

Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None

American Support for
The Heritage Foundation's
Policy Agenda

Matthew Streit
Vice President, Strategic Communications
The Heritage Foundation
January 2015

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Methodology.....	2
Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None.....	3
Restoring Opportunity in the Labor Market.....	5
Free Market Energy Solutions.....	6
Federalism and Education: Pre-K-12.....	7
Beyond Student Loans and Grants: Changing the Game On Higher Education.....	8
A Fresh Start For Health Care Reform.....	9
Regulation: Killing Opportunity.....	10
Ending Too-Big-to-Fail.....	11
Welfare Reform.....	12
Eliminating Waste and Controlling Government Spending.....	13
How Tax Reform Would Help American Families.....	14
Indivisible: Life, Marriage, Religious Liberty, and Prosperity.....	15
A New Foreign Policy Agenda.....	16
Summary Table.....	17
Conclusion.....	18

Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None

American Support for The Heritage Foundation's Policy Agenda

Matthew Streit

Executive Summary

The Heritage Foundation and Heritage Action for America mark the beginning of 2015 with the launch and publication of *Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None*. This policy vision outlines a clear path forward to preserve and create the kind of opportunities that help all Americans from every walk of life provide for their families, contribute to their communities, and pursue their dreams. The ideas within *Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None* are the beacon for the policies and solutions that will build a strong economy, strong society and strong America.

This report examines voter perceptions and support for the principles and policies upon which the *Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None* vision for America is built. It demonstrates the centrality of the two core themes of this vision—"opportunity" without the corrupting influence of "favoritism". The report also examines the themes, messaging, and language that are most effective in communicating about the *Opportunity for All* agenda and for all of the policy issues that support it.

The essence of being an American and pursuing the American Dream is centered on "opportunity". Compelling research demonstrates that "opportunity" lies at the core of the American archetype and is the foundation upon which Americans are able to improve their quality of life and achieve their Amer-

ican Dream. Opposite that lay the frustration and anger over the favoritism and corruption people see going on between government and the special interests of Wall Street, labor, the wealthy and politically well-connected.

While many Americans may not embrace the label of "conservative", most believe the conservative vision for America offers the best approach for solving our nation's most complex policy issues. Moreover, the more they hear and read about the conservative approach and policy solutions of The Heritage Foundation, the stronger their support grows. On issue after issue there are compelling and effective arguments, messages, and language that conservatives can use to focus discussion on the benefits and values that are key to all Americans and their hopes for the future.

Research presented in this document demonstrates that the *Opportunity for All* agenda resoundingly resonates with Americans because it reflects, promotes, and preserves their personal values and priorities. Equally important to preserving these values though is the idea that government should not favor one individual or business over another. The research is clear on this point: Americans see the favoritism for special interests as a threat to the core tenets of "opportunity": hard work, fair competition and success based upon merit, rather than position.

Methodology

The American Perceptions Initiative (API)—a project of The Heritage Foundation—conducts market research among adult Americans on a variety of issues and policy priorities to provide support for strategy and messaging. Research in this report focuses on American perceptions of the priorities and policies outlined in The Heritage Foundation and Heritage Action for America’s *Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None* vision for America. Research is designed to explore the relevancy, credibility and support for the policies, concepts, messages and language used in the *Opportunity for All* platform as well as the impact they have to create movement and action to support these policies and vision for America.

All of API’s market research is conducted in partnership with Vision Critical and Heart+Mind Strategies. Vision Critical is a well-respected research firm based on North America with research specialist that cover subjects including public opinion, health, technology, consumer goods, media and travel. They work with household brands, government bodies, not-for-profit organizations and the media to help them better understand their customers and stakeholders. Heart+Mind Strategies is an experienced and award winning consulting firm specializing in winning the hearts and minds of the people that matter most to their client’s success.

Research findings in this report are based on 6246 interviews with a sample of adult Americans conducted online with the *Springboard America* platform. The sample is matched to gender, age, and regional population parameters of the US population. Interviews were conducted between December 23, 2014 and January 21, 2015. The research examines public reaction to the overarching *Opportunity for All, Favoritism to None* theme and each of the twelve spe-

cific issue areas identified earlier in the table of contents. A sample of approximately 400 interviews was devoted to each issue area.

The study also utilizes new survey research heat-mapping technology to capture the words and messages respondents find most appealing. Aggregated across all respondents, we are able to identify the most powerful and compelling messages and language that can be used to tell the *Opportunity for All* story and the strongest points to emphasize for each policy area.

