

# MEREDITH COLLEGE POLL

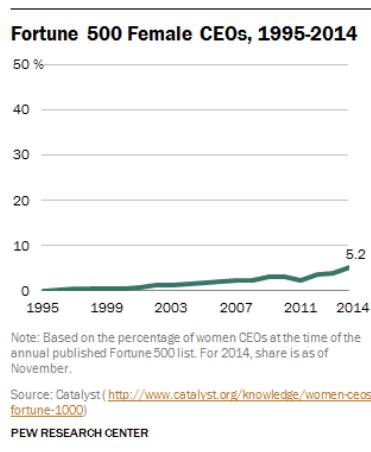
October 11-15, 2015

## Executive Summary

The Meredith College Poll asked questions about North Carolinians' views of women as business leaders and entrepreneurs, as well as the importance of political candidates having a business background. Two questions were added about current Republican presidential candidates Donald Trump and Carly Fiorina to analyze how peoples' perceptions of the importance of a business background applied to the campaigns of these two candidates who lack political experience. Several of the questions were based on the Pew Research Center's surveys of Americans from 2015 about their views of women business leaders. The survey was conducted using a live-caller, dual frame (landline and cell phone) survey of 528 **registered voters** of North Carolina between October 11-15, 2015. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 4.25 percentage points for registered voters. Details regarding the methodology of this 2015 October survey can be found at the end of this report.

## Women as Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs

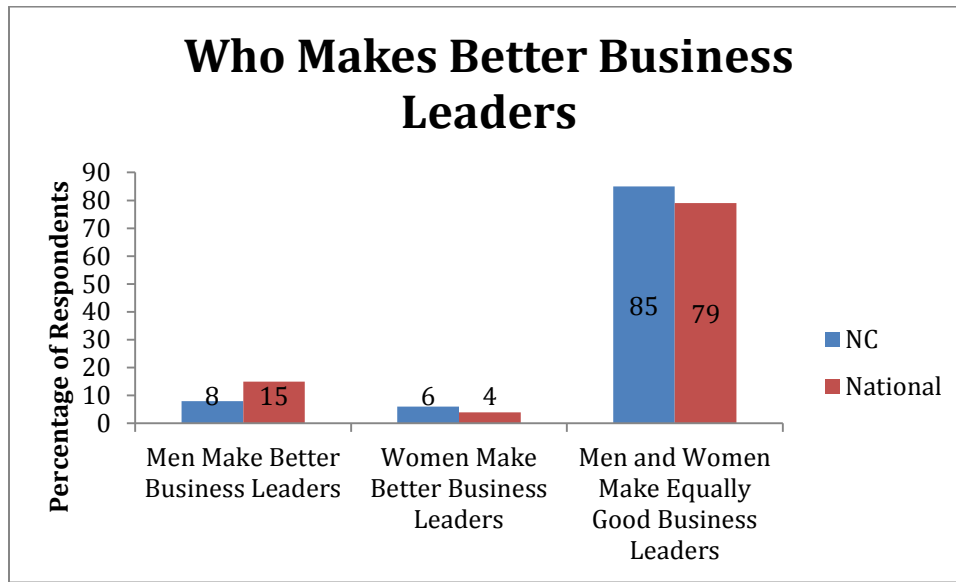
In recent decades, women have made gains in the corporate world moving into executive leadership positions, although there are still few women heading Fortune 500 or Fortune 1000 companies.



The good news for women is that the public sees them as equally qualified to men in terms of leading corporations. In fact, North Carolinians perceive the leadership abilities of men and women even more equally than do all Americans.

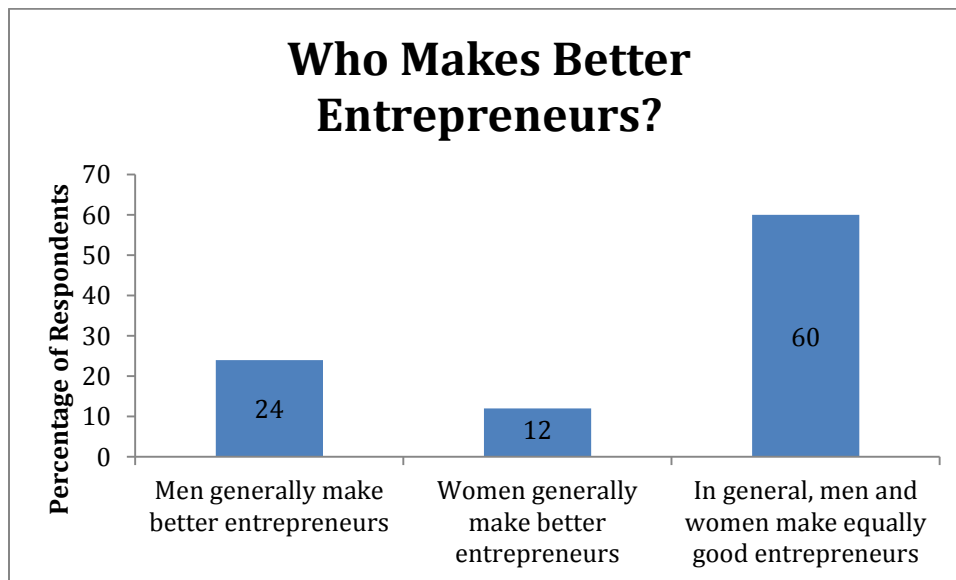
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Pew Research Center (2015) for national results

Although there are still relatively few women CEOs, the picture for women entrepreneurs is brighter, with recent research showing that the number of \$10 million-women-owned-firms increasing by 57% in the last decade (Womenable, 2013). North Carolina is one of the top ten states in the country for women entrepreneurs with the number of women-owned business increasing by 83 percent in the last fifteen years (Gergen and Martin, 2014). North Carolinians' views on the abilities of women to be successful entrepreneurs reflect this growth in women-owned businesses.



