



# Finding Gender in Election 2016

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## Lessons from Presidential Gender Watch

*A Nonpartisan Project to Track, Analyze, and  
Illuminate Gender Dynamics in Election 2016*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Introduction

*In April 2015, the Barbara Lee Family Foundation (BLFF) and the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) launched Presidential Gender Watch 2016, a project to track, analyze, and illuminate gender dynamics in the 2016 presidential election. Together, BLFF and CAWP have spent decades conducting research on women running for office. With the help of expert scholars and practitioners, Presidential Gender Watch worked for 21 months to further public understanding of how gender influences candidate strategy, voter engagement and expectations, media coverage, and electoral outcomes in campaigns for the nation's highest executive office. On social media, in written analyses, and via public presentations, we raised questions, suggested answers, and sought to complicate popular discussions about gender's role in the presidential race by drawing upon the wealth of research and expertise that could best inform the gender dialogue on presidential politics.*

Threaded throughout our analyses were a few major points critical to viewing the 2016 presidential election through a gender lens:

- 1. Gender doesn't equal women.** Importantly, "gender" does not refer only to women, despite the tendency to assume analyzing gender necessarily means focusing on the beliefs, behaviors, treatment, or experiences of women. Such a focus tells only one part of the gender story. Looking through a gender lens requires understanding how gender shapes behaviors, evaluations, and outcomes for women and men. In 2016, that means realizing that all candidates played the gender card, and Trump perhaps most overtly of all in his performance of masculinity. Gender was also at play among both men and women voters, as was evident in polling on gender perceptions and reactions to candidate comments and behavior. If we ignore those ways that gender mattered and focus our analysis only on women, we risk normalizing and perpetuating a gender status quo that not only disproportionately disadvantages women, but also constrains men's political behavior in ways that retain power in performance of traditional masculinity.



**2. Gender is at play at various stages and sites in presidential politics.**

The presidency is a gendered institution, wherein power has been allocated to men and masculinity. Gender shapes behavior, interactions, and expectations of all actors engaged in presidential politics, from candidates and officeholders to media and voters. Importantly, just as stereotypes of gender and candidacy have long influenced presidential campaign dynamics, the way in which institutional actors navigate this campaign terrain contributes to the maintenance or disruption of prevailing norms. Disrupting the gender status quo of a political institution that has long advantaged masculinity and men requires understanding the many ways in which that status quo is manifested and maintained. We sought to do that in election 2016.

**3. Women are not monolithic; nor are men.**

Just as conversations around gender too often assume we are talking only about women, they frequently rely upon singular characterizations of women as voters or candidates, characterizations that ignore the rich diversity among women—ideologically, generationally, and across race and ethnicity, religion, class, or sexuality. Analyzing campaigns through an intersectional lens ensures a more complete picture of the myriad dynamics that influence perceptions, behavior, and evaluation. In 2016, this lens was often missing when assessing voter behavior. However, its importance was illuminated in interpretation of gender differences in vote choice in the primary and general elections. Just as men were not uniform in their preferences and did not vote for a candidate based upon shared anatomy, women were not monolithic in their candidate

choices and did not vote for the woman simply because they were women. In this way, voter behavior in 2016 was historically consistent in that gender affinity was not a primary indicator of men or women's votes.

**4. Gender is one piece of a complex story of what happened in the 2016 election.**

Few would argue that gender was the sole factor in either presidential candidate's victory or defeat, but ignoring the myriad ways in which gender shaped campaign decisions and dynamics would also paint an incomplete picture of what happened in 2016. In our analyses throughout the campaign and in this report, we focus on gender as one of many key influences in the election, interacting and functioning simultaneously with other influential factors in the campaign process, coverage, and outcomes.

In the remainder of this report, we tell parts of the gender story of the 2016 presidential race, recognizing that it is just one story to tell about an unprecedented election. That story begins with the gendered historical context in which 2016 should be evaluated. Then, we analyze gender disparities in institutional representation; gender bias from voters, media, and candidates; and gender performance by presidential candidates. We conclude by complicating the gender story around voters in election 2016.

By demonstrating the various ways in which gender shapes presidential campaigns, we hope to challenge the idea that talking about the politics of gender should end with a woman's defeat. The utility of applying a gender lens to presidential politics is persistent and enduring, and this report offers just one example of how it can be done.



## Putting 2016 in a Gendered Historical Context

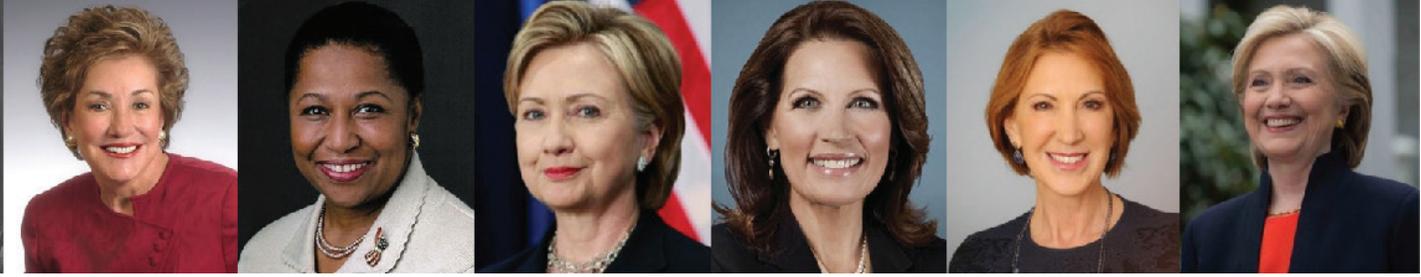
In 2016, for the **first time in U.S. history**, women competed for both major party presidential nominations; Hillary Clinton sought and won the Democratic nomination, and Carly Fiorina competed unsuccessfully for the Republican nomination for president. In addition, Jill Stein ran as the Green Party nominee, reprising her role from 2012. While Hillary Clinton put 63 million more cracks in the glass ceiling of presidential politics as the first woman to be a major party nominee and the first woman to win the national popular vote, she stood on the shoulders of women who have chipped away at gender barriers to the presidency for 145 years.

The first woman to run for president, Victoria Woodhull, competed in 1872, nearly a half a century before women could even vote in presidential elections. Ninety-two years later, Republican Senator Margaret Chase Smith (ME) became the first woman to have her name placed in nomination at a major party presidential convention. Representative Shirley Chisholm (NY) broke that barrier in the Democratic party, winning 152 delegate votes at the 1972 Democratic convention. Chisholm, the first black woman elected to the U.S. Congress, was also the first black candidate to win delegate votes for a major party presidential nomination. While more women ran for Democratic and Republican presidential nominations over the next three decades, it was not until 2008 that another woman won any major party primary contests. In 2008, Hillary Clinton lost a hard-fought battle for the Democratic nomination to Barack Obama. She won

23 primary contests nationwide before conceding defeat in June 2008. Just two months later, Governor Sarah Palin (AK) became the second woman placed on a major party presidential ballot as Republican nominee John McCain's running mate; Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro (D-NY) had been the first woman major party vice presidential nominee in 1984.

In their bids for the nation's highest elected office, each of these women confronted and challenged the masculine dominance of the presidency. **Georgia Duerst-Lahti (1997)** describes the presidency as a gendered space in which masculine norms and images are reified as the ideal. Beyond the implicit assumption of strength and power—not traditionally attributed to women—executives are imagined as singular masculine leaders, “heroes,” “protectors,” and “great men,” presumed to act alone. Our collective imagination of who can and should be president remains stunted by a reluctance either to fully accept female leaders as sufficiently masculine to fit this role or to envision the presidency in less strictly masculine terms.

**Jackson Katz (2016)** argues, “Presidential politics are the site of an ongoing cultural struggle over the meaning of American manhood” (1). From our earliest elections, men have competed to prove they are man enough—or the manliest candidates—for the job. In 1840, Martin Van Buren was rumored to wear a corset, demonstrating the frequent reliance on feminization tactics to discredit presidential contenders. Ronald Reagan challenged Walter Mondale to an arm-wrestling contest in 1984, and Rick Perry called for a pull-up contest against Donald Trump in the early days of election 2016, both shifting the site of presidential competition to tests of physical strength.