In addition, each respondent evaluates the strength of the communication on several other dimensions. In this report we highlight the results of the following communications metrics:

- **Credibility:** how credible or believable is the message
- **Relevancy:** how relevant is the message to the respondent personally
- **Conservative Equity:** the degree to which the conservative vision is perceived as the strongest approach to the issue
- **Change Impact:** the net increase in positive identification with the conservative approach or vision for America

Together, these metrics and the heat-mapping help us identify and highlight the power phrases for each of the issue areas as well as the words and phrases that best raise awareness and bring attention to the policy area. These phrases and words provide powerful and compelling language and talking points that will stir interest and support for conservative policy solutions.

Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None

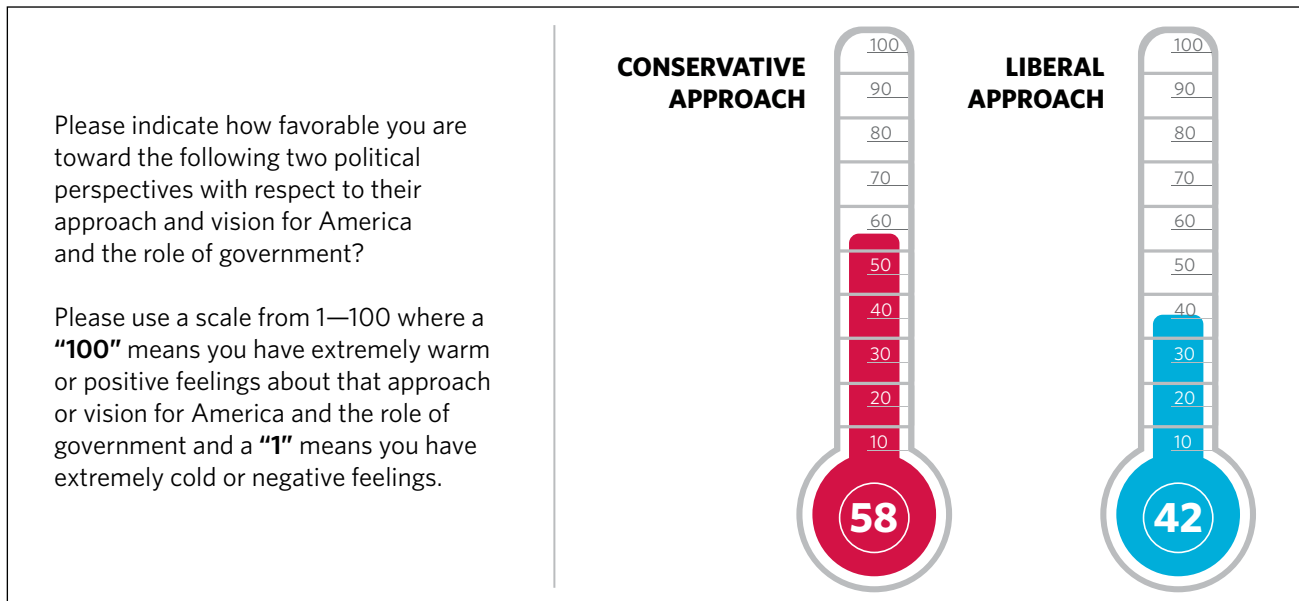
The very essence of being an American and pursuing the American Dream is built on “opportunity”—unique circumstances in our country that make it possible for each American to freely pursue happiness on their own path through life. There is promise and power in a vision of America centered on “opportunity”—power that captures the imagination and support of millions of Americans. Research clearly demonstrates that the language of “opportunity” is what resonates with Americans today.

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of all Americans report being *much* or *very much* more interested and favorable toward the vision for America “where freedom and **opportunity** [emphasis added] encourage innovation, hard work and success. When people thrive, our families, neighborhoods, communities, and nation thrive and the quality of life for every-

RELEVANCE	★	★	★	★	☆
CREDIBILITY	★	★	★	★	★
CONSERVATIVE EQUITY	★	★	★	★	★
CHANGE IMPACT	★	★	★	☆	☆

one is lifted”. Clearly, *Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None* strikes a strong chord. In fact, in a separate question, by an impressive ratio of 8:1, people respond favorable rather than negative to the phrase *Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None*.

