

# Transcript for Webinar Polling & Research on Senior and Disabled Voters for the 2018 Election

# by DO Network

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**Presented by:** DO Network

**Speaker:** Celinda Lake, Lake Research Partners

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>> TED: Thank you, everyone. We're going to go ahead and get started right now. Today's Disability Organizing Networks -- webinar is bringing in Celinda Lake from Lake Research Partners who’s going to talk to us about polling of seniors and voters with disabilities. And we're very excited about the new research that Celinda has done. I'm going to get us started on time, quickly, so I will hand it over to Celinda. But before that, I’ll say that on this slide, we do have an image of the Lake Research Partners logo, the Democrats' logo and an image that’s two wheelchairs surrounded by a circle of human figures. Alright, Celina take it away.

>> CELINDA LAKE: Well thank you. I'm absolutely delighted to be with you. What we’re gonna share with you is just kind of the current mood, and what's going on in terms of the disability community vote, and seniors. This is a huge, huge constituency, that is very, very important in this election, and being it largely -- sorry, I have a terrible cold -- largely ignored and not talked about. I'm very excited to be joining you and to be part of this conversation.

>> TED: On this slide we have an image of people’s hands in the air with the sky in the background, and some of the people are holding the U.S. flag.

>> CELINDA LAKE: So what we’re going to talk about first is the current mood and the political context. If we look at the next slide --

>> TED: We have a graph on this slide.

>> CELINDA LAKE: And what this slide shows is, it's a blue line and a red line. The blue line shows the Democrats continue to have the advantage in terms of the generic ballot. Who would you vote, Democrat or Republican, for Congress? But, it’s not a wave, there’s really a swell, more than a wave. And what we are seeing lately we is very high enthusiasm among Democrats, but also resurging enthusiasm among Republicans. Particularly around the Kavanaugh hearings, believe it or not. The Kavanaugh hearings are actually energizing Republicans. If you look at the next slide…

>> TED: We have another graph with lines going… measuring different numbers that Celinda will talk about.

>> CELINDA LAKE: So what we see here is that there's a very big gender gap, and that’s the difference in men's and women voting. Women are voting much, much more Democrat than men, right now. In fact, the gender gap is some of the highest that we have seen. It’s twice the average that we see in off year elections. So you're seeing older women being some of the most Democratic voters right now. We also see that seniors, particularly white seniors, are a very contested electorate. They will determine, because of their high turnout, who's going to actually win elections. The vote among seniors and the vote among older women, in particular, very, very important in terms of determining who will win these elections. If we look at the next slide.

>> TED: Images, another bar graph on this slide.

>> CELINDA LAKE: What this shows you, is that traditionally, younger voters and women are the ones that are the most disapproving of Donald Trump. Donald Trump’s approval rating is going to be one of the most important indicators of who wins the election. And it’s one of the most highly correlated with the election, right now. In this data, the approval in April and through much of the early summer was 39 approve, 54 disprove. That was… had the potential to create a real wave. The most recent numbers that have just come out are the Wall Street Journal numbers, which show that Trump's approval is now up to 44%. The interesting number is 42. If his number is below 42%, you can expect a wave that will really benefit Democrats. If his number is substantially above 42% than that wave is going to be muted. And at 42% it’s very much up in the air, what the magnitude of Democratic victories will be. Although I do think most likely Democrats will take back the House. If you look at the next slide --

>> TED: This has a bar graph on it, and there’s three of them.

>> CELINDA LAKE: So, we were just talking about the fact that Trump's job performance is the most important predictor. Here is his job performance among the extended disability community, people with disabilities, and then the rest of, outside the extended disability community. And you will see that people with disabilities, the most negative in their job performance. This is a very, very important constituency, for Democrats. And a constituency that’s likely to vote very democratic this year. If people pay sufficient attention to the disability community and providing opportunities for get out the vote, et cetera. If we look at the next slide.

>> TED: There's a line graph here that shows Baby Boomers, Gen X and Millennial voters.

>> CELINDA LAKE: What this shows is that senior voters have the highest rate of turnout. That's true across all elections. So very, very important constituency, and of course it’s a constituency that has a very large proportion of folks with disabilities. If we look at the next chart…

>> TED: It's four graphs, one of registered voters, one of 18-39 year-olds, one of 40-64 yea- olds, and one of age 65 plus.

