

To: Interested Parties

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## Women Speak Out: Getting to Equality in the Workplace

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*Methodology: Business Forward retained GBA Strategies and Bellwether Research to conduct this online survey of 1,500 American women 18 years of age and older. Interviews were completed November 19-22, 2017, using an online panel. The survey is comprised of 1,000 interviews in English among adult women, and additional oversamples of 100 African-American women, 100 Latinas, and 300 women who self-identify as executives or part of leadership in their organization.*

Our recently completed survey of American women shows the challenges women face in advancing professionally. Not only is this topic timely, it's crucial, as women cite professional and financial goals as top of mind. With this backdrop, it's no surprise overwhelming majorities of women support many different policies aimed at helping women advance professionally.

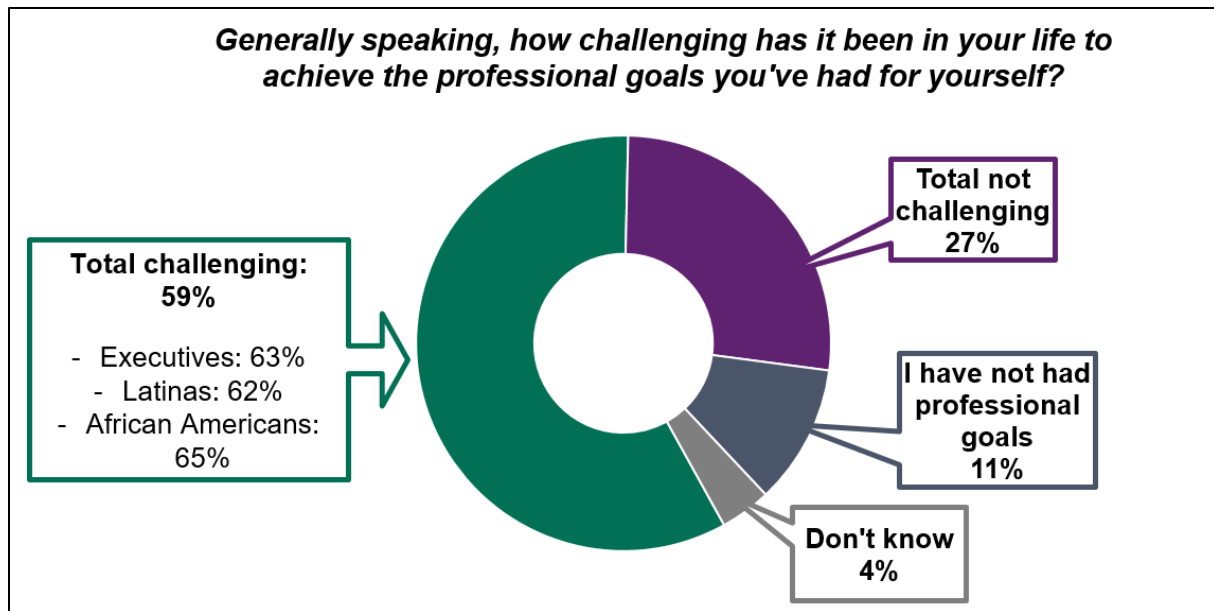
### Toplines:

- **Goals focused on finances and job fulfillment are top for women, although many face obstacles to achieving them.** *Women feel the odds are stacked against them in achieving success in the workplace, having financial security, and reaching their personal goals. Top obstacles include: unequal pay, caregiving pressures, inflexible work schedules, and simply receiving fair treatment.*
- **Women, particularly executives, view the ability to use birth control as an essential component of reaching their personal and job goals.** *Women report that birth control is important to family planning, and that family planning is important to reaching one's goals. Similarly, women, especially executives, say unexpectedly becoming a parent would make goal attainment challenging. And men are viewed as less likely to reflect on balancing parenthood and professional goals.*
- **Across party lines, majorities of women support access to birth control, health care coverage, paid family leave, affordable child care policies, and more.** *In fact, clear majorities of Republican women support access to health care coverage, coverage for well-woman visits, sexual harassment protections, child care tax credits, and other provisions tested.*

**Key Findings:**

**Women’s top goals are financial – and job-related – yet many workplace obstacles stand in the way of achieving them.**

Women report financial and workplace goals as top-tier. “Being able to pay bills and afford monthly necessities” is one of women’s most important personal goals (73% “one of most” important goals). Similarly, “being paid fairly at work” is almost as important (60% “one of most”).



Job fulfillment also ranks high. “Having a job you enjoy” is as important of a goal as “finding happiness” in a relationship with a partner (54%, 56%, “one of most” important, respectively). Yet women (61%) say it’s typically harder for women than for men to reach their professional goals.