It is also important to recognize the fact that today in politics we begin from the starting point where the large majority of Americans are far more warm and positive to the “conservative” approach or vision for America and the role of government than the “liberal” approach or vision. By a significant margin, Americans align with the conservative approach and vision for America over the liberal approach (“conservative vision or approach” scores 58 on a 1-100 favorability scale compared to a score of 42 for the “liberal vision or approach”).*



* [It is important to note that this rating relates to the “conservative approach or vision for America” and is not the same as a rating for conservative ideology. Ratings for parties and ideologies continue to score closer to the middle of the scale—neither positive nor negative. Nevertheless, ratings for “conservatives” and the “conservative” ideology are significantly improving over the last year and now enjoy a decided advantage over “liberals” and the “liberal/progressive” ideology.]

While people are not particularly fond of any ideology or political party today, they remain inherently conservative leaning in their values and support for policies. This creates an implicit receptivity and level of support for the kind of common sense solutions put forward by The Heritage Foundation—a tremendous advantage in the communications and policy battles that lie ahead. Our task rests largely on identifying the most compelling and powerful parts of the conservative message that already resonate and to activate American’s emotions and subsequent support for them rather than trying to persuade them to change their values or to disguise policy in an effort to avoid voters from understanding their negative consequences and impacts on the lives of everyday Americans.

The Heritage Foundation and Heritage Action for America’s *Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None* policy agenda resonates with many Americans.

- 80% of Americans find the *Opportunity for All* narrative credible.
- 62% find it to be personally relevant.
- 59% report that it gets their attention.
- 56% report that it makes them more favorable toward a “conservative approach”.

The market research also surfaced the most powerful and compelling messages and language that can be used to tell the *Opportunity for All* story:

Power Phrases for Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None:

- We believe in an America that is safe and secure; where family has the opportunity to flourish
- ... opportunity to go as far as your talents and hard work will take you
- ... where government recognizes its limits, and treats everyone equally, showing favor to none.
- ... free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense—produce a strong economy, a strong society, and a strong America
- There is nothing wrong with success that is achieved through merit, hard work, fair competition, and the creation of value in the free market.
- ... limited government, a healthy culture, and a strong defense
- ... choices in education, health care, and other necessities are moved closer to home; where taxes are fair and flat
- The nation is ready for leaders who will address concerns about the relationship between mobility, economic dynamism, concentrated power, and collusion between special interests and government.

Words that grab attention to the problem:

- For the wealthy and powerful, Washington is a finely-tuned machine aimed at avoiding principled arguments and keeping the gravy train rolling for well- connected interests.
- crony capital
- ... benefit the wealthy and the well-connected
- disconnected, distant leaders

Every policy issue in the *Opportunity for All* agenda helped build stronger levels of identification with a conservative approach or vision for America. From education policy and social issues to tax reform and

government spending, Americans found the *Opportunity for All* agenda to be a relevant, credible and a positive approach to solving many of the country’s most vexing policy issues.

Restoring Opportunity in the Labor Market

RELEVANCE	★	★	★	☆	☆
CREDIBILITY	★	★	★	★	★
CONSERVATIVE EQUITY	★	★	★	★	☆
CHANGE IMPACT	★	★	☆	☆	☆

Workers face many challenges in the aftermath of the Great Recession. Wages and job opportunities have grown slowly and many feel the economy has left them behind. While opportunity in the labor market is currently not the most important issue for all Americans, jobs and the economy remain a top issue nationally. Americans are frustrated with

progress in job creation and feel government efforts in recent years have made matters worse. Importantly, they recognize that conservatives naturally have a stronger approach to create more opportunity in the labor market and are slightly more inclined to identify with conservatives and support their approach when they read about it.

Power Phrases for Restoring Opportunity in the Labor Market:

- **The government should stop hindering workers who are trying to achieve the American Dream.**
- The challenge facing struggling middle-class workers is **how to become more skilled or find new ways to use their existing skills productively in a changing economy.**
- One third of all jobs in the economy now require a government license to work in them. **Government should get out of the business of mandating such restraints.**
- **Policymakers should make it easier and less expensive for workers to increase their skills and productivity.**
- Policymakers should **make reform of basic education a high priority**, and the government should make it less difficult for workers to acquire the more advanced skills needed by today's employers.
- **The government should make it easier for workers to use their existing skills more productively. Not every worker needs or wants a college degree.**

Words that grab attention to the problem:

- Congress has added to the problem of workers. **Obamacare has significantly raised the cost of health insurance**, especially for small businesses.
- Regrettably, many government policies have made the labor market even less hospitable to workers

Free Market Energy Solutions

RELEVANCE	★	★	★	★	☆
CREDIBILITY	★	★	★	★	☆
CONSERVATIVE EQUITY	★	★	★	★	☆
CHANGE IMPACT	★	☆	☆	☆	☆

Americans are pleased with the emerging energy abundance that has helped the U.S. become number one in the production of oil and natural gas. Nevertheless, they also recognize we could be doing even more and are frustrated by government actions that

are harming our nation's ability to generate energy related jobs and grow the economy. What most Americans see is government using regulations to promote politically-favored energy solutions which they feel are not in the nation's best interests.

