bartlett: Stan you're on.

>> Stan Greenberg: Okay, thank you very much. Thank you to Celinda. We did work on a presidential campaign before Biden when we worked with Bill Clinton. Congratulations. And I'm happy to follow that rich report on what happened in the election, you know, the particular role of the disability community, and how much it was focused on COVID, how much it was affected by the policy debate on things affecting the affordable care act and healthcare. I've had the opportunity to work with RespectAbility over a number of years to try to get more and more of leaders, as well as politicians, to recognize the power of this community. And I think the fact that the policy issues were taken up during the campaign by Joe Biden portends well for trying to address these issues in the period ahead. Let me talk about -- I'm gonna begin by talking about the the poll that we did for RespectAbility prior to the election. This was a a web survey, not combined with a phone survey. The beginning is the definition of the disability community, which is shared between what Celinda did and what we did for RespectAbility. The community includes people who self-identify as having a disability, having a family member with a disability or having a close friend with a disability. I mean obviously, as we've seen in that data, you're dealing with the person themselves, but it's a much more powerful broad community that's affected very much by health care. Next slide. So what we saw, as the election was unfolding, we conducted our survey while many people were voting in person. And you can see a very big difference between those without a disability and those with a disability in voting early, taking advantage of the opportunity to early vote, an opportunity for absentee voting. And in the end, this turned out to be a very intense election with a lot of focus on election day voting. But for the disability community and a lot of those who ended up voting for Biden, this was something that took place early, and it also produced a slow vote at the end as those votes got counted. Next slide. We've looked at the issues that -- the top issues that people were focused on. The economy, health care, managing the public health crisis, uniting the country, getting people back to work, improving things for middle class, and climate change. And you see how central healthcare was, particularly for the disability community. First of all it was a central issue above all. Look - we had -- we were in a deep economic and healthcare crisis in the run-up to this election and now. The economy was a top issue but health care is the economy. We conducted focus groups together with the American Federation of teachers, in which we went into rural and working-class communities where there are a very high proportion of persons with disabilities, and where we discovered such an intersection between what was happening with COVID, people's anger with the high healthcare costs and the high percentage of people that were dealing with disabilities and those people were particularly hurt by having to deal with the restrictions around COVID and what they had to do to protect their families, either themselves or a kid or someone else in their family. And for them, when you said healthcare, this was about healthcare costs. People were in so much pain on the scale of costs that they face and where we're looking for an election where those health care costs could be constrained and addressed. The healthcare debate became much more focused on pre-existing conditions, obviously central to the disability community, but the issue overwhelmingly though is about cost. It's where the emotion is, it's where people get wiped out, it's where they can't -- where people can't even use the health care that's available to them. But it is particularly important and strong in these rural areas and working-class communities. And if you look at what happened in the election, Donald Trump was successful in constraining some of what was some of the trends toward Biden by fueling and trying to motivate, and in fact did increase the turnout, of white working-class voters and many in rural areas, many obviously with disabilities. The health care issue was central for them. It was -- there were so many issues that Vice President Biden was dealing with, getting to health care costs was hard when overwhelmingly people were turning to him from managing the COVID crisis, but healthcare cost was particularly important in these working class communities, I believe particularly important for those with disabilities as you could see in the data that Celinda presented. Go to the next slide. [Audio Issues] Inequality was again strikingly high for persons with disabilities because they are indeed caught up in that, they are on the downside of the issues that face people who are vulnerable, lesser employed, lesser incomes, and they are looking for change as well. Next slide. We looked at the job approval rating for Donald Trump, and indeed this was a president who was not very popular with persons with disabilities, and you saw that where you have much higher negative ratings for him with persons with disabilities, and it carried over to that much larger group of this disability community. In fact, it was almost no difference -- and a very sharp difference if you look by margin on approval rating. You see a two point margin on on non-disability, and a 14 to 16 point margin with the disability community, and with half of them responding strong disapprove. And if you move to the next slide on the handling of the coronavirus, you see there that the intensity and the disapproval goes very very strong. Overall, there was negative disapproval by 12 points for President Trump, but for the disability community it was 63 percent disapproved with half strongly disapprove, focused specifically on how he was handling COVID which was impacting them so sharply. Next slide. And that also translated into presidential vote. This is in the battleground, you know, we saw here a much stronger electoral margin for Joe Biden than I think Celinda had at the end in her poll, but it's also an election which we believe got much closer as Trump was able to motivate his base supporters. We know for sure that Trump supporters grew in their turnout much more than Biden supporters, compared to Hillary Clinton, but we know in terms of the vote, we have a very strong margin amongst disabled and the disability community. Equal, not much difference, which gives you some sense of what's possible when one is conscious, respects and takes seriously these voters, you know, going into an election, an election which in which Joe Biden will be President and have an opportunity to act on this agenda. And we're done. Thank you very much!