But men are not alone reinforcing masculine norms of presidential office. Women candidates have also balanced disrupting the status quo with adapting to it en route to the Oval Office. In preparing for her 2008 bid, Hillary Clinton was **advised by her top strategist** that voters “do not want someone who would be the first mama,” but are open to casting ballots for the “first father president.” Adhering to this logic, Clinton ran a campaign that worked to establish masculine credentials long expected of U.S. presidents instead of discussing the distinct value of electing a woman to the White House. But accepting masculine dominance still presents problems for women running for executive office. As **Duerst-Lahti (2014)** explains, “Presidential elections also present real challenges for women, who must exhibit masculine characteristics (probably better than males) while retaining their femininity if they want to succeed; they must find the perfect blend of pantsuits and pearls” (31).

Clinton sought more of this blend in 2016 than she did in 2008, when she repeatedly reminded voters that she was “not running as a woman.” In her second bid for the presidency, though, she did more than “find the perfect blend of pantsuits and pearls.” Clinton mainstreamed gender in her campaign performance, agenda, and strategy in 2016 in ways that altered the image and expectations of presidential leadership, challenging masculine dominance instead of adapting to it. In those ways, Clinton made presidential history beyond winning a spot on the general election ballot.

Donald Trump’s success, however, showed how history was also repeated in 2016. In multiple ways, his victory signaled the re-entrenchment of presidential masculinity, whether through his strategy and behavior or in the public’s acceptance of the

misogyny evident in his campaign and his past. Importantly, as Katz (2016) notes, it was the *white* masculinity that dominated presidential politics until 2008 that appeared to be favored in election 2016. At a **post-election event with The Atlantic underwritten by Presidential Gender Watch**, scholar and commentator Melissa Harris-Perry pushed back against perceptions that the public’s willingness to accept the sexism and racism associated with Trump was anything new to presidential politics. She **said**, “I am not even vaguely surprised that sexual assault would not even be a disqualifier for the American presidency. In fact, I was mostly irritated every time people would say, ‘Oh God, we can’t have a racist be the American president,’ because I kept wondering, ‘Since when?’ In fact, for most of American history, racism has been a pre-requisite to win the American presidency...and the same was certainly true with sexism.”

*Our collective imagination of who can and should be president remains stunted.*

Harris-Perry’s comments demonstrate the importance of placing the 2016 election, and the gender dynamics therein, in historical context. It is only in that context that the masculine dominance of presidential politics can be truly understood and the potential disruption (or reinforcement) of it in the latest presidential contest can be analyzed.

**For sources referenced in and supplementary to this section, please visit page 32.**

## Ready for a Woman? Voter Expectations and Perceptions of Gender in 2016

Many indicators suggested that the public seemed quite ready to elect a woman president in 2016. Presidential Gender Watch kept track of [all polls asking about perceptions of and willingness to vote for a woman president](#). *Gallup* found in June 2015 that 92% (91% R, 97% D) of Americans said they would be willing to vote for a well-qualified woman if their party nominated her. A few months later, a [Suffolk University poll](#) found 95% (92% R, 97% D) of Americans prepared to vote for a qualified woman candidate for president. A CBS poll in June 2016 found that the percentage of voters saying the U.S. was ready to elect a woman for president doubled over the past two decades.

But these data do not mean that voters do not see, or are not influenced by, gender in evaluating candidates. Voter perceptions of men and women candidates are guided by stereotypes of both gender and candidacy. While expectations of gender and candidacy are often complementary for men, they are often contradictory for women, who face distinct challenges in proving they are *both* man enough to do the job and women enough to appear authentic. More specifically, research shows that the traits and issue expertise often most desired for officeholders are those most often associated with men and masculinity.<sup>1</sup>

These stereotypes of both gender and political leadership are evolving, according to more recent studies, but gender differences remain in perceived qualities and capabilities of candidates, and—importantly—in what we most desire in our political leaders, especially presidents. For example, 25% of voters told [Pew](#) in 2015 that women are not tough enough for politics, and 37% of those surveyed said men were better than women at dealing with national security and defense. An August 2016 [Associated Press survey](#) found that nearly 30% of those surveyed reported a woman president would not be tough enough to handle a military crisis or keep

the country safe from terrorism, and just over 20% were skeptical about a woman president's ability to make hard decisions. In Presidential Gender Watch's post-election [interview](#) with author and expert Juliette Kayyem, she emphasized the dominance of national security concerns in voter decisions in election 2016, making these disparities in perception even more salient in shaping election outcomes. While the majority of respondents did not cite these distinctly gendered disadvantages for women, the findings demonstrate that today's campaign terrain is not gender neutral.

Aside from these implicit biases, overt sexism was also evident among some voters in 2016, particularly those opposed to Hillary Clinton. From chants of "Trump that Bitch" to paraphernalia claiming "Hillary sucks, but not like Monica" or "Life's a bitch—don't vote for one," attacks on Clinton were often explicitly tied to her womanhood. Even rhetoric from some Democratic primary voters played into these gendered tropes, like when one Bernie Sanders supporter shared an invitation to a ["Bern the Witch" debate watching party](#) on the campaign's Facebook page.



*Overt sexism was evident in paraphernalia some voters purchased, such as the "Trump that Bitch" bumper sticker. (Charles Ledford/Getty)*

The gender bias of these attacks is hard to deny. But even those calling Clinton a bitch would likely

deny that her gender was the reason they were voting against her. Presidential Gender Watch guest expert Melanye Price offers a concept to identify a more complex brand of gender bias in her [writing on “aversive sexism.”](#) She defines aversive sexism as discriminatory beliefs or behavior justified on the basis of factors other than gender, noting that we need to recognize the ways in which gender bias shapes voter reactions and responses, even if compounded by other factors.

Beyond this concept, some additional polling data from 2016 might help to illuminate the reluctance of some voters to support the woman running for the nation’s highest office. A [Public Religion Research Institute \(PRRI\) poll](#) released in the spring of 2016 found that 50% of Trump supporters said that it benefits society for men and women to stick to roles for which they are naturally suited. By the fall of 2016, 64% of Republican respondents to another [PRRI poll](#) said that society as a whole had become too soft and feminine. While few would argue that voters rejected Hillary Clinton simply because she would be the first woman president, these data evidence resistance to the perceived feminization of leadership or disruption of established gender roles that electing a female commander-in-chief might represent.

A [PerryUdem study](#) from early 2017 found that men also underestimate the frequency of sexist treatment experienced by women. In fact, the majority of Trump’s male supporters in the fall of 2016 felt that they were the victims of gender discrimination, according to [PRRI](#); 58% of Trump supporters surveyed in fall 2016 agreed that “these days society seems to punish men just for acting like men.” In a [column](#) for *The Atlantic*, Peter Beinart explained these perceptions by referring to “[precarious manhood theory](#),” wherein social psychologists posit that manhood must be earned and maintained while womanhood is presumed natural and permanent. Beinart explains that if manhood can be earned, it can also be lost. Thus, women’s taking of power traditionally allocated to men is threatening and can yield a [backlash](#) by those who benefit most from the status quo, as well

as a longing for an earlier era in which manhood—at least for some men—felt less precarious. There is perhaps no more explicit example of this sentiment than a meme that went viral in August 2016. It claimed Clinton was engaged in a “[vaganda of manocide](#),” characterizing her campaign as a direct threat to men. Dan Cassino offered more explicit [evidence](#) of “gender role threat” negatively affecting Clinton’s ratings among men in an experimental setting, finding that reminders of gender role disruption caused a decrease in Clinton’s male support.

These data serve as important reminders that reported willingness to vote for a woman president does not mean that gender is absent from voters’ evaluations or treatment of the men and women who run for the nation’s highest office. Gender stereotypes persist in voter perceptions of candidate traits and issue expertise, and—for some—motivate more overt sexism in the ways and rhetoric by which women candidates are opposed. Even if these gender stereotypes do not directly affect how voters cast their ballots, as [Dolan \(2014\)](#) has shown, that does not mean that they do not matter at all. [Campaigns address gender](#) in drafting and executing campaign strategy to be sure that it will not be determinative in candidates’ victory or defeat. At the presidential level, this often means reinforcing—instead of disrupting—masculine norms.