Power Phrases for Free Market Energy Solutions:

- Today, thanks to technological advances like fracking and horizontal drilling, the **United States produces more oil and natural gas than any other country.**
- It is simply **not the role of the federal government to promote one energy source over another** or to force people to use a certain type of fuel. **It is the government's job to preserve a free society where these decisions can be made by the people themselves.**
- When thinking about our country's energy, **the only obstacle standing in the way of progress is not technology, resource constraints, or any inability to capitalize on the moment, it is government regulation.**

Words that grab attention to the problem:

- **Bureaucrats and radical environmental ideologues have eroded the energy market by promoting and implementing policies that pick winners and losers.**
- **President Obama's EPA imposes policies that hike energy prices and destroy jobs,** with no discernible environmental impact.
- ... repeatedly delayed approval of the Keystone XL pipeline
- **Washington distorts the market, tilting the playing field toward politically favored individuals and companies**—and away from the solutions that will benefit most Americans.
- They directly harm our nation by **destroying thousands of jobs, hampering economic growth, and raising energy prices** for Americans who can least afford it.
- The President and his Department of Energy have explicitly stated that their policies raise energy prices and that they consider this to be a good thing because it will **force their fellow citizens to use morally superior technologies ... paying more money to use less energy.**

Federalism and Education: Pre-K-12

RELEVANCE	★	★	★	☆	☆
CREDIBILITY	★	★	★	★	★
CONSERVATIVE EQUITY	★	★	★	★	☆
CHANGE IMPACT	★	★	★	★	★

America is at a crossroads in education policy. After years of increasing federal involvement in local education, choice and local control appear, at long last, to be challenging Washington control. While pre-K-12 education is not the most personally relevant issue on the national stage (although it typically plays a significant role at the state level), it is an issue where the

conservative approach is credible and offers a decided advantage over the liberal approach. Importantly, it affords a clear-cut ability to emphasize the fundamental and highly popular conservative principle of local control over federal control and generates significant impact (second highest) in moving people even more toward the conservative approach.

Power Phrases for Federalism and Education: Pre-K-12:

- ... pursue reforms that **situate dollars and decision-making closer to the student.**
- **Decisions about education policy and spending are best made by those who can see firsthand the costs and benefits of those decisions.**
- Congress should advance reforms that **reduce federal intervention while simultaneously championing policies that empower parents.**
- Congress should **propose alternatives to Head Start and eliminate ineffective and duplicative federal preschool programs.**
- **More and more states are choosing to opt out of the federal government’s “Common Core” standards,** which seeks to force parents and communities to cede control over the lessons taught in local schools to federal bureaucrats.
- **Decisions about education policy and spending are best made at the most local level possible.**

Words that grab attention to the problem:

- **The federal government currently operates 45 early learning and childcare programs at a taxpayer cost of \$20 billion**
- **The federal government has proven ineffective at providing quality preschool, with its flagship program—Head Start—having failed for decades** to meet the program’s goal of kindergarten readiness for children from low-income families.
- **Years of well-intentioned reforms like No Child Left Behind have contributed to the massive growth in federal intervention in recent decades, resulting in roughly 100 federal education programs.**
- **Washington has also nearly tripled federal per-pupil expenditures since the 1970s.**

Beyond Student Loans And Grants: Changing the Game On Higher Education

RELEVANCE	★	★	☆	☆	☆
CREDIBILITY	★	★	★	★	★
CONSERVATIVE EQUITY	★	★	★	★	☆
CHANGE IMPACT	★	★	☆	☆	☆

Few obstacles to opportunity loom larger for young people than student loan debt. Most students graduate from college with tens of thousands of dollars in debt to their names. The cost of higher education has grown tremendously over the years. While higher education is not highly relevant at a personal

level, Americans react favorably to policies which would break up the accreditation cartel allowing students to escape expensive programs and open up other alternatives that better meet their needs at a more reasonable cost. Americans find the conservative approach to higher education highly credible.

