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Historic Gender Gap Isn't Enough to Propel Clinton to Victory in 2016 Presidential Race

New Brunswick, NJ—A clear gender difference in candidate preferences and an unusually large gender gap were evident in voting in the 2016 presidential race, according to an analysis of exit poll data by the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. A majority of women (54%) cast their ballots for Hillary Clinton, while a majority of men (52%) voted for Donald Trump, according to Edison Research.

Defined as the difference in the proportions of women and men voting for the winning candidate, a sizable 11 percentage-point gender gap was evident in the election results in 2016, with 41 percent of women and 52 percent of men voting for Trump. The gender gap in this year's presidential race is larger than in any year except 1996, when the gender gap for President Bill Clinton in his race with Senator Robert Dole was also 11 percentage points. There was a 10-point gender gap in the final vote for President Barack Obama in 2012 when he ran against Governor Mitt Romney. Other presidential elections since 1980 have seen gender gaps ranging from four to seven percentage points.

Even though Trump won a majority of white women's votes (52 percent), a gender gap was clearly apparent among white voters, with 62 percent of white men voting for Trump. Forty-three percent of white women, compared with 31 percent of white men, voted for Clinton. Clinton won the votes of large majorities of African American women (94 percent) and Latinas (69 percent), with smaller majorities of Black men (82 percent) and Latinos (63 percent) favoring Clinton.

Among white college graduates, a majority of women (51 percent) voted for Clinton, while a majority of men (53 percent) supported Trump. Among whites without a college degree, majorities of both women (61 percent) and men (71 percent) favored Trump.

In addition to the gender gap in the national vote, a gender gap ranging from 6 to 17 percentage points in women's and men's support for the victorious candidate, Trump, was apparent in all battleground states. Also notable: in each of these 12 key states, a majority/plurality of women voted for Clinton (see table below).

Susan J. Carroll, senior scholar at CAWP, observed, "If women's votes were the only ones deciding the outcome of the 2016 presidential race, Hillary Clinton clearly would have emerged the victor."

About CAWP

The Center for American Women and Politics, a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is a university-based research, education and public service center. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women's changing relationship to politics and government and to enhance women's influence and leadership in public life. CAWP is a leading authority in its field and a respected bridge between the academic and political worlds.

2016 Exit Poll Data:

Presidential Vote in Battleground States

State	Gender Gap	Women for Trump	Men for Trump	Women for Clinton	Men for Clinton
CO	10 pts.	39%	49%	55%	41%
FL	6 pts.	46%	52%	50%	43%
IA	17 pts.	44%	61%	51%	33%
MI	11 pts.	42%	53%	53%	41%
MN	6 pts.	43%	49%	50%	43%
NV	9 pts.	41%	50%	53%	42%
NH	12 pts.	41%	53%	54%	40%
NC	11 pts.	45%	56%	53%	40%
OH	13 pts.	46%	59%	49%	36%
PA	15 pts.	42%	57%	55%	40%
VA	13 pts.	39%	52%	56%	43%
WI	11 pts.	43%	54%	53%	40%

Presidential Vote Nationwide

	Gender Gap	Women for Trump	Men for Trump	Women for Clinton	Men for Clinton
All Voters	11 pts.	41%	52%	54%	41%
White Voters	10 pts.	52%	62%	43%	31%
Black Voters	9 pts.	4%	13%	94%	82%
Latino Voters	7 pts.	25%	32%	69%	63%
Married Voters	10 pts.	47%	57%	49%	37%
Unmarried Voters	12 pts.	32%	44%	62%	46%
White College Graduates	9 pts.	44%	53%	51%	39%
White Non-College-Graduates	10 pts.	61%	71%	34%	23%
Democrat Voters	2 pts.	7%	9%	91%	87%
Republican Voters	1 pt.	88%	89%	9%	7%
Independent Voters	8 pts.	42%	50%	47%	38%