*Reported willingness to vote for a woman president does not mean that gender is absent from voters’ evaluations or treatment of the men and women who run for the nation’s highest office.*

**For sources referenced in and supplementary to this section, please visit [page 33](#).**

## Looking and Sounding Presidential

In May 2016, Donald Trump **asked** a California audience, “Do you think Hillary looks presidential? I don’t think so.” He added, “And I’m not going to say it, because I’m not allowed to say it, because I want to be politically correct. So I refuse to say that I cannot stand her screaming into the microphone all the time.” Trump was not alone in criticizing Clinton’s appearance and vocal tone in election 2016. Moreover, women candidates are accustomed to this attention to style over substance, as they have historically faced disproportionate coverage and commentary on things like **hair**, **hemlines**, **husbands**, and **the horse race** compared with what their male counterparts experience.

Particularly accustomed to combatting heightened scrutiny of how she looks, Hillary Clinton sought to control the narrative around her appearance in her presidential bid. She frequently **joked** about her hair and **made her pantsuits a trademark** of her

campaign. But that did not mean that Clinton was immune from this line of attack. Trump repeated his claims that Clinton did not fit the presidential image at campaign rallies and in a **September 2016 interview** with ABC’s David Muir. Asked to clarify his critique, Trump told Muir, “I just don’t think she has a

***U.S. presidents have looked male for 228 years. Clinton does not. ... she doesn’t have the “presidential look” that has, until now, seemed to be required of those sitting in the Oval Office.***

presidential look, and you need a presidential look.” In his comments, Trump taps into the gendered reality that U.S. presidents have looked male for 228 years. Clinton does not. Hence, she doesn’t have the “presidential look” that has, until now, seemed to be required of those sitting in the Oval Office.

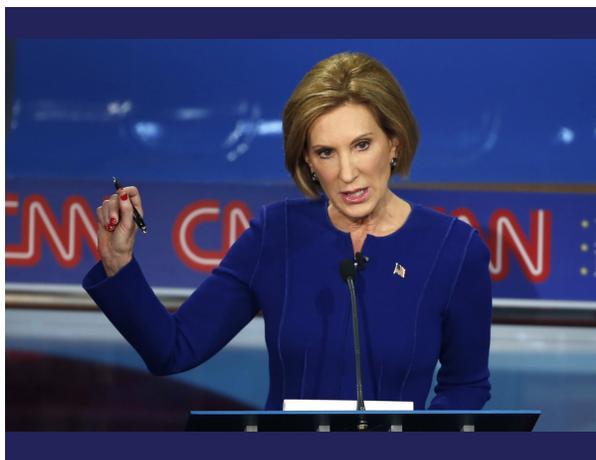


*The Clinton campaign sought to control the narrative around her appearance from the earliest days of her presidential bid.*

(@Hillary Clinton/Instagram, June 10, 2015)

If having the presidential look means adapting to masculine images of political leadership, then women candidates are also challenged by parallel pressures to meet certain expectations of feminine beauty or expression. Trump played into these tropes when he questioned the attractiveness of both women running for president in 2016. Speaking at an October 2016 rally, he **recalled** a moment from that week’s presidential debate with Clinton: “The other day I’m standing at my podium and she walks in front of me, right? She walks in front of me and when she walked in front of me, believe me, I wasn’t impressed.” More overtly, he criticized Carly Fiorina’s

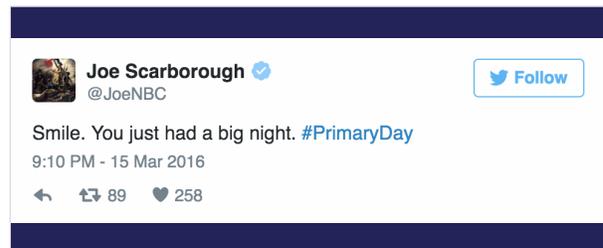
looks in a 2015 [interview](#) with *Rolling Stone*, telling them, “Look at that face! Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president?! I mean, she’s a woman, and I’m not s’posedta say bad things, but really, folks, come on. Are we serious?” Fiorina, when asked to respond to Trump’s comments at a GOP debate, curtly [stated](#), “I think women all over this country heard very clearly what Mr. Trump said.” If they didn’t already, Fiorina’s political action committee made sure that women knew of Trump’s comments; they put out an ad titled “[Faces](#)” in which Fiorina urges women of all ages to look at their “faces of leadership” and be “proud of every line and every wrinkle.” Similarly, Fiorina effectively [shut down](#) the co-hosts of *The View* when they said that she “looked demented” at an October 2015 debate, calling for heightened discourse in the presidential race.



At a GOP primary debate in September 2015, Fiorina responded to Trump’s comments on her looks, stating, “I think women all over this country heard very clearly what Mr. Trump said.” (Lucy Nicholson / REUTERS)

While these attacks provided reminders that women are held to different standards of attractiveness, the backlash to them also evidenced the unwillingness of many voters and media alike to accept these critiques as appropriate for presidential contenders. Still, the resistance to sexist commentary did not deter some in the media, particularly men, from

calling on the women running to smile more or—more generally—adapt to accepted standards for feminine expression. CNN commentator Michael Smerconish hit Fiorina for not smiling at all in the first GOP debate, [adding](#), “There are times to be serious, but you’ve got to loosen it up a little bit.” MSNBC host Joe Scarborough called on Clinton to do the same, famously [tweeting](#), “Smile. You just had a big night,” while Clinton was giving a victory speech in March 2016. Despite backlash to Scarborough’s comment, critiques of Clinton’s expressions of emotion continued for the remainder of the campaign. During her convention speech, *The Atlantic* editor Steve Clemons [tweeted](#) that Clinton should smile and “modulate” her voice. *Nevada Independent* editor Jon Ralston [tweeted](#) “Finally, she smiled!” as her speech concluded.



Joe Scarborough’s tweet instructing Clinton to smile during a primary night victory speech was met with backlash on social media, held up as an example of gendered likability standards. (@JoeNBC/Twitter)

Criticism of candidates’ facial expressions is not necessarily indicative of gender bias, but the media’s lack of scrutiny of male candidates’ smiles (or lack thereof) demonstrated the double standard by which women were evaluated in 2016; while the rarity of Trump’s smiles was noted by some, few criticized it as a character flaw. Because women are expected to appear likable by feminine standards, their serious faces, even if appropriate for serious settings, violate gender norms in ways that may make observers, especially men, uncomfortable.

Strong voices from women candidates also appeared to irk men in election 2016. While Bernie Sanders’ “shouting” was a staple of his style on the

stump, it was Hillary Clinton who was repeatedly accused by male journalists and commentators of “shouting,” yielding direct admonishments from them and reprisals of the “shrill” claims made against her in 2008. She **responded** to those critiques, telling her supporters, “First of all, I’m not shouting. It’s just when women talk, some people think we’re shouting.” Research backs up Clinton’s claim. Stanford linguist Penny Eckert **says** that Clinton’s “loud and clear voice” cues power and defies expectations of the “breathy voice” associated with “a ‘nice’ woman.” She explains, “If somebody doesn’t want a woman to be powerful they’re not going to like that voice.” Male candidates also expressed their disdain for women candidates’ voices, perhaps implicitly noting their aversion to women’s power. Both Marco Rubio and Jeb Bush **complained** that Clinton was “lecturing” them or voters, and Donald Trump **tweeted**, “I just realized that if you listen to Carly Fiorina for more than ten minutes straight, you develop a massive headache.” A month later he **warned**, “Hillary’s becoming very shrill.”

NPR linguist Geoffrey Nunberg **told** *New Republic* that aggression in female speech is more often interpreted as “shrill.” It also denotes anger, which hurts women more than men, according to a **2015 research experiment** by psychologists Jessica Salerno and Liana Peter-Hagene. They find that in the context of debate, men tend to gain influence as they become angry, while women tend to lose it. After Clinton won four of five primaries on

March 15, 2016, Fox News host Brit Hume **tweeted**, “Hillary having a big night in the primaries. So she’s shouting angrily in her victory speech.

***Implicit biases...can easily distort how we all hear women candidates.***

Supporters loving it. What’s she mad at?” Implicit biases like these can easily distort how we all hear women candidates, the traits with which we associate speaking style, and the degree to which we deem types of speech as appropriate for potential presidential officeholders.



