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Gingrich's daughters try to set tone before interview with ex-wife

By Justin Sink - 01/18/12 09:39 PM ET

The daughters of presidential candidate Newt Gingrich sent an open letter to the leadership of ABC News on Wednesday, addressing rumors that the network was prepared to air an interview with the former Speaker's second ex-wife, Marianne.

"The failure of a marriage is a terrible and emotional experience for everyone involved. Anyone who has had that experience understands it is a personal tragedy filled with regrets, and sometimes differing memories of events," Kathy Lubbers and Jackie Cushman wrote in a letter circulated by the campaign. "We will not say anything negative about our father's ex-wife. He has said before, privately and publicly, that he regrets any pain he may have caused in the past to people he loves."

Drudge Report [first reported](#) that Marianne Gingrich offered "her explosive revelations" to ABC News.

The Gingrich daughters' letter goes on to urge the network — and voters — to focus on their father's policy ideas for the future, rather than his past personal history. Gingrich has admitted to multiple infidelities and is twice divorced.

"ABC News or other campaigns may want to talk about the past, just days before an important primary election," the daughters wrote. "But Newt is going to talk to the people of South Carolina about the future — about job creation, lower taxes, and about who can

defeat Barack Obama by providing the sharpest contrast to his damaging, extreme liberalism.”

The interview has the potential to damage Gingrich’s personal image just as a new CNN poll shows him surging in the Palmetto State. Marianne Gingrich has said in the past that Gingrich asked for a divorce by telephone and carried out an affair during the time he was investigating then-President Clinton for lying about his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. She has also said that Gingrich proposed to her before his divorce from his first wife in 1981.

ABC News has not commented on whether it plans to air the interview, or what its contents are, although Drudge Report reported Wednesday that executives at the network were concerned that running the interview just before the pivotal South Carolina primary would be unfair to the candidate. The Associated Press, however, is reporting that ABC ultimately [decided to air the interview](#) as a segment on Thursday’s “Nightline” broadcast.