Despite the fact that North Carolinians view women as equally capable in terms of corporate leadership and starting up successful companies, the reality is that a vast

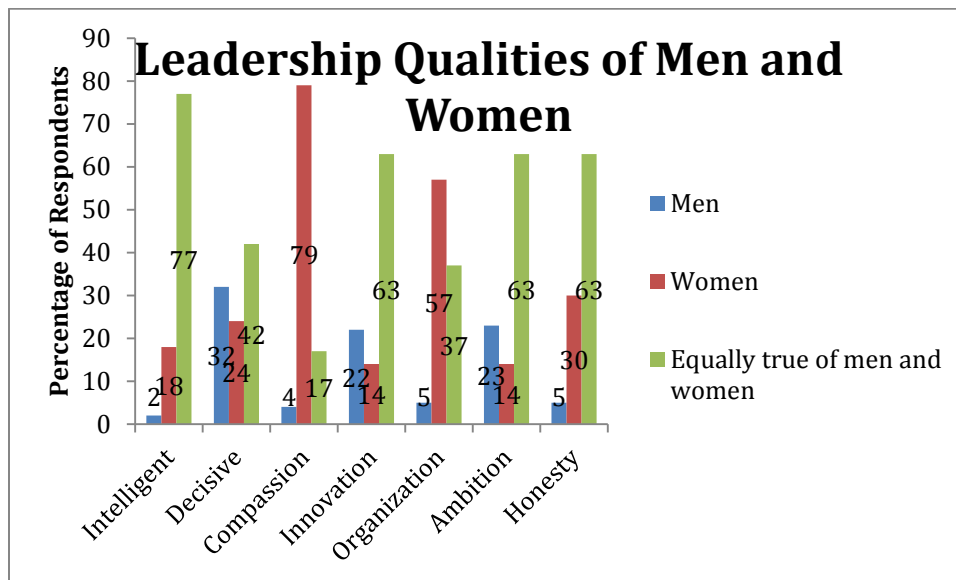
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majority of major corporations in this country are led by men and over 70 percent of all businesses are owned by men (National Association of Women Business Owners, 2015). North Carolinians are generally pessimistic about the abilities of women to achieve gender equity in becoming corporate leaders or business owners.

When asked if there will be an equal number of women in top executive leadership positions as there are men in the next decade, a slight majority of all North Carolinians (57%) thought it was likely or very likely to happen. Under half of the women surveyed (47%) thought that gender equity would be achieved in corporate CEO positions in the next decade.

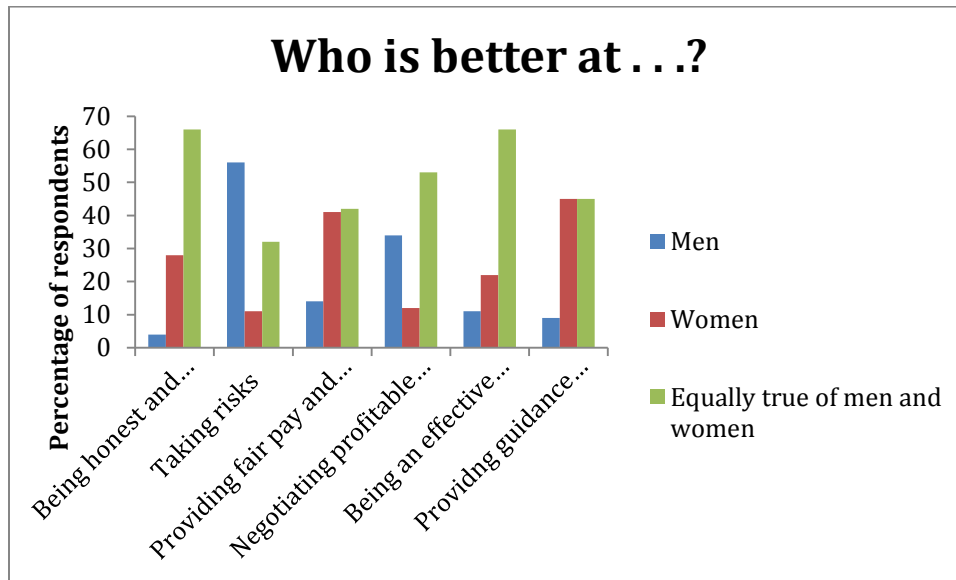
The belief of North Carolinians about the difficulty of women to reach the top of corporations and to start up successful businesses equal to men has little to do with peoples' perceptions of the leadership abilities of women. On most qualities associated with successful leadership, women were perceived as equal to men and on two qualities—compassion and organization—were considered to be superior to men.



Not only do North Carolinians believe that women have leadership qualities equal to men, but that their leadership behaviors are equal to those of men. Men, according to North Carolinians, have an advantage in terms of taking risks, but in every other behavior often associated with successful leaders, a majority of people feel that women are at least equal to men. It is interesting to note that, on behaviors affecting workers, such as providing good compensation packages and mentoring newer employees, women are perceived as extremely strong.