>> Steve Bartlett: Thank you very much Stan. We're now going to turn to Curt Decker, the head of the National Disability Rights Network. Curt?

>> Curt Decker: Thank you very much. I'm just trying to get my video going here so you can see me, I guess if you want to, but thank you very much for those presentations, and it's great to be on the same panel with an old friend Steve Bartlett. We worked together over 30 years ago on the ADA, and that was an incredible important effort. Let me just tell you a little bit. NDRN which is the association of the protection and advocacy programs around the country, we have been fortunate to have funding from Congress to look at voting accessibility. We've been committed for the last 20 years to make sure people with disabilities can vote privately and independently, and based on that 20-year history, it became clear to us that, as been said before, that this disability vote, the power of the disability vote, really hasn't been tapped to the extent that it could be. And so we have moved, in addition to our work on accessibility, to really think about how we can get not only people with disabilities to vote, to identify themselves as people with disabilities, and connect the issues that affect their daily lives and make sure that they are working with policy makers and candidates to bring that message home. I share Steve's concern that polls, most exit polling do not really track, until recently, people with disabilities. And so while we can probably find out just about every possible demographic group that how they voted, we still aren't always sure about people with disabilities. Secondly, I was heartened by the the importance of health care that both pollsters discovered. For those of us who worked on the ADA, we know that that was one of the major gaps in the Americans with Disabilities Act. Insurance was -- and especially health care insurance -- was not included in the ADA. So for many of us in the disability community, the ACA wasn't just about providing health care, it was the final piece of the American Disability Act to make it completely comprehensive affecting all walks of American life. The other issue also is to see that COVID was such a high -- a point of interest to people with disabilities. I've been very concerned frankly that the way we have publicly talked about COVID is that it's affecting the elderly and people with underlying conditions. I believe those underlying conditions are disabilities, and we really ought to be talking about the elderly and people with disabilities as the most adversely affected population with COVID. And so I do think that this polling data that we've gotten both from Celinda and Stan really gives us a great deal to work with as we move forward. This is obviously a long term effort that didn't end just because this election, as heightened as it was -- that this is something we can -- I think dig deep to find out how to message not only to people with disabilities so they identify themselves as people with disabilities but also then reach out to the candidates, their consultants, the people that work on campaigns to really bring home this message. This is an incredibly powerful group and in small and in tight elections this could be actually the difference. A small percentage point can really make the difference in some of these closely contested races and people ought to be really thinking about the disability vote and how to reach it. Both RespectAbility and NDRN has participated in several webinars with consultants, political consultants, say you're really missing the boat here. If you could get your candidates whether it's websites, or stump speeches, town hall meetings - to really talk about disability issues, you will benefit. One of the things we've learned from previous polling we've done is that the disability community will reward those people who talk about their issues and they'll punish those people who don't talk about their issues. So there's a very clear message here and the polling that we've been able to get developed, both through Celinda and Stan, I think really give us some really terrific messaging opportunities to move forward as we move into the continuing election season, to make sure that this vote really is identified, is sought after, and really becomes an integral part of the whole political discourse. So I'll stop there and [mumbles].

>> Steve Bartlett: Well stated and very insightful. Curt, thank you very much. We'll now turn to our voice from Georgia, from the political center of the debate, at least the election debate in the country, Lee Jones. Lee?