*Male journalists and commentators repeatedly accused Clinton of “shouting.” Clinton responded to those critiques, stating, “It’s just when women talk, some people think we’re shouting.” (@DavidAxelrod/Twitter, @BritHume/Twitter, @SCClemons/Twitter, @Hillary Clinton/Twitter)*

Despite this evidence of gender biases in presidential coverage, journalists and commentators in 2016 also intervened to problematize perceived sexism to a greater degree than they had in elections past. Fox News host Greta Van Susteren called out *New Yorker* columnist Rick Hertzberg for telling Clinton to “lower her voice,” **quipping**, “I missed Hertzberg’s tweet telling @BernieSanders to lower his voice, too.” And in response to Joe Scarborough’s recommendation that Clinton smile more, comedian and host Samantha Bee **launched** a viral Twitter campaign with the hashtag **#SmileforJoe**, tapping into the

frustration felt by women who perceive recommendations to “look pretty” as both condescending and disempowering. Feminist voices like these broke through on both social media and mainstream outlets in the 2016 presidential election, providing evidence of both evolution in and disruption of the policing of political women’s styles of expression in presidential campaigns.



*Journalists and commentators in 2016 also intervened to problematize perceived sexism to a greater degree than they had in elections past.*  
 (@Greta/Twitter, @FullFrontalSamB/Twitter)

For sources referenced in and supplementary to this section, please visit page 34.

## Up to Standards

### MASCULINITY

When *Washington Post* columnist Dana Milbank **praised** Hillary Clinton after her first primary debate as a “man among boys,” he provided evidence that masculinity is the standard by which presidential competency is measured. In his choice of a single word, Milbank associated the positive characteristics he credited to Clinton—experience, composure and appearing presidential—with men instead of women. While likely unintentional, his characterization stripped Clinton of her role as powerful *woman* by implying that her power was earned by becoming more like a man. Her success, in this characterization, came in adapting to a man’s world instead of disrupting it. **Presidential Gender Watch** joined **journalists** and critics in calling out Milbank’s turn of phrase, resulting in his quick “**surrender**” and shift to calling Clinton “a Woman among boys.”



*Presidential Gender Watch joined journalists and critics in calling out Milbank’s gendered turn of phrase.*  
 (@Milbank/Twitter, @Genderwatch2016/Twitter, @Milbank/Twitter)

Media also hold men to stereotypical standards of masculinity, but critics are less likely to call it out as sexist than when those same standards are applied to women. In 2016, Republican candidate Marco Rubio was **ridiculed** for wearing supposedly feminine high-heeled boots and was **characterized** by *The Daily Beast* as “wimping out” after he apologized for going too far in his personal insults against Donald Trump. During the Republican primary, the *New Yorker* **satirized** male candidates Chris Christie and Marco Rubio’s “sleepover” at Mitt Romney’s estate, characterizing the men as tween girls engaged in pillow fights and talking about boys. These jabs at male candidates perpetuate expectations that a deficit in masculinity is a demerit for office holding and, even more, that stereotypically feminine expression by men is un-presidential.

*While both men and women running for president are expected to meet masculine candidacy standards, there are also standards for electoral success that are differently applied based on candidate gender.*

While both men and women running for president are expected to meet masculine candidacy standards, there are also standards for electoral success

that are differently applied based on candidate gender. In 2016, campaign discourse on candidate likability and authenticity, as well as honesty and ethics, provides evidence of persistent double standards by which women candidates are evaluated.

## LIKABILITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Research by the Barbara Lee Family Foundation has shown that likability matters more for women candidates than it does for men. More specifically, evaluations of women’s qualifications for office are tied to perceptions of their likability in a way that is not seen for men. Failing to succeed in proving she is both qualified and likable can undermine a woman’s candidacy, creating an additional burden on women’s campaigns to strike a balance between masculine and feminine behavior, between

toughness and niceness, in a way that meets stereotypical expectations of gender and candidacy, or at least reduces the backlash to stereotype disruption.

In 2016, Carly Fiorina competed for the Republican nomination amidst a group of arguably unlikable men. But it was only Fiorina’s persona that merited a *Raw Story* **headline** reading, “Not even a room full of puppies can make Carly Fiorina likable.” Attention to Hillary Clinton’s likability also outpaced concerns about the unfavorability or relatability of her two major opponents—Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump. She was asked why voters could not warm to her in multiple public forums, while few asked Sanders how he could contest his curmudgeonly reputation or asked Trump what he could do to rehabilitate his image. In these ways, media coverage reinforced the heightened scrutiny women face in meeting expectations of feminine warmth and likability, forcing them to do additional work to meet the double standards to which they were held.



*Media attention to Clinton and Fiorina’s likability seemed to outpace concerns about the unfavorability or relatability of their male opponents.*  
(Raw Story, Washington Post, The New York Times)

That type of strategic work also addresses the related challenge of meeting expectations of authenticity, an **increasingly important determinant** in presidential voting.<sup>2</sup> Communication scholar Shawn Parry-Giles wrote a 2014 **book** outlining the news media’s preoccupation with concerns over Hillary Clinton’s

authenticity from 1992 to 2008, illuminating the ways in which gender complicates conceptions of what counts as authentic. That preoccupation persisted in the 2016 presidential race, where multiple journalists and commentators asked about Clinton’s “authenticity problem” or criticized her for being “too fake.” Whether or not she was confronted with these questions more than male candidates is unknown, and many would point to Mitt Romney’s authenticity struggles in 2012 as evidence that this scrutiny is not distinctly gendered. However, proving authenticity can present distinctive challenges to women and men, whether due to the axes on which that authenticity is measured or the standards by which it is earned. For women candidates, the pressure to prove professional and political credentials can present hurdles to humanization. It is assumed that women, as political outsiders, have to “act” the part of candidate and officeholder in order to meet both the “masculine credentials for the job and the feminine credentials of being a “real” woman, while being authentically male also means that a man is meeting the expectations of executive office.

## HONESTY AND ETHICS

Just as voters seek authenticity in presidential candidates, they also value honesty and ethical behavior. However, **research** on gender stereotypes reveals that they may be less likely to expect honesty and ethical behavior from men than from women. As a result, it is entirely possible that women candidates might be held to *higher* standards than men when it comes to honesty and ethics in their pasts and on the campaign trail. Moreover, as **Barbara Lee Family Foundation research** has found, women’s punishment for dishonest or unethical behavior is often harsher and harder to overcome. This double standard may help to explain the differences in attention to and influence of Clinton and Trump’s indiscretions over the course of election 2016. It may also explain the strategic decision for the Trump campaign to characterize Clinton as “crooked” from day one and to encourage chants of “lock her up” at Trump campaign events. These tactics not only undermined Clinton’s credibility, but knocked her

off the pedestal upon which stereotypes of feminine virtue place women.

According to the **Shorenstein Center**, coverage of Clinton’s scandals—primarily emails—accounted for 19% of her news coverage in the final 13 weeks of the campaign, fueled in large part by FBI Director Comey’s letter to Congress ten days ahead of Election Day informing them that he was re-opening the investigation into Clinton’s emails. The same study revealed that 15% of Trump’s news coverage focused on scandal in the final three months of the 2016 campaign, including accusations and an on-tape admission of sexual assault, a lack of transparency over tax payments, fraud at Trump University, and a long series of allegations against Trump’s use of his foundation for inappropriate and illegal purposes. But the damage to Trump appeared short-lived, whether because his supporters discounted

the seriousness or evidence of his ethical violations. Though we cannot know to what extent concerns about Clinton’s transparency affected election results, her failure to meet stereotypical expectations of honesty and ethics may have had more detrimental effects on voter evaluations than if she were a man. Even more, voter skepticism of her principles made her attempts to position herself as morally superior to Trump more difficult.

Together, these examples demonstrate how women face different challenges to meeting the same standards as men and show that, in some cases, the standards are differently applied. Understanding the potential for gender influence in these more nuanced ways is essential to rejecting all-or-nothing characterizations of gender bias in presidential campaigns. Presidential Gender Watch sought to navigate this terrain with care in 2015 and 2016, never seeking to be a sexism watchdog, but instead

*[Clinton’s] failure to meet stereotypical expectations of honesty and ethics may have had more detrimental effects on voter evaluations than if she were a man.*

shedding light on how underlying gender stereotypes may alter the way in which media reports, opponents' attacks, or candidate behavior are digested and interpreted by voters, whether the intent of reporters or candidates is biased or not. For example, calling Clinton "secretive" is not objectively sexist, as **one group claimed** early on in the 2016 election; journalists seek greater transparency from *all* public officials. But emphasizing Clinton's

*Looking critically and with complexity at the role of gender in the 2016 presidential election is necessary to identify potential opportunities for rethinking or reinterpreting the standards by which men and women are deemed presidential.*

secrecy raises questions about her honesty in ways that may be more damaging to women than men. Similarly, concerns about Clinton's likability could have more direct effects on perceptions that she was qualified to be president and may have complicated her capacity to meet expectations of authenticity.