Power Phrases for Beyond Student Loans and Grants: Changing the Game on Higher Education:

- **Breaking the accreditation cartel would allow students to escape expensive, full-degree programs and to chart their own path, selecting specific courses that meet their and their employers' needs.**
- **A real higher education market would promote not just those programs offered by traditional colleges and universities, but also those credentialed by businesses and other non-college institutions.**
- **Enabling aid to follow students to those individually credentialed courses could reap massive savings and transform the industry.**

Words that grab attention to the problem:

- **The current accreditation system serves the special interests of the higher education industry.** Students seeking jobs that require traditional degrees have no choice but to shoulder the cost.
- **Congress' actions (increased loan subsidies and expanded access to need-based grants), have only contributed to increases in college costs over time.**
- **Currently ... the process is controlled by a cartel of higher education industry insiders with an interest in preserving the status quo.** These accreditors have the power to block innovative competitors from receiving federal financing.
- **A vicious lending-and-spending cycle.** This easy flow of federal student aid—which is available to students regardless of their credit-worthiness—enables universities to continue to raise tuition, sending students back to the federal trough for more financial aid.
- **Most students graduate from college with tens of thousands of dollars in debt to their names.**

A Fresh Start for Health Care Reform

RELEVANCE	★	★	★	★	☆
CREDIBILITY	★	★	★	★	☆
CONSERVATIVE EQUITY	★	★	★	★	★
CHANGE IMPACT	★	★	★	★	★

The quality of health care in America is second to none. Still, not everyone can get quality care when they need it and rising health care costs make access even more difficult. The passage of Obamacare has only confounded these problems. For these reasons, health care continues to be a personally relevant issue and the concerns and worries of Obamacare have not gone away. Frustration with increasing cost,

loss of choice and control, and access to the doctors individual's need continue to create pressure for a fresh start on health care reform. This is overall one of the strongest issues on the conservative agenda—strong relevance, strong credibility, recognizable strengths in The Heritage Foundation's approach and a significant ability to further increase identification with the conservative vision for America.

Power Phrases for A Fresh Start for Health Care Reform:

- Forget about letting bureaucrats manage your health care. **Empowering individuals to control their health care dollars and decisions is a far better prescription for health care reform.**
- **Health reform should create a marketplace in which insurers and providers can compete freely to provide better care at lower cost.**
- **It should give individuals and families the freedom to select the plan that best suits their needs.**
- **Congress should fix the tax code so that it treats individuals fairly, giving the** tax benefits to buy insurance similar to the benefits available for those with employer-based coverage.
- **People who like their company-provided plan should not be forced out of it by government regulators.**
- **There is no reason why Medicaid and Medicare recipients should be denied the benefits of choice and competition.**
- **Choice**
- **Patient-centered**
- **Coverage that follows me wherever I go**

Words that grab attention to the problem:

- **Obamacare turned insurance companies into public utilities, promising them a comfortable existence in exchange for eliminating competition.**
- **Obamacare regulations severely restrict insurers' ability to set their own prices, choose which services they will or will not cover, select their customers, or adopt innovative business models or products that might lower their costs**
- **Many people, newly covered under Obamacare, are having difficulty finding participating doctors who are accepting new patients.**
- **Long waiting periods for getting an appointment are increasingly common.**
- **Many who lost their existing coverage because it didn't meet federal standards find themselves paying higher premiums, deductibles and co-pays while losing access to the doctors they trusted.**

Regulation: Killing Opportunity

RELEVANCE	★	★	★	☆	☆
CREDIBILITY	★	★	★	★	★
CONSERVATIVE EQUITY	★	★	★	★	☆
CHANGE IMPACT	★	☆	☆	☆	☆

The explosive growth of regulation emanating from Washington is a long-term problem that acts as a drag on the economy, shifting resources from innovation, expansion and job creation to regulatory compliance. People want their representatives in Congress to reassert their influence over the bureau-

cratic regulatory machine that is generating a \$73 billion burden on our economy each year. While burdensome regulation is not the most impactful issue for conservatives, the conservative approach is clearly preferred.