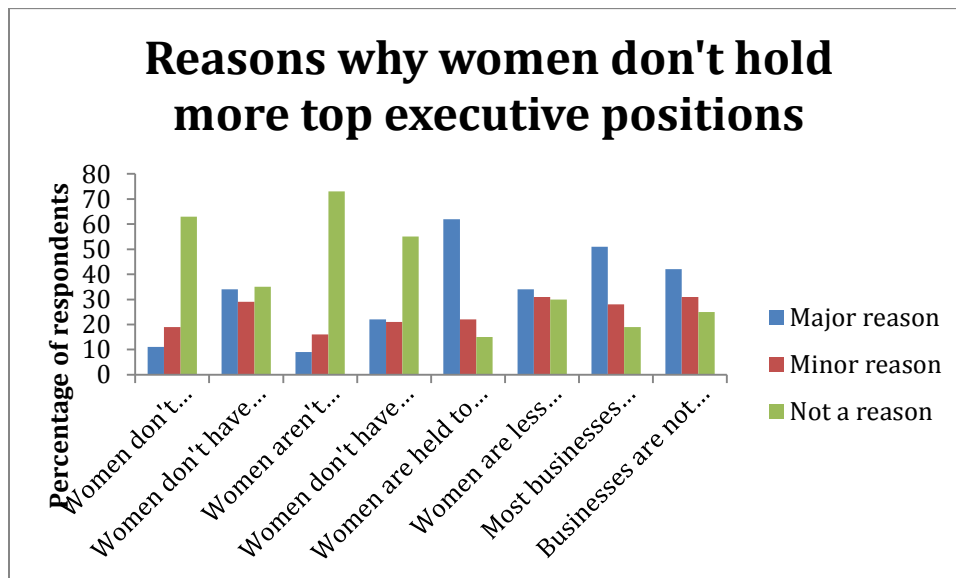
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So, if women possess the leadership qualities and demonstrate leadership behaviors associated with success in business to essentially the same degree as men, why are there relatively few women in corporate executive positions or that own their own businesses?

In many ways, North Carolinians, like most Americans feel that there is a double standard for women in the corporate world. Over three-quarters of North Carolinians believe that men have it easier in the business world, especially in achieving top executive positions.

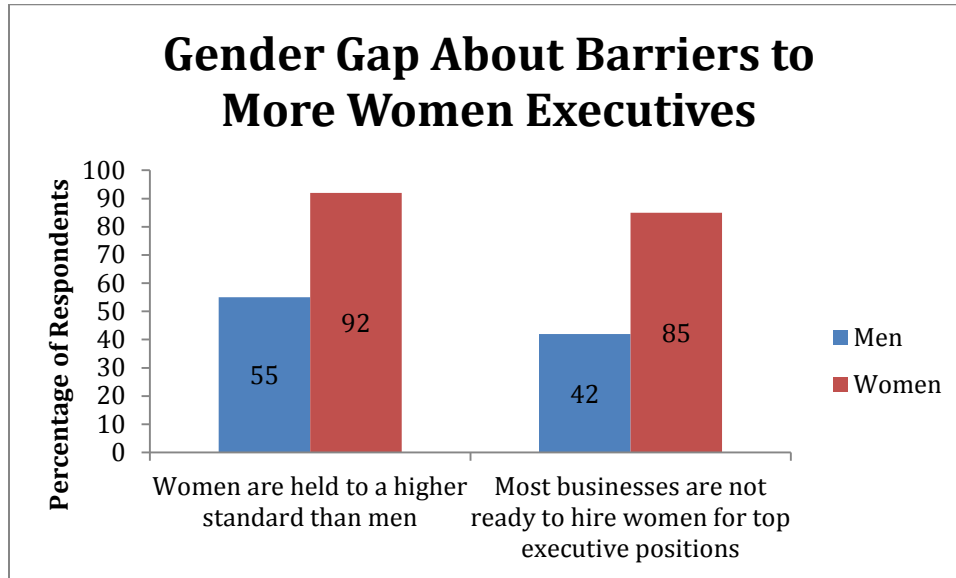


People feel that women have to do more than their male counterparts to prove themselves in the business world (84%) and that corporate America is not ready to put women in top executive positions (79%). There is a gender gap in terms of the perception that a higher

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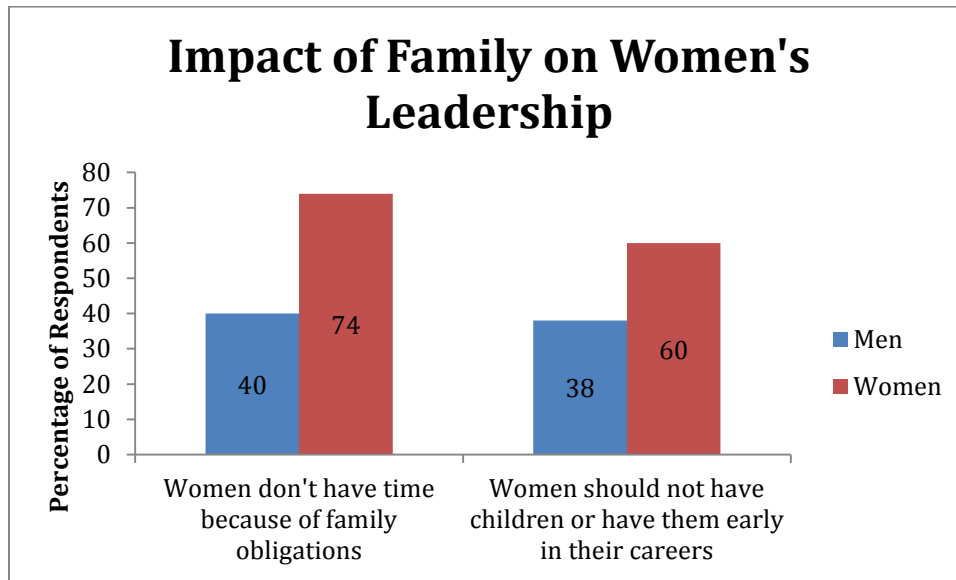
standard exists in business and that businesses are unwilling to advance women to higher executive positions, but it is worth noting that many men share these views, including a majority of men in the state that believe that women need to work harder to succeed.