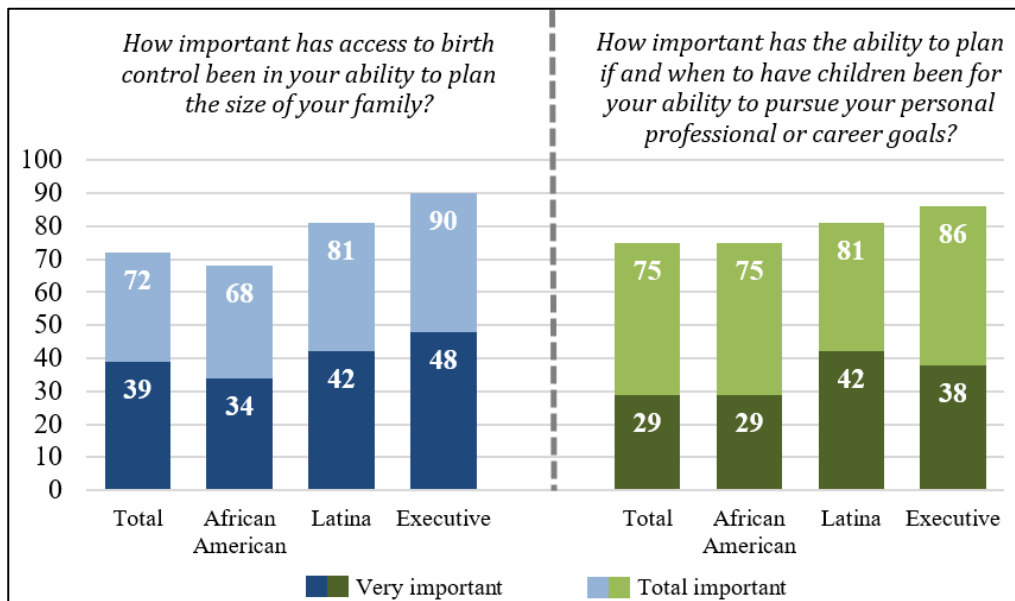
A majority (59%) of women, and even more Latinas, African-Americans, and executive women, say it’s been challenging in life to reach the professional goals they’ve had for themselves.

Digging deeper into specific obstacles further reveals the multitude of workplace challenges women face. Almost half of women say job-related obstacles such as unequal pay, caregiving pressures, inflexible work schedules, and simply fair treatment have been obstacles in their own lives. Executive women are particularly likely to cite a lack of respect, pay inequity, and caregiving pressures to as obstacles (51%, 54%, and 53%, respectively).

<i>How much of an obstacle has this been in your own life? (% big obstacle/somewhat of an obstacle) Only top obstacles shown</i>	<b>% Total Obstacle</b>
Being paid less than men for doing the same job	48
The demands of caring for others—such as children, partners, or elderly parents— at the expense of your own personal or career goals	48
A lack of flexible work schedule	48
The need to work twice as hard as other co-workers to get ahead	46
Finding quality child care that is also affordable	45
Having the ability to take time off of work to take care of your children when needed	44
Not being treated equally/fairly in the workplace	43
A lack of respect for women like you in the workplace	43
The difficulty of balancing your work commitments and parenthood	42
The difficulty of finding a partner who does their share of household and child care duties	42
Having the ability to take time out of the workforce to raise your children	41

**The ability to decide whether and when to become a parent is an essential component of women reaching their professional goals.**

Women view birth control as an essential tool in planning the trajectory of their lives. Nearly three-fourths of women (72%) and a full 90% of executives say birth control has been



important for planning the size of their family. Seventy-five percent of women and 86% of executives say access to birth control has been important to their ability to pursue their own professional goals.

Interestingly, women with children under two are even more likely to say birth control has been important to attaining their job goals (93%).

Nearly all women surveyed (90%, 92% of executives) say unexpectedly becoming a parent would make it more challenging for a woman to achieve her professional goals. Similarly, almost all women (91%, 92% of executives) say that it would be challenging for a woman to achieve her educational goals if she unexpectedly became a parent.

Women feel like they disproportionately have to plan the timing of their children based on the impact it will have on them professionally. Three-fourths (75%) say men don't give as much consideration to "the timing of when to have children and the impact on their job or career."

**Across party lines, majorities of women support access to birth control, health care coverage, paid family leave, affordable child care policies, and more.**

Large majorities of women support proposals to level the workplace playing field. More than eight-in-ten women support a series of proposals covering equal pay, improved sexual harassment policies, protection of Obamacare, and paid leave. They also strongly support maintaining coverage for routine women's health care including well-woman check-ups and birth control, even for women without insurance.

<i>Do you support or oppose this proposal? % combined Strong + Somewhat support (partial list of proposals)</i>	<b>% Total Support</b>	<b>GOP % Total Support</b>
Require men and women be paid the same wage or salary for the same job	88	85
Make it easier for women to safely report sexual harassment in the workplace	87	85
Maintain affordable health care coverage options for people who need it, regardless of pre-existing conditions, income, or job status	86	81
Make college more affordable for middle-class families	84	76
Require paid family and medical leave so people can take care of a newborn, sick child, or relative	83	76
Make sure all women have coverage for routine medical care like well-women check-ups, mammograms, pap smears, and birth control, even if they don't have health insurance	82	74
Create a national child care policy to help families afford quality child care	76	61
Fining companies that don't have strong policies against sexual harassment	74	66
Require insurance plans to include coverage for birth control	73	60
Increase the tax credit for child care expenses	69	62

These measures are popular across party lines. Clear majorities of Republican women support most of the proposals tested. Paid leave, health care coverage, equal pay, sexual harassment protections, coverage for well-woman visits and birth control, child care tax credits, and a national child care policy all garner widespread support from Republican, Democratic, and independent women.

### **Conclusions:**

Women from many backgrounds cite job, career, and financial goals as central to their lives. Yet many workplace obstacles put these goals further out of reach. Parenthood undoubtedly magnifies many of these challenges, given how many cite inflexible work hours, child care, and the challenges of caregiving more broadly, as obstacles. The decision when and if to become a parent is an essential part of women's goal attainment, and family planning and birth control are therefore critical tools. These issues need not be partisan; women across party lines support a variety of proposals to help women get the health care they need, make ends meet, and get ahead in the workplace. These issues need not be socio-economic either; women from different economic backgrounds have more in common than not on the efforts needed to help women advance.