>> CELINDA LAKE: What it shows again, that voters over 40 have significantly higher turnout than voters 18-39, so projected, uh, this isn’t projected, this is from people's own responses, 53% of millennials and ? percent of [AUDIO DISTORTION] There are 40 million, under normal circumstances, there would be 40 million voters, who voted in 2016, who would not be planning on voting in 2018. And 25 million of them would be progressive voters. It’s the whole ball game for Democrats and Progressives. I think we can skip the next chart to pick up a little bit of time and turn to the disability community as part of the electorate.

>> TED: This slide has an image of a person in a wheelchair at a voting booth. It says, “The Disability Community as an Electorate.” It's a drawing, not a picture.

>> CELINDA LAKE: The next slide shows you some of the data.

>> TED: This has a pie chart that shows 63% extended disability community, 51% with a disability connection and 54% in the disability community.

>> CELINDA LAKE: So you have here is half the electorate in the disability community, and even more in the extended disability community. It is astounding. The impact that the disability community can have on elections, and there's brand new data that came out from Texas that shows the disability community has very, very high turnout rates, contrary to conventional wisdom. So this is a key constituency. And what you're doing is so important because people don't pay nearly enough attention to the disability community and the fact that they can determine the winner in literally every election we have this year. If we look at the next chart...

>> TED: We have three charts. One is measuring outside extended disability community, one is measuring people with disabilities, and the other one is measuring extended disability community.

>> CELINDA LAKE: What we see in this chart, is that people with disabilities actually have higher interest in the election, the 2018 elections than other voters. 49% said they're very motivated and very interested in the election. The extended disability community, 45% says they're very interested and outside the disability community, only 40% said they're very interested. This is a key vote, both in terms of interest and in terms of voting democratic. We will see more of that in the next slide.

>> TED: We have three bar graphs again here, measuring Republicans against Democrats. The first subset is outside extended disability community, the second is people with disabilities, and the third is extended disability community.

>> CELINDA LAKE: What you see is that people with disabilities, of these three communities, the most Democratic voting… Voting net Democratic by 16 points at the time of this polling. That's significantly ahead of the rest of the population. Again, Democratic margins will depend very, very much on what disabled voters do and what the extended community does.

>> TED: There's two bar graphs on here, measuring 2014, 2016, and 2018. One grouping is not in the disability community. One grouping is in the disability community and it’s measuring Democrat to Republican vote.

>> CELINDA LAKE: So, both groups show a steady increase in the percentage voting Democratic. But what you see is that the disability community going from voting 11 points for Republican in 2014 -- to 2 points Democratic in 2016 while the rest of the population was voting 2 points Republican. And now, at 11 points, Democratic, 39 to 50, so again, moving more rapidly towards the Democrats, and showing a very, very significant advantage for the Democrats. If we look at the next slide --

>> TED: There's a positive and negative bar graph on this. So there’s the positive numbers going up, negative going below, and it’s showing outside the extended disability community, people with disabilities and extended disability community. And measures GOP, Congress and Dem party.

>> CELINDA LAKE: And what we see here, is that this vote, this more democratic disability community, is underpinned by feelings as well. Everybody is negative toward both parties right now, but the people with disabilities particularly negative toward the Republicans. Net, 24 negative, 53 unfavorable to only 29% favorable. That's the strongest of the three groups we looked at. And again, if people with disabilities are allowed to vote and if people with disabilities vote, they will be voting very democratic this year and they could determine any election out there. Let's look at some of the issues now that motivate seniors and the disability community.

>> TED: On this slide, we have a picture of a man, and he’s standing, standing, talking to a doctor holding a clipboard. Looks like they're in a doctor's office, and it says, Motiving Issues for Seniors, Medicare and Prescription Drug Prices. And on this slide, we have a sideways bar graph measuring different issues and different groups that Celinda will talk about.

>> CELINDA LAKE: What this data shows is that one of the major, major motivating factors particularly for seniors and older women who are two key constituencies in the disability community: prescription drugs and cuts to social security and Medicare. Also cuts to Medicaid by the way. Prescription drugs is such a powerful issue that it is almost more of a value than a policy position. 92 and 93% say they agree strongly that Medicare should be allowed to negotiate for prices just like the VA and that drugs developed with taxpayers dollars should be available for every American. Those are 76% and 75% strongly agree. Strongest supporting those policies. This is off the charts in terms of support for these policies. And we’ll look at the next slide.

