

## THE GENDER GAP

### Voting Choices In Presidential Elections<sup>1</sup>

A gender gap in voting refers to a difference between the percentage of women and the percentage of men voting for a given candidate, generally the winning candidate. Even when women and men favor the same candidate, they may do so by different margins, resulting in a gender gap. In every presidential election since 1980, a gender gap has been apparent.

A gender gap was evident in the 2004 presidential election, with women 7 percentage points less likely than men to vote for George W. Bush. A majority of female voters preferred John Kerry, while a majority of male voters favored Bush.

A similar pattern was apparent in 2000, when women were 10 percentage points less likely than men to vote for George W. Bush. As in 2004, a majority of women preferred the Democratic candidate, Al Gore, while a majority of male voters favored Bush, the Republican candidate.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Presidential Candidates</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>(Source)</u>
<b>2004</b>	George W. Bush (R)	48%	55%	Edison Media Research
	John Kerry (D)	51%	41%	
<b>2000</b>	George W. Bush (R)	43%	53%	Voter News Service <sup>2</sup>
	Al Gore (D)	54%	42%	
	Ralph Nader (Green)	2%	3%	
<b>1996</b>	Bill Clinton (D)	54%	43%	Voter News Service
	Bob Dole (R)	38%	44%	
	Ross Perot (Reform)	7%	10%	
<b>1992</b>	Bill Clinton (D)	45%	41%	Voter News Service
	George Bush (R)	37%	38%	
	Ross Perot (Reform)	17%	21%	
<b>1988</b>	George H. W. Bush (R)	50%	57%	CBS News/ <i>New York Times</i> <sup>3</sup>
	Michael Dukakis (D)	49%	41%	
<b>1984</b>	Ronald Reagan (R)	56%	62%	CBS News/ <i>New York Times</i>
	Walter Mondale (D)	44%	37%	
<b>1980</b>	Ronald Reagan (R)	46%	54%	CBS News/ <i>New York Times</i>
	Jimmy Carter (D)	45%	37%	
	John Anderson (I)	7%	7%	

<sup>1</sup> For information on the gender gap on public policy issues, see CAWP's fact sheet "The Gender Gap: Attitudes Toward Public Policy Issues."

<sup>2</sup> *Voter News Service* is the service which was known as *Voter Research and Surveys* until 1993. It is referred to on this fact sheet by the newer name.

<sup>3</sup> From 1980 to 1988 major media outlets conducted separate exit polls. While not presented here, exit polls conducted by ABC News/Washington Post and NBC News showed gender gaps of similar magnitude to those evident in the CBS/*New York Times* poll results.

**A note to users of our fact sheets: Please credit the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University.**