Power Phrases for Regulation: Killing Opportunity:

- **Simply put, no rule should be adopted if the American people, as represented by Congress, do not agree that it is properly designed or necessary.**
- **As agencies increase their authority, Congress loses its own. To restore balance, lawmakers should require that all major regulations be approved by Congress,** giving the people’s representatives a chance to weigh in policies that will directly affect their constituents.
- **Not all regulations are unwarranted,** of course. No one is talking about eliminating airline safety rules or letting merchants sell contaminated meat. But volumes of rules lack any rational justification,

Words that grab attention to the problem:

- **The cost of the various regulations imposed by the Obama Administration now nears \$73 billion per year.**
- **Congress increasingly passes vaguely worded legislation that gives regulatory agencies broad discretion in how they exercise their power.** This lets lawmakers claim credit for “doing something” while evading blame for specific regulations.
- **The growth of the regulatory state has upset the proper balance of power in American government.**
- **One of the most worrisome new rules being developed by the FCC would require Internet carriers to deliver all online content in a “neutral” fashion.**

Ending Too-Big-to-Fail

RELEVANCE	★	★	★	★	☆
CREDIBILITY	★	★	★	★	★
CONSERVATIVE EQUITY	★	★	★	★	☆
CHANGE IMPACT	★	★	★	★	☆

Favoritism to None perhaps comes out strongest in American reaction to *Ending Too-Big-To-Fail* policy approaches. Bailing out large institutions is something Americans still have not forgotten and never want to see happen again. It is a highly relevant issue

on which conservatives have a lot of equity and credibility. The *Opportunity for All* agenda is also effective in increasing support for the conservative vision for America.

Power Phrases for Ending Too-Big-to-Fail:

- Congress can act to ensure that history does not repeat itself. Lawmakers can and should **ensure that taxpayers will never again bail out large institutions**. Instead large financial institutions that fail should be allowed to wind down through an orderly bankruptcy process.
- **To root out corruption and irresponsible stewardship in the private sector, we must attack the government policies that encourage it.**

Words that grab attention to the problem:

- **Federal intervention in the private sector was a major contributor to the crisis in the first place.** The Federal Reserve kept interest rates too low for too long, while government puppets Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac distorted the mortgage market. Lenders of all stripes faced pressure from regulators to lend to underqualified borrowers.
- The **government institutions that helped create the crisis have been left untouched.** In some cases, they've been given even more power and responsibilities.
- When the mortgage lenders and their underwriters went underwater, **taxpayers were forced to keep them afloat.** Such is the privilege of institutions deemed "too big to fail."
- The **new regulations are tying down the private sector**, preventing it from doing all it can to lift Americans out of the economic doldrums.

Welfare Reform

RELEVANCE	★	☆	☆	☆	☆
CREDIBILITY	★	★	★	★	★
CONSERVATIVE EQUITY	★	★	★	★	★
CHANGE IMPACT	★	★	★	★	☆

In 1996, Congress and President Bill Clinton reformed one welfare program. But the U.S. welfare system encompasses far more than just that one program. While welfare reform is not very relevant to most Americans at a personal level, it is a policy in which the conservative approach has the ability

to significantly increase support for the conservative vision for America. The conservative approach would remedy the federal disincentives around marriage and work, which many Americans believe is an effective way to deal with the problem, thus helping families and children to thrive.

Power Phrases for Welfare Reform:

- Today, the US Welfare system comprises roughly 80 means-tested programs that provide cash, food, housing, medical care, and social services to poor and lower-income Americans. **The vast majority fail to include any type of work requirement. That should change.**
- If the nation hopes to reduce poverty, it **must address the primary cause: the breakdown of marriage.** Too many children are born outside of marriage—the very institution that research continually shows best helps children to thrive.
- Unfortunately, many of today’s welfare programs include marriage penalties. In other words, individuals are able to receive more in welfare benefits by remaining unmarried than if they were to marry. **Policymakers should look for fiscally responsible ways to reduce these disincentives to marry,** thus ensuring that welfare programs do no harm to marriage.

Words that grab attention to the problem:

- Rather than respecting the dignity of the people it is meant to help, **today’s welfare system simply provides a one-way handout that encourages dependency.**
- **After 50 years and \$20 trillion, the poverty rate remains essentially unchanged** from the day LBJ launched the War on Poverty.
- The decline in marriage has fueled the emergence of divided society.
- **The large increase in unwed childbearing, particularly in lower-income communities, puts children at high risk for poverty. Additionally, it boosts their risk of experiencing other negative outcomes, such as dropping out of high school,** abusing drugs and alcohol, engaging in delinquent behaviors, and becoming a single-parent themselves.

Eliminating Waste and Controlling Government Spending

RELEVANCE	★	★	★	★	★
CREDIBILITY	★	★	★	★	★
CONSERVATIVE EQUITY	★	★	★	★	★
CHANGE IMPACT	★	★	★	★	☆

America’s massive, ever-accumulating debts are the symptom of a problem we can—if we choose to do so—get under control. Eliminating waste and controlling government spending have been recognized staples of the conservative agenda. Wasteful programs and government spending have an impact on every

American and are among the most personally relevant of all the issues. Due to the high relevance, high credibility, and high conservative equity, this issue continues to hold promise in its ability to increase support for the conservative vision for America.