Traditionally, women's family obligations have been considered to be a barrier for women achieving top levels of management, especially for those women who take time off from their business careers to have and raise children. Almost two thirds (63%) of North Carolinians believe that family obligations are a reason why women don't reach the top corporate levels of leadership, but significantly more women feel that this is a barrier and believe that not having children or having them earlier in their careers, as opposed to later in their business careers, will help them reach the top of the corporate ladder.

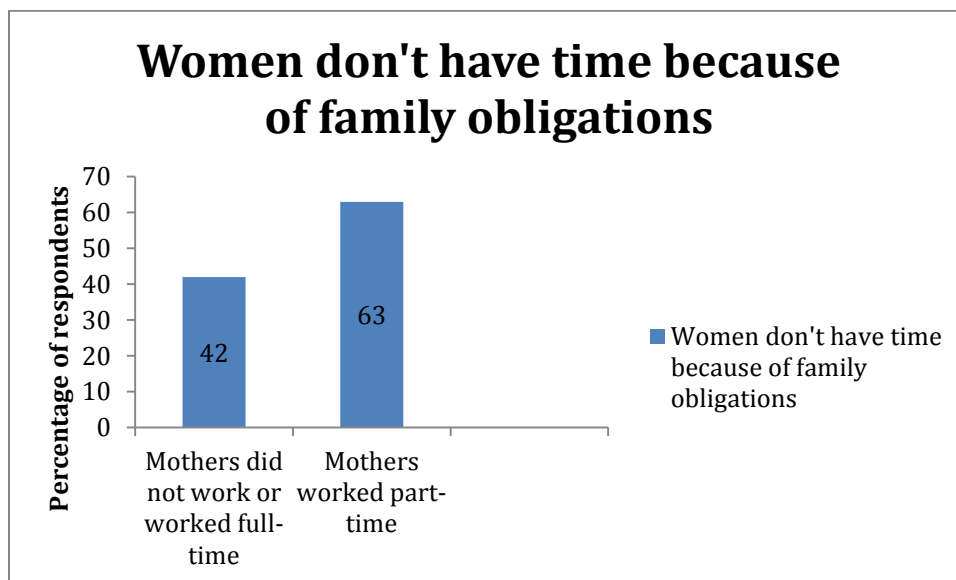
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On the question of children's impact on women achieving gender equality in the workplace, the respondent's age was a factor. Younger respondents (55% of those under the age of 40) believed that it was better for women to delay having children in order to work their way up the corporate ladder, but older respondents thought that women having children earlier their careers was advantageous.

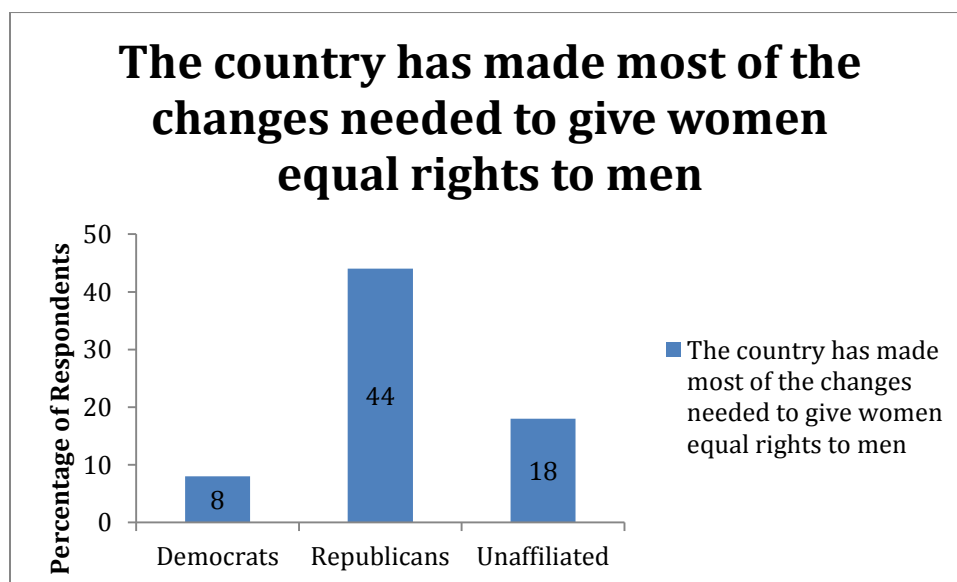
Another factor affecting respondents' perceptions of the impact of children on women's ability to achieve top executive positions in business was whether their mothers worked while raising them. People whose mothers did not work or worked full-time felt that having children is a less significant barrier than did respondents whose mothers worked part-time.



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On the larger question of equal rights, a large majority of North Carolinians (83%) feel that the country needs to continue to make changes to give women equal rights with men, a belief that feeds directly into these beliefs about women having unique barriers to gender equality in the workplace. This is the question in which there was a significant gap in perception based on the respondent's political party affiliation with far more Republicans than Democrats feeling like the country had made changes to give women equal rights.



## Role of Business Experience as a Background for a Political Leader

This year is the year of the outsider in presidential politics, as Donald Trump and Ben Carson lead the polls for the Republican nomination, while Carly Fiorina has been among the top tier of GOP candidates. At the same time, candidates with political office experience, such as Jeb Bush, are well behind in the polls.