>> TED: And here we have two tables on this slide that is measuring concerned and not concerned on particular issues. And it’s set by different age groups between men and women.

>> CELINDA LAKE: What we see here in this data is that older voters, extremely concerned about prescription drugs, but so, by the way, are younger voters. And that 79% of voters are concerned that someone in their family may not be able to afford a prescription drug treatment for an illness that they might need to be paying for as early as next month. Just overwhelming concern here. If we look at the next slide.

>> TED: Here's another table, here, that measures favorability or opposition on Medicare. It's set out by age, gender X Age, race, and party identification.

>> CELINDA LAKE: And what this is looking at is people who are energized around having Medicare negotiate just like the VA. This is one of the truly bipartisan issues in our society today. 85% of Democrats, 85% of Independents, and 81% of Republicans strongly favor this policy. It's unheard of in today’s world to have this level of bipartisan consensus. And if we turn to the next slide.

>> TED: We have an image on this slide that is several social security cards. And then it says “Motivating Issues for Seniors: Social Security”. And then we move to the next slide, which again has a gross and net sideways bar graph measuring different issues.

>> CELINDA LAKE: We see here again the concern for prescription drugs, particularly with older women, and also see two-thirds of voters worried about retirement and worried about whether Social Security will be there when they retire. This used to be the concern of younger voters. Now it's really grown to be older and younger voters as well. If we turn to the next chart --

>> TED: This is a table measuring by age, race and party identification. Different groups of people on Social Security related issues.

>> CELINDA LAKE: What we see here is older as well as younger voters very concerned about Social Security being there when they retire, having enough money for retirement and prescription drug costs. We see that across race, and we see it for Democrats, Independents and Republicans. Again, a very bipartisan agenda here.

>> TED: We have three bar graphs, here, measuring different groups of retired folks.

>> CELINDA LAKE: What we see here just the average payments for retired men and retired women. What’s really important is that voters believe, in general, that Social Security and Medicare should not be means tested. They believe very, very strongly that it doesn't pay enough. And they are strongly in favor of expansion. Particularly conservative voters are in favor of expansion for people who have to count years that you have taken, had to take out of the paid work force for care giving or homemaker responsibilities. The next issue that's really strong out there, and it’s less of an issue for 2018, but more of an issue for 2020 and 2022, is long term care. And let’s look at some of that data.

>> TED: On this slide, we have an image of a woman pushing a person in a wheelchair overlooking some mountains in a field. It says “Motivating issues for seniors, long term care”. We have a sideway bar graph measuring different issues on long term care. On confidence.

>> CELINDA LAKE: What we see here is that voters really believe, very concerned about whether they’ll have enough care… get enough money to take care of their health care, their prescription drugs. But absolutely, convinced they won’t have enough money for long term care. This is really an issue that we have seen really grow in the consciousness. In fact, the only thing that’s kept it from growing more is that people think it's so expensive to do, they don't know what you can do about it. We turn to the next slide.

>> TED: We have a sideway bar graph measuring different long term issues, Medicare, health insurance, individuals, Medicaid and families. Comparing 2017 to 2013.

>> CELINDA LAKE: In almost all the cases, the government funding for long term care has increased and people's desire for it. But the number one source that people would like to see pay for it, is Medicare. They really, really want to see Medicare include long term care as an option.

>> TED: On this slide, we have an image, it’s a picture from a march with people holding a banner that says “The Hardest Hit”. Next to them are three people in wheelchairs and they’re people behind them marching holding banners and signs. The text says, “Issues for voters with disabilities”.

>> CELINDA LAKE: As we look at the next slide, we see that if you look at the disability community, it's a very diverse issue agenda. At the top are economy, health care, national security, and education. Also, very high concern for dysfunctional government. And for people who are themselves disabled, very high concern for climate change, interestingly. Many of our issue constituencies have no idea how supportive the disability community is in terms of these issues. Not only do we don't organize people enough in terms of voting, frankly, we don’t organize people enough in terms of issue advocacies as well. Which is why everything you all are doing is so important.

>> TED: This slide has a table with the issues going along one side and the measurement along the top of non-people with disabilities, people with disabilities, self, family and friend.

>> CELINDA LAKE: And if we move to the next slide.

>> TED: This slide has an image of a pie chart with a picture of Donald Trump in the middle, and a measurement around the pie chart and a bar graph next to it that measures non-people with disabilities, All people with disabilities, self, family and friend and Celinda will talk about the numbers.