Instead of claiming media, candidate, or voter behavior or commentary is **sexist or not**, analyzing the ways in which coverage and evaluations are gendered yields a more complete picture of how and where underlying expectations of masculinity, femininity, and candidacy affect campaign discourse and outcomes and shape the standards to which candidates are held. Looking critically and with complexity at the role of gender in the 2016 presidential election is necessary to identify potential opportunities for rethinking or reinterpreting the standards by which men and women are deemed presidential.

**For sources referenced in and supplementary to this section, please visit page 35.**

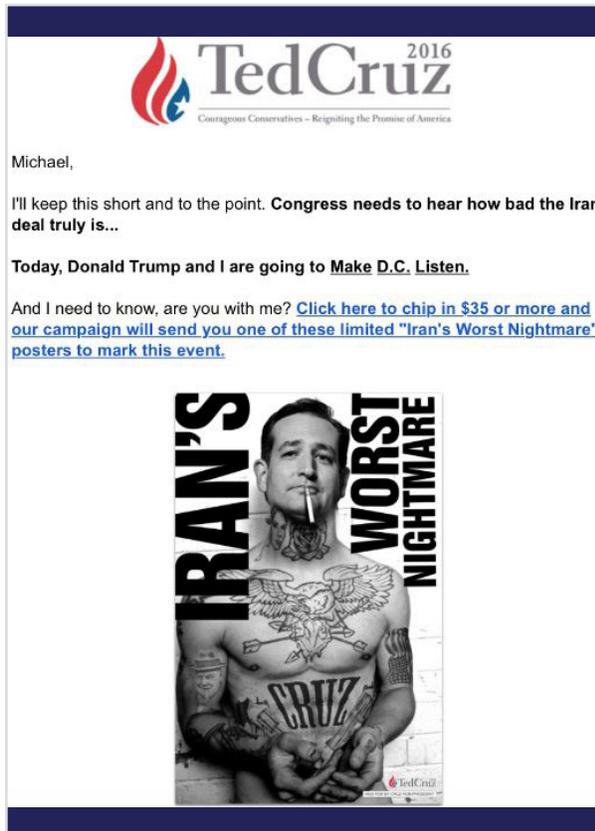
## Playing the Gender Card or Expanding the Deck?

Early on in the presidential election, Hillary Clinton was **accused** of "playing the gender card" for embracing her gender identity on the campaign trail. In reality, **all candidates "play the gender card"** in the ways in which they **navigate** gender norms and expectations in political campaigns. For most of American history, that has meant that presidential candidates—male and female—have worked to prove they are "man enough" for the job.

Presidential Gender Watch sought to expose the style and tactics by which all candidates played into or against gender stereotypes in election 2016, revealing the ways in which masculine dominance of the presidency was disrupted or maintained not simply in the sex of the candidates, but in the behaviors, values, and agendas they espoused. In some cases, candidates offered examples of adapting to the existing rules of the game, playing the masculinity card to meet expectations of the office. At other times, they expanded the deck of cards that can be played to make a persuasive case for the presidency.

### PLAYING THE MASCULINITY CARD

From the early days of the campaign, male candidates put forth images to tout their literal strength, whether via **muscle, force, or athleticism**. They also engaged in **"tough talk,"** repeatedly describing how they would "hunt down and destroy" ISIS, kill terrorists, or bomb cities to protect the homeland, utilizing the language of war to make the case that they should be commander-in-chief. Importantly, these displays of masculinity are not limited to men. Carly Fiorina adopted equally aggressive rhetoric in 2016 when she **vowed**, "We need the strongest military on the face of the planet, and everyone needs to know it."



*Displays of masculinity were a campaign tactic in the 2016 presidential race, one the Cruz campaign employed in the above fundraising email. (@TeddyGoff/Twitter)*

Another strategy for touting toughness and strength is to characterize opponents as weak. Donald Trump adopted this emasculation strategy most overtly in election 2016. He called Ben Carson “super low energy” and repeatedly referred to Jeb Bush as “really weak.” He nicknamed Marco Rubio “**little Marco**” and called him a “**frightened little puppy**,” characterizing fear—stereotypically associated with feminine vulnerability—as a liability to presidential leadership. Trump consistently questioned Hillary Clinton’s strength and stamina, saying as early as **December 2015**, “Hillary’s not strong. Hillary’s weak, frankly. She’s got no stamina. She’s got nothing.” In a post-convention address on national security, he **argued** she “lacks the mental and physical stamina to take on ISIS, and all the many adversaries we face.” In one of Trump’s final campaign ads (“**Dangerous**”),

he featured images of Clinton fainting and being helped up stairs, with a voiceover claiming, “Hillary Clinton doesn’t have the fortitude, strength or stamina to lead in our world.” Questioning Clinton’s strength, stamina, and mental stability not only played into Trump’s attempts to prove himself as the strongest and toughest candidate, but also capitalized on gender stereotypes of feminine instability and weakness—whether physical or emotional. For those who may still question whether women are tough enough to be commander-in-chief, Trump’s attacks stoked those flames without ever explicitly invoking gender.

Trump was not the only candidate aiming to emasculate his opponents to prove his own manhood. In the Republican primary, Marco Rubio took the bait in the battle over masculinity and countered Trump’s claims that he was “lightweight” by **arguing** that Trump has “never punched anyone in the face,” adding, “Donald Trump is the first guy who begged for Secret Service protection, the first guy.” Rubio’s rebuttal bought into the politics of manhood and emasculation by suggesting that seeking Secret Service protection is a sign of weakness; tough guys don’t need protection, Rubio implies, especially if they throw the first punch. Rubio went on to **criticize** Trump for having small hands, telling an audience, “You know what they say about men with small hands...,” and implying in the most literal sense that Trump was not man enough to be president.

In an **April 2016 interview** on Fox News, Trump explained that “so many women that really want to have protection....and they like me for that reason,” arguing that women viewed him as the candidate best poised to protect them. With this message, Trump sought to prove his masculinity in another way, making claims of “masculinist protection.” Scholar **Iris Marion Young (2003)** defines masculinist protection as “that associated with the position of male head of household as a protector of the family, and, by extension, with

*Another strategy for touting toughness and strength is to characterize opponents as weak.*

masculine leaders and risk takers as protectors of a population” (3). On the campaign trail, Trump reinforced an image of protector by emphasizing that he would restore law and order and, at times, assuring parents who had lost children at the hands of undocumented immigrants—including “**Angel Moms**”—that he would make policy to prevent other parents from experiencing that same type of grief. Trump’s protectionist rhetoric was most explicit in one of his final campaign advertisements (“**Dangerous**”), where the concluding image read, “Donald Trump will protect you. He is the only one who can.” As Young contends, candidates who position themselves as masculine protectors draw upon quite basic conditions of patriarchal or paternalistic masculinity that position men as dominant in relation to more vulnerable or dependent women.



*Trump’s protectionist rhetoric was most explicit in one of his final campaign advertisements (“Dangerous”).*  
(Theil Daniel/YouTube)

Trump’s claims of masculinist protection were undermined, however, by the toxic masculinity evident in his comments about and treatment of women before and during the 2016 campaign. In past remarks, he reduced women to “a piece of ass,” repeatedly tied their attractiveness to worth, and called women names like “fat pig,” “Miss Piggy,” and “dog.” During the 2016 election cycle, he fired back at women who questioned him by calling them “neurotic,” “wacky,” or “nasty,” and condoned even worse name-calling among his supporters. In response to his own on-tape admission and

subsequent allegations of sexual assault, Trump doubled down on misogynist messages—excusing his remarks as “**locker room banter**” and mass backlash to them as “**nothing more than a distraction from the important issues.**” He went on to try to discredit those making the assault claims by reinforcing misogynist tropes, denying that he could have assaulted some of the women because they are not attractive enough (“**Look at her! I don’t think so**”) and discounting assault of another because she works in the adult film industry (“**Oh, I’m sure she’s never been grabbed before**”).