The reason why experienced candidates, such as Jeb Bush, struggle while newcomers such as Trump top the polls is because voters are angry at those who have or are currently are serving in elected office. Voters feel that these elected officials are too entrenched in playing politics and don't have any new ideas for dealing with the nation's problems, especially economic issues (Pew, 2015). Outsider candidates such as Trump and Fiorina argue that their business backgrounds make them uniquely qualified to handle issues such as the tax code or international trade agreements.

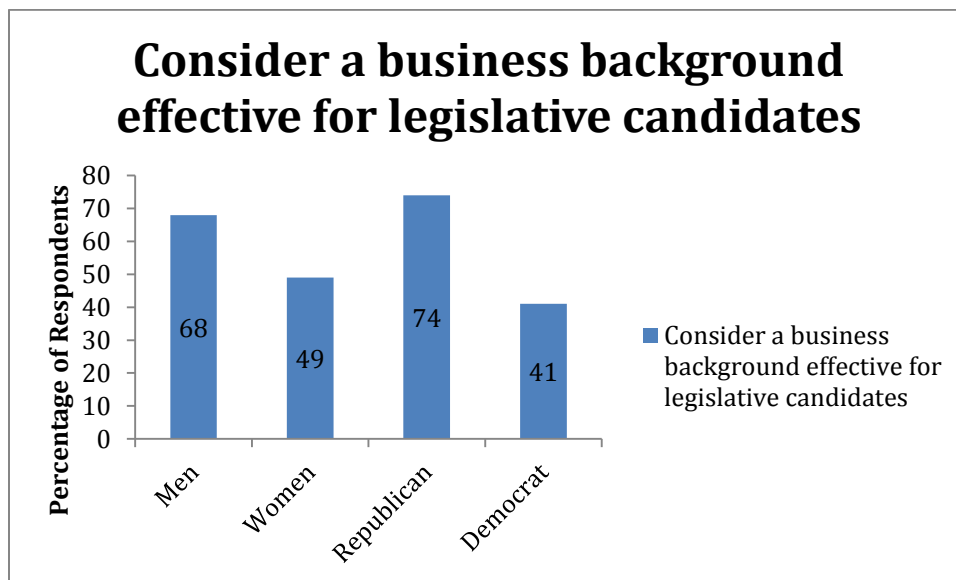
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To test the effectiveness of a business background as an important qualification for political office and that voters prefer that candidates have a business background, we asked a series of questions about the background for generic candidates and for Donald Trump and Carly Fiorina.

A majority of North Carolina voters (57%) consider a business background to be important for a candidate for legislative office, but less than one-in-five voters (19%) consider a business background the deciding factor when voting for a particular candidate. Traditional factors such as party affiliation and policy positions are considered to be more important factors in voting decisions.

Not all voters consider a business background equally valuable. A large majority of males (68%) consider a business background to be effective for a legislative candidate, while slightly less than half of women (49%) consider a business background effective. Likewise, Republicans put more stock in candidates with a business background (74%) than do Democrats (41%).



Donald Trump and Carly Fiorina are prominent candidates without political experience who are running for the Republican nomination for president based on their business backgrounds. Almost half of North Carolina voters (46% and 45%, respectively) consider Trump and Fiorina's business experiences effective factors in their candidacies. Their support comes predominantly from Republican voters. 70% of Republican voters consider Trump's business background as an effective

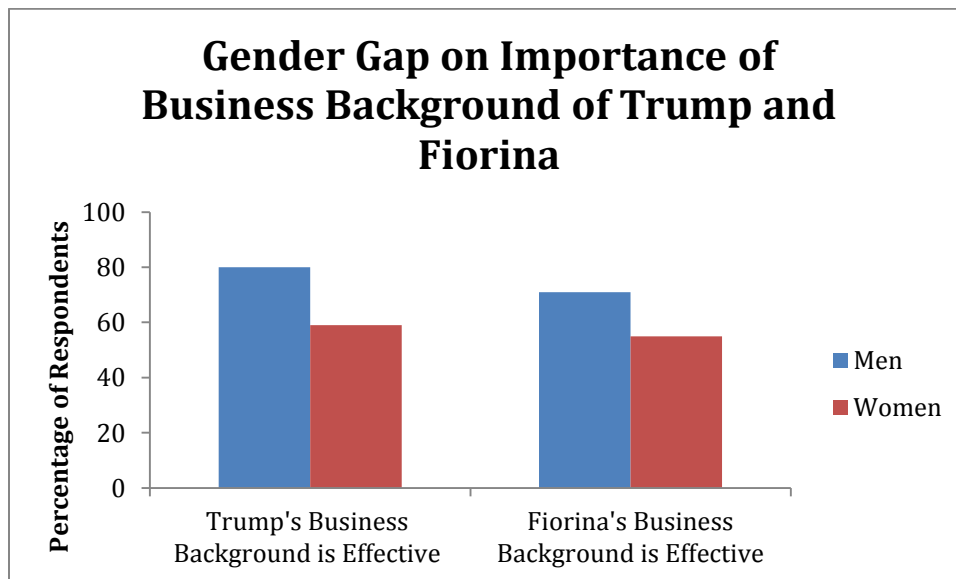


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factor in being considered qualified to be president, while only 6% of Democrats considered his business background to effectively qualify him as president and 18% of unaffiliated voters. Likewise, 62% of Republicans considered Fiorina's business background to effectively qualify her to be president, while only 8% of Democrats and 23% of unaffiliated voters consider be business background to be an important qualification for her.