Power Phrases for Eliminating Waste and Controlling Government Spending:

- **Washington should eliminate waste wherever possible**, even on a small scale.
- **We need to make common-sense reforms that modernize these outdated programs** [Social Security and Medicare] **and enable people to exercise more choice with their own health care and retirement dollars.**
- **It’s time for America to take control of its own destiny.** This will require elected officials with the moral fortitude to do the hard, but incredibly important work, of paring down the size of our government and setting it on track to fiscal health.

Words that grab attention to the problem:

- **The nation is \$17.6 trillion in debt and counting.**
- **Waste is everywhere.** According to the Government Accountability Office, the federal government is wasting hundreds of billions each year on improper and duplicative payments
- **Congress even fails to abide by its own laws** to make and pass a budget every year.
- **Popular programs like Social Security and Medicare, if left unreformed, will soon devour nearly two-thirds of all tax dollars.**

How Tax Reform Would Help American Families

RELEVANCE	★	★	★	★	★
CREDIBILITY	★	★	★	★	★
CONSERVATIVE EQUITY	★	★	★	★	☆
CHANGE IMPACT	★	★	★	★	★

Tax reform is one of the most pressing policy improvements that Congress needs to address. The current tax system is stifling opportunity for all Americans. Updating the tax system is the most relevant issue of the conservative agenda. Research shows everyone wants a tax system that is fair and simple, rewards work and savings, and eliminates

loopholes and special treatment for special interests. The conservative approach is highly credible and recognized as a strong solution. Most importantly, the conservative approach to tax reform has high potential to increase positive identification with the conservative vision for America.

Power Phrases for How Tax Reform Would Help American Families:

- Fair share tax that treats everyone equally, creating opportunity for all and favoritism to none.
 - **Fair:** treats people equally
 - **Simple:** easy to understand and apply
 - **Rewards work and savings:** Provide greater opportunity to work, save and invest hard-earned dollars. It would also **remove the disincentives to save** because it would not tax savings.
- **Eliminates special privileges:** Congress should eliminate preferential treatment for special interest groups and level the playing field for all Americans.
- **Protects those in society we all care about**
- **Updating the tax system would greatly improve the lives of every American family.**
- **Unleash opportunity for every family.**
- **Lower rates and a broader tax base. A single, low-rate system ...**

Words that grab attention to the problem:

- Unfair. Complex. Corrupt.
 - Too many getting away with not paying fair share. (ie., NFL)
 - Too many loopholes
 - Incorrect perceptions about who pays the nation's tax burden
 - Impossible to understand
 - More difficult and expensive than it needs to be
- Encourages cronyism and favoritism
- Government picking winners and losers and playing favorites
- Gives the BIGS too much influence and too many advantages
- The tax code **imposes tax rates that are too high, is biased against saving and investment, and wrongly picks winners and losers.**
- **It's time to end such unfairness.**

Indivisible: Life, Marriage, Religious Liberty, and Prosperity

RELEVANCE	★	★	★	☆	☆
CREDIBILITY	★	★	★	★	☆
CONSERVATIVE EQUITY	★	★	★	★	☆
CHANGE IMPACT	★	★	☆	☆	☆

Some in Washington believe economic and social issues should not be discussed in the same breath. But it takes a strong marriage culture, intact families and a civil society to ensure a thriving economy that will lift families out of poverty and advance prosperity. The relevance of social issues is mixed—high for some Americans but not all. Importantly the conser-

vative approach to social issues such as life, marriage, and religious freedom are credible and the conservative approach outlined in this policy document is seen as the better approach for the country. Moreover, people connect strong families and a healthy marriage culture to economic prosperity and a robust civil society.

Power Phrases for Indivisible: Life, Marriage, Religious Liberty, and Prosperity:

- **All human beings have basic, natural rights, the most fundamental of which is the right to life.**
- **Government has a duty to protect the weakest in society and to recognize the inherent value of every human life.**
- **Marriage and family are the building blocks of human civilization** and the primary institutions of civil society. Intact married families are the foundation of a strong and stable culture.
- **Marriage exists to bring a man and a woman together as husband and wife to be father and mother to any children their union produces.**
- **Americans should be free to earn a living and free to care for the poor, heal the sick and serve their communities in accordance with their faith without unnecessary government interference.**
- **It takes strong families, a healthy marriage culture, and a robust civil society to provide the sort of social solidarity that serves as a necessary precondition to economic prosperity and limited government.**