The success of Trump’s emasculation tactics and the fact that sexist behavior was not disqualifying to his candidacy demonstrate that the balance of gender power in the presidency remains tilted toward men and masculinity.

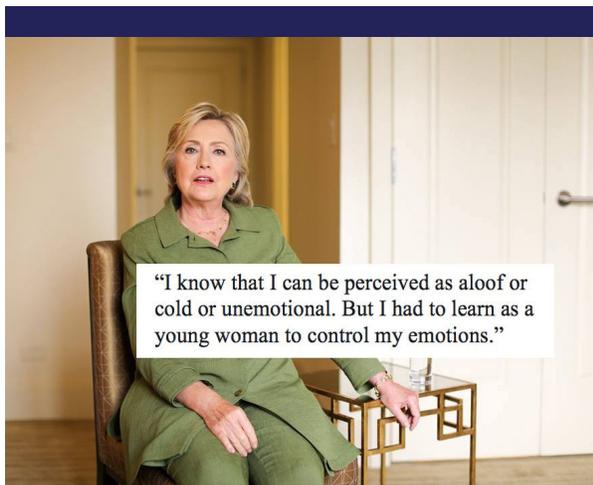
## EXPANDING THE DECK

The persistence of masculine dominance does not preclude some institutional disruption. Beyond making history as the first female presidential nominee, Hillary Clinton played the gender card in 2016 in ways that not only opened the door for women to embrace gender as an electoral asset at all levels of office, but expanded the deck of cards—gender and otherwise—from which presidential candidates can draw to prove they are credentialed and capable of being commander-in-chief.

One way to disrupt the gender status quo in presidential politics is to redefine masculinity or offer new routes to meeting masculine credentials expected of presidential candidates and office-holders. In 2016, some candidates contributed to such change. Hillary Clinton and Carly Fiorina, both of whom had previously adopted the same tough talk as their male peers, also offered different conceptions of presidential power. At a **Republican debate**, Fiorina emphasized, “Talking tough is not the same as being strong.” This nuance, perhaps reflective of her understanding of the hurdle women often face in proving toughness credentials, was echoed by Hillary Clinton when she argued in a **campaign address** on foreign policy, “Promising

to carpet bomb until the desert glows doesn't make you sound strong, it makes you sound like you're in over your head. Bluster and bigotry are not credentials for becoming commander-in-chief."

Clinton and Fiorina found less stereotypically masculine ways to communicate strength in 2016, meeting the masculine demand of toughness in ways that justified the potential disruption of gender norms of femininity. Both women talked about strength of character and established toughness credentials by describing how they stood up to sexism in their professional lives and tragedy in their personal lives. Some male candidates followed their lead, as when Jeb Bush **used** his experience as a father of a daughter struggling with substance abuse to demonstrate personal and relational strength.



Both Clinton and Fiorina established toughness credentials by describing how they stood up to sexism in their professional lives. (Brandon Stanton/Humans of New York, BuzzFeed/YouTube)

In her **convention speech**, Clinton also redefined masculinity in a way that would undermine Trump's masculinity claims. She warned, "A man you can bait with a tweet is not a man we can trust with nuclear weapons. I can't put it any better than Jackie Kennedy did after the Cuban Missile Crisis. She said that what worried President Kennedy during that very dangerous time was that a war might be started—not by big men with self-control and restraint, but by little men—the ones moved by fear and pride." Clinton's model of masculinity necessitates a type of maturity and restraint that she argued Trump lacks, allowing her to question Trump's masculine credentials without reinforcing the stereotypical norms of masculinity that often put women at an electoral disadvantage.

***Clinton and Fiorina found less stereotypically masculine ways to communicate strength in 2016.***

Even with this redefinition, Clinton also questioned the dominance of masculinity in presidential politics. In rhetoric and strategy, she offered a reevaluation of gender that would shift the balance of power so that presidential success need not only occur on masculine terms. In contrast to 2008, when Clinton repeatedly reminded voters that she wasn't "running as a woman," she embraced her gender as one among many credentials for presidential leadership in 2016. Early in the campaign, she **told voters**: "I'm not asking people to vote for me simply because I'm a woman. I'm asking people to vote for me on the merits," adding, "I think one of the merits is I am a woman."

In elaborating upon *how* her gender was a credential for presidential office holding, she moved beyond the history she would make as the first woman president to discuss the experience and perspective she would bring *as a woman* to the presidency. Through storytelling and surrogates, she gave credit and attention to the distinct realities that women face in navigating private and public life in the U.S. and tied those experiences to the exercise of political leadership. Clinton's strategy was reflective of **research from the Barbara Lee Family**

**Foundation** that finds that women candidates have greater opportunity today to be **360-degree candidates**, using all of their expertise, background, and personal experiences to prove their qualifications for office and connect with voters.

Clinton also tied her experiences to a policy agenda that brought “women’s issues” like paid leave, equal pay, and child care to the forefront of her campaign and re-gendered conventionally salient issues like the economy and national security so that they were less likely to be deemed the domain of men. As Presidential Gender Watch argued early in the campaign, Clinton “**mainstreamed gender**” in her campaign in a way candidates before her have not, integrating the diversity of women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences into her strategic decision-making and campaign messaging. As she frequently said on the campaign trail, “If fighting for women’s health care and paid family leave and equal pay is playing the woman card, then deal me in!” Her prioritization of and attention to these issues may have also influenced her opponents to address them on the campaign trail, from the primary to general election.



*In late April 2016, Clinton’s campaign capitalized on Donald Trump’s claim that she was playing the “woman card” by issuing plastic woman cards to campaign donors. (@HillaryClinton/Twitter)*

Even Donald Trump unveiled **proposals** for paid maternity leave and child care tax credits in the final two months of the election. However, his approach was far more conventional by gender standards. First, Trump targeted a leave policy only on women, instead of addressing the caregiving responsibilities of men. Second, Trump **announced his plan** alongside female surrogates, including women members of Congress and his daughter, Ivanka. He also left it to Ivanka to **discuss** the need for and dimensions of the plan at the Republican National Convention, adopting a tactic traditionally used by male candidates to rely on female surrogates to communicate on stereotypical “women’s issues.” Finally, Trump rarely integrated the leave or child care policies he rolled out in September into his standard campaign stump speech or discussions of economic policy, nor did he mention them in his convention speech. The contrast between Clinton and Trump on this issue area is illustrative of differences in the degree of gender disruption evident in the candidates’ approaches to policymaking, policy messaging, and policy prioritization.

Importantly, Clinton’s gender strategy also sought to recognize the diversity among women and men. While her campaign did not always apply or address it perfectly, Clinton **grappled with** the concept of “intersectionality” on the campaign trail, seeking to illuminate the distinct challenges and experiences of women at intersections of race, gender, class, and sexuality. Unlike her **highly criticized** attempt to relate to Latina voters with her “**7 things Hillary Clinton has in common with your abuela**” campaign in December 2015, Clinton demonstrated more care and understanding of intersectional realities at an October 2016 stop at the Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church. Standing with Zianna Oliphant, a 9-year-old who had tearfully addressed the Charlotte city council that week about police violence against African Americans in the wake of the death of Keith Lamont Scott, Clinton **explained**, “I’m a grandmother, and like every grandmother, I worry about the safety and security of my grandchildren, but my worries are not the same as black grandmothers, who have different and deeper fears about the world that their grandchildren face.” She added,

“Because my grandchildren are white, because they are the grandchildren of a former president and secretary of state, let’s be honest here, they won’t face the kind of fear that we heard from the young children testifying before the City Council.” By both recognizing her own experiences and distinguishing them from those of mothers and grandmothers throughout the United States who do not share her privilege, Clinton took one step further toward complicating the credentials, experiences, and competencies expected of a U.S. president.

There is nothing new about candidates performing masculinity in presidential elections, but the 2016 campaign provided a clear contrast between nominees. While Donald Trump played to the most stereotypical models of masculinity, Hillary Clinton embodied gender disruption while also adopting

*Male candidates can alter expectations of gender and candidacy in the images, messages, and strategies they adopt on the campaign trail.*

some strategies to re-gender perceptions of presidential credentials so that candidates might not win only on masculine terms. This capacity for making institutional change is not limited to women; male candidates can alter expectations of gender and candidacy in the images, messages, and strategies they adopt on the campaign trail. Paying attention to the ways in which all candidates—women and men—navigate and shape institutional gender dynamics is key to painting a complete picture of the ways in which those dynamics persist, as well as identifying strategies for institutional change.