>> Lee Jones: Good afternoon. I'm the grassroots coordinator for the Arc Georgia. I represent Merriweather and Troup counties. I work in my community to advocate for people with disabilities to be able to exercise their right to vote. Unfortunately people with disabilities are a population that is often overlooked. I identify as disabled. I live this experience. A lot of people believe you can always see a disability but that's not always the case. Additionally I live and work in a county with a historically very low voter turnout for African-American communities. In my county historically only eight percent of African-American males and 12 percent of African-American females go to the polls. But in 2020, the general election brought out half of the county residents to vote, so for us, that's unprecedented. I am not sure about the African-American community numbers yet, but again, this is unprecedented for us in Georgia. iIm involved in the leadership of many organizations in my community including my neighborhood associations, the NAACP, and my own foundation. Through these partnerships I have been able to get information out about voting to many people for the 2020 general election and now the Senate runoff. We are focusing on educating people about their voting options, how to register to vote, important deadlines and how to get an absentee ballot. I've worked with partner organizations to deal with situations of voters with disabilities not being allowed to bring their service dog in to vote, or not having headphones available that were needed, along with some other issues. These situations have been resolved and election staff were retrained on how to support people with disabilities here in our counties. I have also focused my work on making sure that formerly incarcerated individuals, some of whom have developmental disabilities, are aware of their voting rights. That's another population that is again overlooked. We have also gotten the word out through social media. We've used a lot of social media to contact people with disabilities and other voters to try to educate them on what their options are. Of course the pandemic has severely impacted how we get the word out, however we have transitioned and had to do everything virtual, and I've been learning a lot about social media and its importance. We are planning events for the Senate runoff. We will be partnering with the NAACP and other local partners to pool our resources, along with being safe for during COVID. But some of the examples of what we're doing is we're making flyers to give away at food distribution sites. We've done three of those events already and I have volunteers available to answer questions that people have about the upcoming election. And we're continuing to do this work. We have several events planned, two in November and one in December. We're also passing out information with another partner for people to come out when they go to the local soup kitchen, so we have volunteers that pass out these flyers while they're having lunch and answer any questions that they may have and help them to register to vote, if that's what they need, and help them schedule rides to the precinct or schedule rides to go get an absentee ballot, or whatever it is that they need. And we're also helping seniors in this regard with local churches and other social service organizations. So we're really putting forth a lot of effort to educate people about their voting options, and also to see if we could get more participation from persons with disabilities to get them out to vote. And the feedback that we've gotten has been tremendous and very well received, so we're going to continue doing this work.

>> Steve Bartlett: Thank you Lee. We're now going to turn it over to anyone on the call that has a question of any of our panelists. You can either -- I don't know if you'll be able to speak up, but you can enter them into the question and answer, Eric do we have any questions?

>> Eric Ascher: None so far, so --

>> Steve Bartlett: We had several who called in and said can they get these slides after the presentation so the answer, Eric, is yes?

>> Eric Ascher: The answer is you can get them right now on our website. I've just updated the website, and I'm gonna put the link in the chat box for everyone to be able to download the PowerPoint.

>> Steve Bartlett: We're nothing if we're not transparent so we want you to have these slides and they're on our website right now. I might offer a couple of takeaways I got from all this, and then ask Stan and Celinda to comment on that. One is that it appears that message matters and this is kind of the first breakthrough election -- presidential election in which you really had a focused message about disability issues, issues to the disability community on the website from Joe Biden. So it appears that that helped to move the needle for Joe Biden's vote and his support. Second is the overwhelming support for dignity and respect which, you know, was not even a question that we asked a few years ago, but now that people are quite aware that dignity and respect is important. And then last is that, again, the overwhelming support that all people should have opportunities, not just limited to those that are abled. So comment on that, Stan or Celinda?

>> Stan Greenberg: I'll let Celinda start, since she asked the questions on dignity and respect.