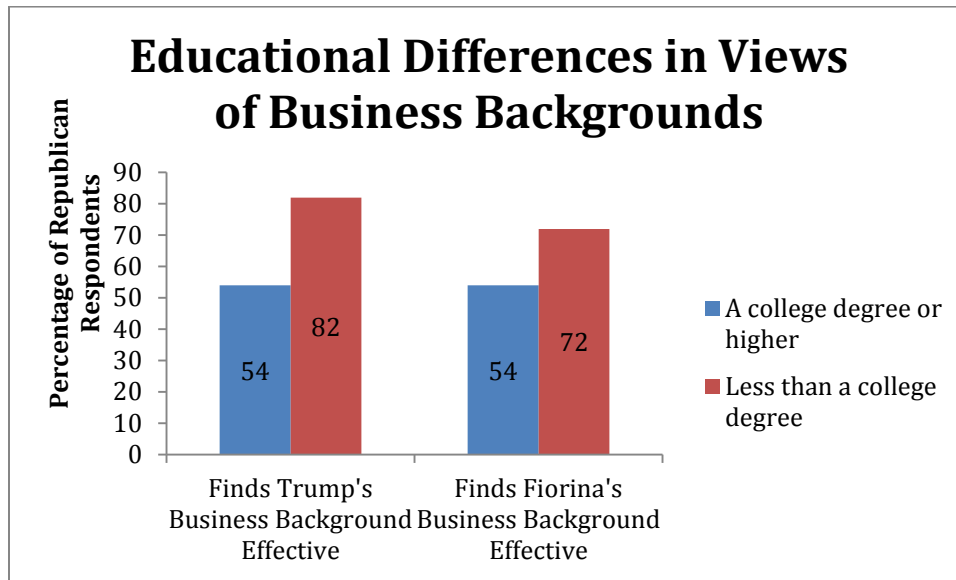
Just as men and women see business backgrounds differently when considering generic legislative candidates, men and women have different perceptions of the importance of the business backgrounds of Trump and Fiorina in making them qualified to be president. Men were significantly more impressed with the business credentials of Trump and Fiorina than were women.



Trump and Fiorina's business backgrounds also seem more effective to Republican voters with less education.

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## Topline Results

### Who makes better business leaders?

Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion about men and women as business leaders?

Men generally make better business leaders	41	8%
Women generally make better business leaders	32	6%
In general women and men make equally good business leaders	437	85%
Don't Know/Refused	4	1%

### Who makes better entrepreneurs?

Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion about men and women as entrepreneurs?

Men generally make better entrepreneurs	122	24%
Women generally make better entrepreneurs	62	12%
In general women and men make equally good entrepreneurs	309	60%
Don't Know/Refused	18	4%

### More true of men or women—intelligence

Is this more true of men or more true of women (intelligence)?

Men	12	2%
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Women	92	18%
Equally true of men and women	393	77%
Don't know/refused	13	3%

## **More true of men or women—decisive**

Is this more true of men or more true of women (decisive)?

Men	165	32%
Women	121	24%
Equally true of men and women	213	42%
Don't know/refused	10	2%

## **More true of men or women—compassion**

Is this more true of men or more true of women (compassion)?

Men	18	4%
Women	400	79%
Equally true of men and women	86	17%
Don't know/refused	3	1%

## **More true of men or women—innovation**

Is this more true of men or more true of women (innovation)?

Men	110	22%
Women	71	14%
Equally true of men and women	317	63%
Don't know/refused	8	2%

## **More true of men or women—organization**

Is this more true of men or more true of women (organization)?

Men	27	5%
Women	288	57%
Equally true of men and women	189	37%
Don't know/refused	2	0%

## **More true of men or women—ambition**

Is this more true of men or more true of women (ambition)?

Men	118	23%
Women	69	14%
Equally true of men and women	319	63%
Don't know/refused	1	0%

## **More true of men or women—honesty**

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Is this more true of men or more true of women (honesty)?

Men	23	5%
Women	154	30%
Equally true of men and women	316	63%
Don't know/refused	12	2%

## **Equal Rights**

Which of these two statements come closest to your own views—even if neither is exactly right?

The country has made most of the changes needed to give women equal rights with men.	73	14%
The country needs to continue to make changes to give women equal rights to men.	419	83%
Don't know/refused	14	3%

## **Who Has it Easier**

Thinking about top executive positions in business these days, would you say it is generally:

Easier for men	387	76%
Easier for women	14	3%
Not much different	93	18%
No answer/refused	12	2%

## **In the next decade**

In your opinion, how likely is it in the next decade that there will be an equal number of women in top executive positions as there are men?

Very likely	71	14%
Likely	216	43%

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Neither likely nor unlikely	48	10%
Unlikely	132	26%
Very unlikely	29	6%
Don't know/refused	9	2%

## **Are Men or Women Better at (Being honest and ethical)**

In general, do you think men or women in top executive positions are better at being honest and ethical?

Men are better	18	4%
Women are better	142	28%
No difference	333	66%
No answer/refused	8	2%

## **Are Men or Women Better at (Being willing to take risks)**

In general, do you think men or women in top executive positions are better at being willing to take risks?

Men are better	282	56% %
Women are better	55	11%
No difference	159	32%
No answer/refused	7	1%

## **Are Men or Women Better at (Providing fair pay and good benefits)**

In general, do you think men or women in top executive positions are better at providing fair pay and benefits?

Men are better	70	14%
Women are better	203	41%
No difference	212	42%
No answer/refused	16	3%

## **Are Men or Women Better at (Negotiating profitable deals)**

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In general, do you think men or women in top executive positions are better at negotiating profitable deals?

Men are better	168	34%
Women are better	59	12%
No difference	264	53%
No answer/refused	10	2%

## **Are Men or Women Better at (Being an effective spokesperson for the company)**

In general, do you think men or women in top executive positions are better at being an effective spokesperson for the company?