**For sources referenced in and supplementary to this section, please visit page 36.**

## Where Were the Women?

One characteristic of masculine institutions is the relative, if not complete, absence of women, both historically and at present. While the Constitution does not exclude women in its eligibility requirements to serve as President of the United States, the use of male pronouns in [Article II](#) reminds us that the default expectation was for the nation’s leader to be a man. The gendered intentions in establishing the presidency are even more evident in considering the dearth of women candidates and absence of women presidents for the past 228 years.

The underrepresentation of women in presidential politics is not limited to candidates and office-holders. For example, it was not until 1933 that a woman was **appointed** to a presidential cabinet, and no woman has yet held the position of the president’s chief of staff. The first woman was **selected** to manage a major party presidential campaign less than three decades ago. In 1976, two journalists became the first women to **moderate** presidential debates. It was just four years earlier that Timothy Crouse published *The Boys on the Bus*, capturing the male dominance in the 1972 presidential campaign press corps. From the campaign trail to the White House, the representation of women in influential positions has been historically small and only recently rising.

Throughout election 2016, Presidential Gender Watch paid close attention to the gender balance of campaign staffs, on debate and convention stages, and among those journalists covering the major candidates. Of the 23 candidates who put their names forward as Democratic or Republican candidates for president in the 2016 cycle, just two began with female campaign managers: Republicans Mike Huckabee and John Kasich. Donald Trump had three different campaign managers by the end of the election, including one woman. Kellyanne Conway was named Trump’s campaign manager in August 2016 and made history in November by becoming the first female campaign manager to win a presidential election.

By the end of the campaign, women held **four of 18** top staff positions in Donald Trump’s campaign; including campaign manager (Kellyanne Conway), press secretary (Hope Hicks), senior advisor (Sarah Huckabee Sanders), and national spokesperson (Katrina Pierson). Of the 16 comparable posts on the Clinton campaign, **seven** were women; including national political director (Amanda Renteria), communications director (Jennifer Palmieri), digital director (Jenna Lowenstein), trip director (Connolly Keigher), chief operating officer (Beth Jones), and two of three senior policy advisors (Maya Harris and Ann O’Leary).<sup>3</sup> When looking at Clinton’s national campaign staff in its entirety, the relative gender parity is even stronger. The

*From the campaign trail to the White House, the representation of women in influential positions has been historically small and only recently rising.*

gender ratio of Trump’s national campaign staff also persists in the broader measure, in which women remain less than one-quarter of his national campaign team members.<sup>4</sup>



*Only one primary debate, moderated by PBS anchors Judy Woodruff and Gwen Ifill, had only female moderators; ten debates had no women moderators. (@NewsHour/Twitter)*

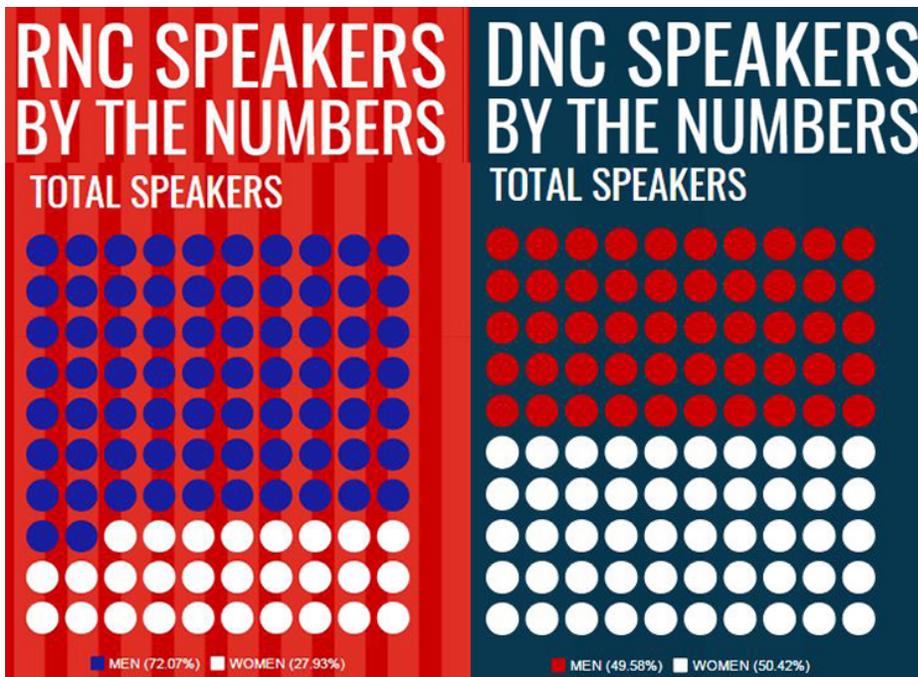
Presidential Gender Watch also analyzed gender differences on debate and convention stages. Including both parties’ primary debates (undercard and main stage), there were 27 presidential debates

with 51 moderators.<sup>5</sup> Nineteen of 51 moderators, or 37%, were women. Only one primary debate, moderated by PBS anchors Judy Woodruff and Gwen Ifill, had only female moderators; ten debates had no women moderators. Of the three general



*Politico profiled the “women in the van” covering Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign, noting that—at the time—at least 18 national media outlets had female reporters on the Clinton beat, across print, online, radio and TV. (Jeff Green/POLITCO)*

election presidential debates, three of four moderators were men. Martha Raddatz joined Anderson Cooper to co-moderate the second presidential debate in fall 2016. The sole vice presidential debate was moderated by Elaine Quijano, who also became the first Asian American woman to moderate a general election debate at the presidential level. There were 236 speakers over the **Democratic National Convention’s** four days, not counting invocations, benedictions, or narrative videos.<sup>6</sup> Of those 236 speakers, 119—or 50.4%—were women. In comparison, women were just 26.1% of the 111 speakers at the **Republican National Convention** in 2016. Of about 21.5 hours of speaking time, just over 12 hours was occupied by male speakers at the DNC; women spoke for slightly over nine hours—43% of the total speaking time—across the convention’s four days.<sup>7</sup> The gender disparities in speaking time were greater at the RNC, where women spoke for just 24% of the total time; even excluding the nominees (Trump and Pence), 72% of the speaking time was given to men.



There was a larger gender disparity in the number of speakers at the Republican National Convention than at the Democratic National Convention. (Presidential Gender Watch)

More women’s voices were heard in campaign reporting than in previous presidential campaigns. The “boys on the bus” in 2016 were joined by many female journalists covering primary and general election campaigns. Early on in the cycle, *Politico* profiled the “women in the van” covering Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign, noting that—at the time—at least 18 national media outlets had female reporters on the Clinton beat, across print, online, radio and TV. Veteran Clinton reporters like *The New York Times*’ Amy Chozick noted the change from the 2008 campaign, where she recalled being one of the only women in Clinton’s press corps. By May 2016, *Vogue* columnist Irina Aleksander reported that 26 of 29 members of Clinton’s campaign press corps were women. She also noted that MSNBC’s embeds for all of the major candidates at that time were women, and that women represented a bit more than half of election correspondents at CNN. During the general election campaign, women journalists were well-represented in the press corps for both major party candidates.



A Bernie Sanders supporter’s tweet illustrates the type of sexist vitriol targeting female reporters like NPR’s Tamara Keith throughout election 2016. (@TamaraKeithNPR/Twitter)

But not all of the attention to the women journalists on the campaign trail was positive. Conservative commentator Rush Limbaugh accused female reporters of being overly sympathetic to female candidates like Hillary Clinton, deriding what he called the “chickification of the news.” Female reporters were also subject to particularly sexist vitriol from candidates and their supporters throughout election 2016. Multiple journalists

documented **harassment of women reporters by “Bernie Bros”** in the Democratic primary campaign, including threats of violence and explicitly racist and sexist name-calling and attacks. Trump supporters were also particularly aggressive toward some of the women covering his campaign. In a piece titled **“My Crazy Year with Trump,”** MSNBC embed Katy Tur described being so targeted at a Trump rally that she was escorted to her car by Secret Service. After that rally, she **wrote**, “The wave of insults, harassment, and threats, via various social-media feeds, hasn’t stopped since. Many of the attacks are unprintable.” For Tur, those attacks were sparked by the candidate himself. Trump singled her out on national TV and from the campaign stage, questioning her skill as a reporter and then shushing her and telling her to “be quiet” at a **July 2016 press conference**.