>> CELINDA LAKE: Most people say that they heard nothing positive in terms of Trump's policies or plans for people with disabilities. Only 19% of the public say they’ve heard anything positive. Among people with disabilities themselves, that goes down to 15%. In fact, at the state and federal level, when we have tested budget cuts, cutting programs with disabilities has been the least popular tract. And that includes work that we did in suburban Colorado with suburban women. Work that we did in Michigan, work that we did in Maryland. It's really astounding how far ahead the public is, ahead of the politicians, in terms of these issues. If we turn to the next slide.

>> TED: We have three bar graphs measuring whether we're on the right track or the wrong track, we’re outside extended disability community, people with disabilities, and extended disability community.

>> CELINDA LAKE: Here, we see that, you can imagine from the job performance numbers, that people with disabilities – everybody thinks the country is going in the wrong direction. But people with disabilities, particularly negative about the direction, with 58% negative. More negative than the rest of the country. Again, people with disabilities voting very Democratic, voting very much for change. If we look at the last slide --

>> TED: Three positive and negative graphs here, going above zero and below zero. Measuring the net mean for outside extended disability community, people with disabilities, and extended disability community.

>> CELINDA LAKE: What we see here is, the Republican tax cut that started out fairly positive, it has deteriorated pretty massively with the public. Interestingly, people with disabilities are the most negative toward the Republican tax cut. 55% negative, only 28% positive. Again, what we’re seeing is what a powerful, important constituency people with disabilities and the extended disability community is. How Democratic they are, how progressive they are and how under mobilized they are, uh… Not only can they make the difference at every race that we're talking about, but can also make the difference when we’re talking about issues of being the leaders and the number one constituency for many, many of these issues that we all care about. Let me turn it back to Ted. Thank you, Ted, for the interpretation and I want to say thank you most of all, to all of you, for what you do.

>> TED: Thank you, Celinda. Do we have time for a few questions?

>> CELINDA LAKE: Yes, we do on our end.

>> TED: Great. The first question is from Ruthie Goldcorn, and she asks, “When were the polls taken?”

>> CELINDA LAKE: A good question, Ruthie. This data is a variety of data that was taken all through this year, starting April. So it's all different timelines. April, through the early fall, through September.

>> TED: Great. The next question is, “Is the decrease in Democratic people with disabilities because of voter registration efforts, or reregistering, which could be because of other factors?”

>> CELINDA LAKE: Oh, it’s a great question. I don't think we know for sure. I don't know, Ted, if you guys looked at this. There is some of all of that. But actually, despite big disadvantages and disenfranchisement, people with disabilities have maintained their registration and their participation rates more than a lot of other groups have. What I was remarking on was the fact that I don't think we're doing nearly enough to facilitate, maintain that registration, and to mobilize the vote to help the turnout, given the power, the size and power of this constituency. But I don't think we have all that sorted out. By the way, one of the things that makes people angriest is when people with disabilities are taken off the rolls. That really makes voters very angry.

>> TED: These are good questions. We have another question from Cheryl Kasai, from the State Independent Living Council in California. Cheryl asks, “Do you know where to find a listing of disability champions in Congress?”

>> CELINDA LAKE: I want to turn that to Ted because I don’t, but that’s a great question.

>> TED: It is a good question. If you go on line, there's a disability caucus. There are probably about, I think 40 members, of the House that are on the disability caucus and I think in the Senate, it’s about 20 senators. And that's a good indication. That caucus is not as active. However you will find those particular members in that listing active on disability issues. We see it's the same folks we see active on health care and things like that. That’s a really good question. And I would also say that right now we're seeing a lot of leadership in the Senate from Bob Casey, whose a senator from Pennsylvania, on disability issues, along with Tammy Duckworth, of course. Kirsten Gillibrand. And in the House, there's a number of folks, if you go through the listing of the disability caucus.

Looks like that's it with all of our questions today. Thank you very much, Celinda.

>> CELINDA LAKE: Oh, thank you so much.

>> TED: The DONet really appreciates you joining us. And thank you all folks, for joining us for this webinar today. Thank you so much, you can find us on the web at www.disabilityorganizing.net. Have a great day everyone.

>> CELINDA LAKE: Thank you Ted, thanks so much, thanks you to all of you.

>> TED: Thank you.