

Creating Positive Conversations

Prepared by the Herndon Alliance

The Conversational Challenges:

1. People understand issues through the narratives and stories they understand.
2. If a concept comes to them that does not fit the narratives they have, they do not listen to or believe it. When beliefs and facts conflict, people disregard the facts.
3. How do we cast policies in narratives that connect to the majority of Washington citizens? And support the reform that we have stated?

Affordable Health Care is a Value:

1. Voters agree with the central principle that there should be access to quality affordable health care.
2. Health care has become a core value, not just a commodity. It is linked to the American dream, our families' and country's well being.
3. It is a moral obligation when focused on deserving recipients such as children and seniors.

America's Future:

1. Voters are feeling that the needs of Americans are being neglected.
2. They are eager for a uniquely American solution, and believe American ingenuity would produce the best solution to the health care problem.
3. Voters want concrete solutions to problems and doable steps to move us forward.

Consumers and Government:

1. The role of government is not alternative to consumer frame. Rather it is a way of ensuring that individual choices are available, responsible behavior rewarded, and greed punished.
2. Government should work as a *watchdog and enforcer* of rules – *not* as the mass provider of health care.

Avoid Triggering Fears:

1. Our proposals are in trouble if they make people worry that they will lose what they currently have.
2. When people are fearful, they tend to become less open and less generous.
3. When fearful, they blame others: freeloaders, illegal immigrants, bad parents, welfare cheats, etc.

Prepared using data provided by the Herndon Alliance. The Herndon Alliance is a coalition of 120 state, national, faith, labor and provider groups that agree on changing the conversation so that we can connect with the majority of Americans and achieve affordable health care for all Americans.