Words that grab attention to the problem:

- Today, the **United States remains one of only seven countries (in the company of such illustrious human rights supporters as China and North Korea) in which elective, late-term abortions after 20 weeks—five months—of pregnancy are allowed.**
- **Obamacare has vastly expanded federal funding for health plans that include coverage of elective abortions and threatens to crush the conscience rights of many pro-life Americans.**
- **Federal courts are usurping the authority of citizens and their elected representatives to make marriage policy within their own states.**
- In the summer of 2014, a couple running a farm in upstate **New York was fined \$13,000 for declining to rent their family farm for a same-sex wedding ceremony.**
- Facing coercion by state governments to place children with same-sex couples, some **Christian adoption agencies have even been forced to end foster care and adoption services** rather than abandon their belief that children do best with a married mother and father.

A New Foreign Policy Agenda

RELEVANCE	★	★	★	★	☆
CREDIBILITY	★	★	★	★	☆
CONSERVATIVE EQUITY	★	★	★	★	☆
CHANGE IMPACT	★	★	☆	☆	☆

In recent years, world events have eroded global security. National security is at the forefront of many Americans' minds. Americans are disillusioned and disappointed with our country's foreign policy and are looking for a new approach. While the concerns

are mounting, progress and improvement are yet to be seen. In this context there is credibility and equity in the ideas and approaches outlined in the conservative approach.

Power Phrases for A New Foreign Policy Agenda:

- ... unashamed projection of American strength aimed at deterring threats before they materialize.
- ... ensuring that the US only provides foreign aid that serves US interests
- ... the United States does not ignore the transgressions of its enemies and is willing to provide the security guarantees needed to maintain peace.
- Foreign policy is not one-size-fits-all
- America's defense is not just a budget line item. It is the primary responsibility of our federal government and a responsibility that we are increasingly ill-prepared to meet.
- Defense spending should be set through an analysis of the threats our nation faces, the capabilities needed to meet those threats, and—only then—the programs needed to achieve those capabilities.
- Congress should focus on creating and supporting the warfighting capacity needed to ensure that we have the force to defend America's interests now and in the future.

Words that grab attention to the problem:

- eroded global security.
- American power and influence are waning.
- America is walking away from its responsibilities
- the resurgence of terrorism due to American withdrawal from the region despite the hard-fought gains achieved in Iraq and Afghanistan
- In every region of the world, our foreign policy shortcomings have created turmoil.
- When it comes to defeating ISIS, the Administration has been forced to face a host of bad options, partly of its own making. The result is a half-hearted strategy of limited bombings and a slow-motion plan to create a Syrian opposition that offers little hope of success.
- A bitter new rivalry with an emboldened and hostile Russia.
- Across the board, our commanders in the Navy, Army and Air Force have been forced to choose between keeping a much smaller force combat-ready or sacrificing readiness to replace and modernize key equipment. That situation is dangerous and unacceptable.

Summary Table



	RELEVANCE	CREDIBILITY	EQUITY	IMPACT
Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None	★	★	★	★
Restoring Opportunity in the Labor Market	★	★	★	★
Free Market Energy Solutions	★	★	★	★
Federalism and Education: Pre-K-12	★	★	★	★
Beyond Student Loans and Grants: Changing the Game On Higher Education	★	★	★	★
A Fresh Start For Health Care Reform	★	★	★	★
Regulation: Killing Opportunity	★	★	★	★
Ending Too-Big-to-Fail	★	★	★	★
Welfare Reform	★	★	★	★
Eliminating Waste and Controlling Government Spending	★	★	★	★
How Tax Reform Would Help American Families	★	★	★	★
Indivisible: Life, Marriage, Religious Liberty, and Prosperity	★	★	★	★
A New Foreign Policy Agenda	★	★	★	★

Conclusion

The *Opportunity for All: Favoritism to None* policy agenda is seen as a credible, relevant and a positive way to solve our nation's complex public policy issues. The policy agenda resonates with Americans because it reflects and promotes the values and priorities of millions of individuals across the country.

The core themes of the conservative vision for America hinge on “opportunity” for every American, without the corrupting influence of “favoritism” to a select few.

The more Americans hear and read about the conservative approach and policy solutions of The Heritage Foundation and Heritage Action for America, the stronger their support grows. On issue after issue there are compelling and effective arguments, messages, and language that conservatives can use to focus discussion on the benefits and values that are key to all Americans and their hopes for the future.