Men are better	53	11%
Women are better	111	22%
No difference	329	66%
No answer/refused	8	2%

## **Are Men or Women Better at (Providing guidance or mentoring)**

In general, do you think men or women in top executive positions are better at providing guidance or mentoring to young employees?

Men are better	43	9%
Women are better	225	45%
No difference	226	45%
No answer/refused	6	1%

## **Reasons Why Very Few Top Executive Positions Held by Women (Women Don't Make Good Managers)**

Very few top executive positions in business are filled by women. Do you think that the idea that women don't make as good managers as men is a:

Major reason	54	11%
Minor reason	95	19%
Not a reason	173	35%

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No answer/refused	13	3%
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## **Reasons Why Very Few Top Executive Positions Held by Women (Women Don't Have Time Because of Family Obligations)**

Very few top executive positions in business are filled by women. Do you think that the idea that women's responsibilities to the family don't leave much time for running a major corporation is a:

Major reason	168	34%
Minor reason	145	29%
Not a reason	173	35%
No answer/refused	13	3%

## **Reasons Why Very Few Top Executive Positions Held by Women (Women Aren't Tough Enough for Business)**

Very few top executive positions in business are filled by women. Do you think that the idea that women aren't tough enough for business is a:

Major reason	46	9%
Minor reason	81	16%
Not a reason	367	73%
No answer/refused	6	1%

## **Reasons Why Very Few Top Executive Positions Held by Women (Women Don't Have Personal Networks)**

Very few top executive positions in business are filled by women. Do you think that the idea that women don't have the personal networks and connections as men is a:

Major reason	112	22%
Minor reason	104	21%
Not a reason	274	55%
No answer/refused	9	2%

## **Reasons Why Very Few Top Executive Positions Held by Women (Women are Held to a Higher Standard Than Men)**

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Very few top executive positions in business are filled by women. Do you think that the idea that women are held to a higher standard than men and have to do more to prove themselves is a:

Major reason	310	62%
Minor reason	109	22%
Not a reason	74	15%
No answer/refused	6	1%

## **Reasons Why Very Few Top Executive Positions Held by Women (Women Are Less Likely to Ask for Promotions and Raises)**

Very few top executive positions in business are filled by women. Do you think that the idea that women are held to higher standards than men and have to do more to prove themselves is a:

Major reason	167	34%
Minor reason	154	31%
Not a reason	149	30%
No answer/refused	28	6%

## **Reasons Why Very Few Top Executive Positions Held by Women (Most Businesses Are Not Ready to Hire Women for Top Executive Positions)**

Very few top executive positions in business are filled by women. Do you think that the idea that most businesses are not ready to hire women as top executive positions is a:

Major reason	252	51%
Minor reason	137	28%
Not a reason	95	19%
No answer/refused	12	2%

## **Reasons Why Very Few Top Executive Positions Held by Women (Businesses Are Not Friendly to Women with Children)**

Very few top executive positions in business are filled by women. Do you think that the idea that most businesses are not friendly to women with children is a:

Major reason	206	42%
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Minor reason	154	31%
Not a reason	122	25%
No answer/refused	14	3%

## **Did Your Mother Work?**

During the time you were growing up, did your mother work full-time, part-time, or she was not employed?

Full-time	224	45%
Part-time	86	17%
Not employed	178	36%
No answer/refused	8	2%

## **Having Children and Its Effect on a Woman's Career?**

In general, what do you think is better for a woman who wants to reach a top executive position in business?

Having children early in her working career	148	30%
Waiting until she is established in her career	174	35%
Not having children	99	20%
No answer/refused	77	15%

## **Donald Trump's Business Background**

Donald Trump is seeking the Republican nomination for president and has not served in political office before. Instead, he says his business background prepares him for the presidency. How effective is Donald Trump's business background in preparing him to be president?

Very effective	101	20%
Somewhat effective	130	26%
Neither effective nor ineffective	48	10%
Somewhat ineffective	62	12%

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Very ineffective	134	27%
No answer/Refused	24	5%

## **Carly Fiorina's Business Background**

Carly Fiorina is seeking the Republican nomination for president and has not served in political office before. Instead, she says her business background prepares her for the presidency. How effective is Carly Fiorina's business background in preparing her to be president?

Very effective	74	15%
Somewhat effective	151	30%
Neither effective nor ineffective	46	9%
Somewhat ineffective	71	14%
Very ineffective	101	20%
No answer/Refused	54	11%

## **Business Background for Legislative Candidates**

How important is it to you, as a voter deciding who to represent you in the state legislature, is it that the candidate has business experience, meaning that they owned a business or were involved in the management of a company.

Very important	119	24%
Important	165	33%
Neither important nor unimportant	94	19%
Unimportant	65	13%
Very unimportant	40	8%
Not sure/refused	14	3%

## **Business Background as a Factor in Voting**

In a race where one candidate for the state legislature is female and the other is male, which of the following most closely states how you would choose which candidate to vote for?

I would vote for a female candidate over	17	3%
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over a male candidate if the female had  
business experience and the male did not

I would vote for the male candidate over a female candidate if the male candidate had business experience and the female did not	19	4%
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I would vote for the female candidate if both had business experience	33	7%
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I would vote for the male candidate if both had business experience	25	5%
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I would vote based on some other factor	376	76%
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Don't know/refused	26	5%
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## Demographics

### Party ID

Democrats	42%
Libertarian	1%
Republicans	33.7%
Unaffiliated	23.3%

### Sex/Gender

Male	45%
Female	55%

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## **Income**

Less than \$25,000	17%
\$25,000 to \$50,000	33%
\$50,000 to \$75,000	25%
More than \$75,000	14%
Unknown	11%

## **Race**

White	76%
Black	17.9%
Other	6.1%

## **Age**

18-30	3%
31-40	9%
41-50	24%
51-65	33%
65+	31%

## **Location<sup>1</sup>**

Rural	50.8%
Urban	49.2%

## **Education**

Less than high school diploma	18%
High school diploma	22%
Some college	23%
College degree or higher	30%
Unknown	7%

## **Phone Type**

Landline	59%
Cell	41%

## **Cross Tabulations**

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<sup>1</sup> The 15 urban counties, as determined by the US Census Bureau, are: Buncombe, Cabarrus, Cumberland, Durham, Forsyth, Gaston, Guilford, Iredell, Johnston, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Orange, Pitt, Union, and Wake.

