

## THE GENDER GAP

### Attitudes on Public Policy Issues \*

The “gender gap” refers to differences between women and men in political attitudes and voting choices. Although the gender gap has historical roots, political differences between women and men have increased in scope and shown greater persistence in recent years. A gender gap has been apparent in voting behavior, party identification, evaluations of performances of recent presidents, and attitudes toward some public policy issues.\*\*

A gender gap is apparent in the way women and men respond to a variety of contemporary issues. Among many issues where gender gaps have been observed, recent polls have found that, compared with men, women are:

- more likely to favor a more activist role for government;
- more often opposed to U.S. military intervention in other countries;
- more supportive of programs to guarantee quality health care and meet basic human needs;
- more supportive of restrictions on firearms;
- more supportive of affirmative action and efforts to achieve racial equality.

#### ISSUES WHERE GENDER GAP IS FOUND

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Source</u>
<b>Role of Government</b>			
Do you believe the government is doing too much?			
Yes	50%	66%	Gallup for CNN/ <i>USA Today</i> , 6/96
If you had to choose, would you rather have a smaller government providing fewer services, or a bigger government providing more services?			
Smaller government	55%	67%	CBS/ <i>New York Times</i> , 2/96
Which of these statements comes closer to your own views -- even if neither is exactly right? “The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt.” OR “The government today can’t afford to do much more to help the needy.”			
Do more	53%	43%	Times Mirror Center for The People and The Press, 10/94
<b>Use of Military Force</b>			
Do you approve or disapprove of the presence of U.S. troops in Bosnia?			
Approve	37%	52%	Yankelovich for <i>Time/CNN</i> , 6/96
Would you favor or oppose the use of U.S. troops...if North Korea invades South Korea?			
Favor	30%	49%	Gallup for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 10/94

\* Information for this fact sheet is drawn from *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1995* (Scholarly Resources Inc., 1995), *The Public Perspective*, Volume 7, Number 5 (The Roper Center, August/September 1996), and *The People, The Press and Politics: The New Political Landscape* (Times Mirror Center for The People and The Press, October 1994).

\*\* For information on the gender gap on voting choices, party identification, and presidential performance ratings, see CAWP’s fact sheet “The Gender Gap: Voting Choices, Party Identification, and Presidential Performance Ratings.”

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

	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Source</u>
Which of these statements comes closer to your own views -- even if neither is exactly right?			
"The best way to ensure peace is through military strength." OR "Good diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace."			
Military strength	27%	45%	Times Mirror Center for The People and The Press, 10/94

Which of these statements comes closer to your own views -- even if neither is exactly right?			
"We should all be willing to fight for our country, whether it is right or wrong." OR "It's acceptable to refuse to fight in a war you believe is morally wrong."			
All should fight	46%	59%	Times Mirror Center for The People and The Press, 10/94

### Health Care and Human Needs

Do you favor cutting government spending on social programs?			
Favor	47%	60%	ABC News 8/96

In your view, should more be done to expand the availability of good, affordable child care, or is this something better left to families and individuals?			
Do more	63%	41%	Lake Research for Center for Policy Alternatives, 8/96

Do you think the government in Washington should guarantee medical care for all people who don't have health insurance, or isn't that the responsibility of the government in Washington?			
Should guarantee	69%	58%	CBS/ <i>New York Times</i> , 2/96

Do you agree or disagree that the federal government should see to it that every person who wants to work has a job?			
Agree	69%	57%	CBS/ <i>New York Times</i> , 2/96

How important a problem for the country is ...poverty and homelessness?			
One of the most important	63%	44%	Princeton Survey Research Associates for Knight-Ridder, 1/96

Do you favor or oppose [President Clinton's proposal to raise the minimum wage]?			
Favor	83%	72%	Gallup for CNN/ <i>USA Today</i> , 2-5/95

### Restrictions on Firearms

In general, do you feel that the laws covering the sale of firearms should be made more strict, less strict, or kept as they are now?

More strict	67%	57%	Gallup for CNN/ <i>USA Today</i> , 4/95
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Would you favor or oppose a ban on the manufacture, sale, and possession of certain semiautomatic guns known as assault rifles?

Favor	74%	61%	Gallup for CNN/ <i>USA Today</i> , 4/95
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### Affirmative Action and Racial Equality

Should affirmative action programs be continued or abolished?

Abolished	36%	52%	<i>The New York Times</i> /CBS, 9/96
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Do you favor or oppose affirmative action programs for blacks and other minority groups?

Favor	53%	41%	NBC/ <i>Wall Street Journal</i> , 9/95
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Do you think that women in this country have equal job opportunities with men, or not?

No	69%	59%	Gallup, 9/95
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