>>Celinda Lake: Thank you so much. So interestingly about dignity and respect, this was very core to Joe Biden's message, and it was part of what people were really yearning for was coming together, respecting each other and those were very very strong words with seniors as well. And in fact, Joe Biden did better with seniors than we have done since before 2004. So these were very very important concepts about leadership and things that women in particular and seniors were really paying a lot of attention to. So it's not surprising frankly that it would have an impact among people with disabilities in the broader voting community. And interestingly, when we talked about Donald Trump being deliberately divisive and disrespectful of people, one of the top incidents - even at the very end of the campaign - that people would volunteer in focus groups was how disrespectful he was to the reporter in his first campaign who had a disability. That was just a searing image for them. And I think Stan, I'll turn it to you, because I think more than anybody you've really documented long-term changes that are producing these immediate results.

>> Stan Greenberg: Yeah, you will frequently get people saying they want unity and not divisiveness, you know, less polarization of the country, but it hasn't often translated into votes. And I think that really this is unique if we look at this election, because I remember doing focus groups with white working-class women in northern Maine near Bangor over two different years, one in Zoom, with Zoom focus groups, and had one in person. But they view the divisiveness meant that you couldn't get anything done. I mean, you couldn't have change. It meant we were stuck. And for the people who pulled away - and it was enough people pulled away to change this election from where it was in 16, the polarization, the lack of respect, the incivility was associated with a style of politics that meant you could not make progress on issues, particularly on health care which was their highest priority, and could not reach people, the vulnerable, who were so much in need of government action. And you also -- people saw with Medicare and Medicaid and the debates over Medicaid in the states where disability was now mainstreamed because of COVID they were now -- it was now linked into that whole set of policies that were going to be impacted by who was in government. Health care became a top issue and a voting issue, but it was linked with the changes in the reaction to polarization and divisiveness, and wanting a different kind of politics and ultimately put Biden over the line.

>> Steve Bartlett: So we have two questions coming in the chat box that are going to Philip Pauli, our director of policy research at RespectAbility. Philip?

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Yep, and I will just jump in. The first question was from an anonymous attendee who wanted to know who they could contact both to review the report and learn more and help advance this work. You can contact us via RespectAbility.org. We've got newsletters you can sign up for. You can email me which is -- my email's on the website, so please feel free to get in touch to help move the work forward. We also have a two-part question from Amy Barto. So Amy's first question is do you feel -- she's really interested about the number of women identifying with disabilities being higher, and she wonders, do you feel that number is influenced at all related to gender differences, being willing to self-identify as a disability. And then the second question is at the grassroots level, there are many organizations focused on different aspects, different areas of disabilities and what are suggestions for some groups that they could use to pursue information from?

>> Celinda Lake: So let me take the first part of that question, and then I'll turn it back to you all to answer the second part. In terms of the more women, it's not that overwhelming honestly, it's just slightly and it's due more to age. You have more seniors who identify with disabilities or have disabilities, and then you have more seniors who are women so it's really an age effect. It's interesting, there might have been a time where there was that gender effect in terms of acknowledgement, but it doesn't seem to be apparent today. What was really interesting though in the data is the intensity with which women wanted to vote these issues, wanted to hear from candidates about these issues, that they were core values, and so you know we always get into and -- if Stan and I had a nickel for every time we've been asked how we're gonna target the suburban women voters, we could fund a free poll for you. And yet nobody thinks about the enormous number of suburban women who are part of the disability community. No one ever talks about, let's talk about disability issues and caregiving to women. Now Joe Biden did bring that in aggressively into his caregiving economy, his third component of his economic plan. But this is still very under-talked about and very underutilized as a way to target women voters. And Stan you may have other stuff to add to that.

>> Stan Greenberg: No, I think your organization will want to respond on the other.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Well I was going to say -- so I'd say Curt and Lee, Lee especially, you are working in the grassroots. What are some of the different disability organizations that you're working with or people could support? And then Curt, could you talk about some of the other different disability organizations that are out there nationally?