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Donald Trump's Business Background (all numbers indicate percentages of respondents)

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Neither	Somewhat ineffective	Very ineffective
Democrats	2	4	5	40	30
Republicans	32	38	15	4	4
Unaffiliated	8	10	9	28	11

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Neither	Somewhat ineffective	Very ineffective
Republican Men	40	40	15	2	1
Republican Women	24	35	15	6	7

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Neither	Somewhat ineffective	Very ineffective
Republicans with college degree or higher	20	34	17	7	5
Republicans with less than a college degree	40	42	14	3	2

Carly Fiorina's Business Background (all numbers indicate percentages of respondents)

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Neither	Somewhat ineffective	Very ineffective
Democrats	2	6	5	35	30
Republicans	22	40	12	7	4
Unaffiliated	8	15	9	17	18

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Neither	Somewhat ineffective	Very ineffective
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Republican Men	26	45	15	3	1
Republican Women	19	36	9	9	7

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Neither	Somewhat ineffective	Very ineffective
Republicans with college degree or higher	17	37	15	9	7
Republicans with less than a college degree	28	44	10	5	2

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Business Background for Legislative Candidates (all numbers indicate percentages of respondents)

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Neither	Somewhat ineffective	Very ineffective
Democrats	18	23	22	20	13
Republicans	33	41	15	9	5
Unaffiliated	21	24	17	12	6

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Neither	Somewhat ineffective	Very ineffective
Men	31	37	14	9	3
Women	19	30	22	17	12

## Methodological Information

Mode:	Live Interviewer RDD Telephone Interviews (Dual Frame: Cell Phone and Landlines)
Population & Sample Area registered	North Carolina; Adults (Primarily English speaking voters with some Spanish speaking voters)
Dates in the field:	October 11-15, 2015
Registered Voter Sample Size	528
Registered Voter Margin of Error	±4.25%
Confidence Level	95%
Weighting Variables	Age, Race, Gender

## Procedures Used for Conducting the Poll

The Meredith College Poll uses a stratified random sample of households with telephones and wireless (cell) telephone numbers. Please direct questions about the Meredith College Poll's methodology to David McLennan (919-760-2287 or dbmclennan@meredith.edu).

The Meredith College Poll uses CATI system software (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) for the administration of surveys. We attempt to reach each working

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telephone number in the sample up to five times. We only interview residents of North Carolina who are over 18. The Meredith College Poll conducted the survey in English. Live interviewers called from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Sunday, October 11 through Thursday October 15, 2015.

## **Additional Methodological Decisions**

### “Don’t Know” and “Refused” Options

All questions include an option for respondents to volunteer “don’t know” or to refuse. In most questions, callers do not prompt these possible responses.

### Completion Criteria

An interview is a complete only if a respondent progresses through the entire survey. Respondents who hang up before completing the last question or refuse to more than 10 percent of the questions are incompletes.

## **Sampling**

Survey Sampling International, LLC, provide samples of telephone numbers. To equalize the probability of telephone selection, sample telephone numbers are systematically stratified according to subpopulation strata (e.g., a zip code, a county, etc.), which yields a sample from telephone exchanges in proportion to each exchange's share of telephone households in the population of interest. Estimates of telephone households in the population of interest are generally obtained from several databases. Samples of household telephone numbers are distributed across all eligible blocks of numbers in proportion to the density of listed households assigned in the population of interest according to a specified subpopulation stratum. Upon determining the projected (or preferred) sample size, a sampling interval is calculated by summing the number of listed residential numbers in each eligible block within the population of interest and dividing that sum by the number of sampling points assigned to the population. From a random start between zero and the sampling interval, blocks are selected systematically in proportion to the density of listed household "working blocks." We use SSI because they produce valid samples for many polling organizations, including the Meredith College Poll.

Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting at each of these stages. The margin of sampling error at the 95% confidence level is plus or minus 4.25 percentage points for results based on the full sample (n=528). In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.



# MEREDITH COLLEGE POLL

October 11-15, 2015

## The Meredith College Poll Team

- Dr. David McLennan is Director of the Meredith Poll and a Visiting Professor of Political Science at Meredith College. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin.

Faculty members in the History/Political Science program supported the poll and helped recruit students to work as callers. Dr. Dan Fountain is chair of the department and has provided a great deal of support for this project. The poll operates under the auspices of the School of Arts and Humanities, led by Dean Garry Walton, Ph.D.

The Meredith College administration, led by Dr. Jo Allen, president of the College, and Dr. Matthew Puslosny, Provost of the College, fully support the Meredith College Poll as part of its service commitment to state, regional, and national constituents. Meredith College fully funds the Meredith College Poll. This permits the Meredith College Poll to operate as a neutral, non-biased, non-partisan resource.

Meredith College students administer the survey as part of the College's commitment to civic engagement and producing strong women.

**For more information on the Meredith College Poll and this survey, visit**

<http://www.meredith.edu/>

**or**

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