>> Curt Decker: Well yes. As you saw here, both RespectAbility and NDRN are part of the CCD - the Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities - and so there's a very large group of disability organizations, many of who have affiliates at the local level. And we have been working with them to really make sure that, as I said earlier, people can vote privately and independently. We were very active in local election protection efforts to make sure that people had a place to call if they found a problem if they were doing in-person voting. I think, as Stan said, a lot of people with disabilities opted for the mail in choice. The downside of that I think is sometimes it's hard to find those people, so it's not as visible as they might be if they were voting in person. And we worked so hard over the years to get accessible voting machines in place and make sure they're working. Another big problem we've experienced: we finally get the election officials to buy the machines but then the poll workers are not trained on how to hook them up. So it's -- I always recommend that everybody ask to vote on the accessible machine - that's one way of guaranteeing that it's working in the polling place. But there's a large coalition. And then of course NDRN has worked with the larger election protection coalition of major civil rights groups throughout the country making sure -- because not only do we want to be part of that because they have a very robust effort, we also want to make sure that the other civil rights groups understand the intersectionality of disability and race, because people are both and it's really important to remind our colleagues in the civil rights community that the disability population is a major part of their constituency.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Great. Thank you Curt. And Lee, can you talk about some your grassroots work and some of the other organizations you're working with?

>> Lee Jones: The organizations that we're working with in LaGrange is New Ventures, LaGrange housing authority, community action for improvement, and we're working with them to focus on some of their clients that do have disabilities because New Ventures is an organization that provides employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. So we're working with these organizations to do voter education and also to get their help for their volunteers, of their clients. We're asking them to help us as well to reach out to family friends colleagues or anyone that they have an association or affiliation with that is in the disabled community to help us to get the word out as well. So we're really doing this, again, at a grassroots level with the NAACP, we're doing a door-to-door canvassing. So we're educating everyone but specifically also getting the word out to family friends co-workers about the disabled population and their voting options and what we can do to help them to to get their vote in.

>> Steve Bartlett: Philip you had two questions in here about the types of disabilities. Was that in the poll? Do you want to take those?

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Great. So one question was how do you address the deaf population in your surveys, and then the second question was are there any variations based on different types of disabilities in terms of how people voted?

>> Steve Bartlett: Meaning physical or intellectual?

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Yep.

>> Steve Bartlett: Celinda or Stan?

>> Celinda Lake: Yeah I can start. We did not, unless people have equipment to accommodate it on there, and we do not, and it's still something that's missing, I think, from polling. We do not have accommodation for deaf people and that's something that we need to do and we're committed to doing. In terms of different types of disabilities, we have looked at that in other work that we've done for both you -- for RespectAbility and for NDRN, but we did not look at it in this survey. It's a good question we just ran out of time to look at all the different nuances. [Crosstalk]

>> Stan Greenberg: I should mention that the survey we did was a online survey which we recommended against. Now it was the only survey we had at that time and RespectAbility wanted to to do it because -- our phones are done on cell phones, and people have made adjustments, you know, to deal with that. And so two-thirds are mobile -- are cell phones. And probably a hundred percent you know with the disability community. And I think quite reachable. But this survey was online. But the timing was what mattered and so I deferred to RespectAbility that made that compromise.

>> Steve Bartlett: I think we're about to close. I do have one observation that's sort of in the bad news category, at least the news that we can -- an improvement to look next year and that is a year ago on other work, we determined as most did that the country had reached about a 37 percent employment rate for persons with disabilities which was at an all-time high. Back when Curt and I did the ADA it was like 23 percent, okay. But even 37 percent, that's huge but it's still those are the people employed, all the others are unemployed. But I noticed in this survey Stan that, I think because of COVID, that the percentage of persons with disabilities in your poll was down to 31 percent employed full-time or part-time.

>> Stan Greenberg: Right. No, it's such a critical piece to this, with COVID, percentage of people pulling out of the labor force. We see the number of women now that have moved out of the labor force. And I have no doubt that households with disabilities are gonna be much more impacted, and are gonna be the latest to come back into the labor force. And painfully, we're looking at very weak intervention by government right now because of polarization and uncertainty about when the real stimulus, real relief comes. And so next year is going to be very challenging.

>> Steve Bartlett: We have our work cut out for us in the coming year. Celinda, Stan, Curt, Lee, plus Eric and Jennifer and Philip, thank you very much for -- and Ali, our interpreter, thank you very much for your participation.