Tur was not the first female reporter to be subject to Trump’s mistreatment, however. In his **famous spar** with Fox News anchor and debate moderator Megyn Kelly, he called her “dopey,” “crazy,” a “bimbo,” and “so average in every way.” He also quipped that she was so angry when questioning him at the Republican debate that there was “blood coming out of her eyes...blood coming out of her wherever.” In *Vocativ’s* **analysis** of social media posts directed at Kelly in a 24-hour period soon after the debate, they noted the dominance of sexist language and attacks targeting her; “Their language was largely gendered, using phrases like ‘dumb blonde’ and other words derogatory to women,” Leigh Cuen and Jishai Evers reported. They added, “‘Bitch’ appeared the most—a total of 423 times in tweets from the last 24 hours—followed by ‘bimbo.’” In a **memoir** she released post-election, Kelly wrote, “Every time [Trump] tweeted about me, it was like he flipped a switch, instantly causing a flood of intense nastiness.” Among the tweets she highlights was one of many direct threats: “F--- off you sl--, I will beat you up so bad I will force you to support trump you sl--,” it read.



*Donald Trump used Twitter as a way to attack the character and credentials of Fox News anchor and debate moderator Megyn Kelly.*  
(@realDonaldTrump/Twitter)

Thankfully, threats of violence against women remained threats in most cases. But *Breitbart* reporter Michelle Fields did make news when she was grabbed aggressively by Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski at a March 2016 campaign event. After **video** of the interaction was released and Fields posted a **photo** of a bruised arm, Lewandowski was charged with battery; the charges were dropped by a Florida State Attorney in April 2016. Instead of condemning Lewandowski’s behavior, Trump **defended** his campaign chief, calling Fields a “very aggressive person” and asking, “How do you know those bruises weren’t there before?” Trump’s response reflected a strategy often used to discredit abuse victims and shift the fault to the victim from the accused perpetrator.

When the *The Washington Post’s* Paul Farhi pulled together the **many insults Trump used against female campaign reporters**, Trump’s response similarly reinforced masculine dominance over women by focusing on their appearance. He **noted**, “There are some women...there’s one sitting over there in the beautiful red dress [pointing to NBC’s Andrea Mitchell]. I have great respect for that woman...I would never do that to you.” Later that month, he **called** another *Washington Post* reporter “beautiful” as he left a session with the editorial board. Despite the larger representation of women in the presidential campaign press corps, Trump’s comments, as well as the attacks against women

by campaign supporters, serve as a reminder that women reporters in 2016 did not escape the boys' club climate on the campaign trail and online.

Still, increasing women's presence among campaign reporters challenges men's dominance in presidential politics and adds value in the voices and perspectives being shared with the public. As CNN chief political analyst Gloria Borger wrote in a [piece](#) for her outlet's "[Girls on the Bus](#)" series in 2016, "You bring who you are to every story you cover, but you don't cover a story differently just because you are a woman. That diversity may just bring a different question or point of view to an interview or to a piece. It took a while for us all to recognize that, but at least we do now. And that's not changing."

Unfortunately, diversity remained limited among presidential campaign analysts. Gender Avenger, the Center for American Women and Politics, and the Women's Media Center [analyzed](#) cable news commentary on the presidential election from March 1 to November 11, 2016, finding that men remained the vast majority of morning and primetime cable news guests invited to discuss presidential politics. Of the nearly 15,000 guests counted across six cable news shows, just 28.4% were women. Even more striking, just four percent were women of color.

Whether on staff, at events, or on television, women's representation in presidential settings or institutions was still not the norm in 2016. As these data show, women are still working to break into what has long been a man's world of presidential politics, from the Oval Office down.

**For sources referenced in and supplementary to this section, please visit [page 37](#).**

## Complicating Conceptions of "the Women's Vote"

When candidates "play the gender card," they are motivated by perceptions of voter demands. Put simply, campaign behavior is primarily shaped by a desire to win votes. Women's votes are particularly important in presidential elections, as women have **outnumbered and outvoted** men in every presidential election since 1980. Since then, there has also been a persistent gender difference in partisanship and vote choice, with women more likely than men to align with the Democratic Party and support Democratic candidates for president.<sup>8</sup>

According to [exit polls](#), there was an 11-point gender gap in presidential vote choice in 2016; 52% of men and 41% of women voted for Donald Trump. This is a larger gender gap than in **any year since 1980** except 1996, when there was also an 11-point gap, with Bill Clinton winning 44% of men's and 55% of women's votes. Trump earned the lowest proportion of women voters of any Republican presidential candidate in the past 20 years, and he was the first winning presidential candidate since 1980 to earn less than 44% of women's votes. Trump's win was also not historic in the proportion of men's support he earned. He matched Mitt Romney's support among men in 2012 (52%), but earned a lower proportion of men's votes than any winning Republican contender in the past three-and-a-half decades.

Hillary Clinton's support among men was the **lowest** for any Democrat since her husband's first presidential run; she earned 41% of men's votes, compared to the 45% Obama won in 2012 and 49% he won in securing his first term of office. In contrast, Clinton nearly matched Obama's 2012 support among women with 54% of women's votes. She garnered more support among women voters than did 2004 Democratic nominee John Kerry, but matched Al Gore's 2000 levels of female support.

## GENDER GAP IN PRESIDENTIAL VOTING, 1980-2016

Year	Presidential Candidates	Women	Men	Gender Gap (Percentage Pts.)
2016	Donald Trump (R)	41%	52%	11 pts.
	Hillary Clinton (D)	54%	41%	
2012	Barack Obama (D)	55%	45%	10 pts.
	Mitt Romney (R)	44%	52%	
2008	Barack Obama (D)	56%	49%	7 pts.
	John McCain (R)	43%	48%	
2004	George W. Bush (R)	48%	55%	7 pts.
	John Kerry (D)	51%	44%	
2000	George W. Bush (R)	44%	54%	10 pts.
	Al Gore (D)	54%	43%	
	Ralph Nader (Green)	2%	3%	
1996	Bill Clinton (D)	55%	44%	11 pts.
	Bob Dole (R)	38%	45%	
	Ross Perot (Reform)	7%	10%	
1992	Bill Clinton (D)	45%	41%	4 pts.
	George H.W. Bush (R)	38%	38%	
	Ross Perot (Reform)	17%	21%	
1988	George H.W. Bush (R)	50%	57%	7 pts.
	Michael Dukakis (D)	49%	41%	
1984	Ronald Reagan (R)	56%	62%	6 pts.
	Walter Mondale (D)	44%	37%	
1980	Ronald Reagan (R)	47%	55%	8 pts.
	Jimmy Carter (D)	45%	36%	
	John Anderson (I)	7%	7%	

*According to exit polls, there was an 11- point gender gap in presidential vote choice in 2016. This is a larger gender gap than in any year since 1980 except 1996. (Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers University)*

Presidential Gender Watch gathered data on gender differences in presidential polls (state/national, primary/general) throughout election 2016, amassing an extensive **database** on major candidates' support among men and women voters nationwide and over time. Together with **exit poll results**, these data are useful for historical comparison in the aggregate, but they mask very important dynamics of voter preference and behavior within these binary categories of men and women voters. Recognizing that lumping all women or all men into singular voting blocs is strategically dangerous and analytically shallow, Presidential Gender Watch committed itself to highlighting the rich diversity among voters, wherein gender differences intersect with other key influences of ideology, generation, race, education, geography, religion, and sexuality, and challenging narratives that ignore this complexity. With the support of our experts and scholars, we paid particular attention to **problematizing claims** that there was any monolithic "women's vote," instead providing

evidence and analysis of the differences in preference, behavior, and perspectives *among* women voters. By looking beyond the false constraints of assuming singularity over multiplicity, we found that the results of applying a gender lens to voting patterns in 2016 are broad, deep, and rich.

## VAGINA VOTERS?

There appeared to be two primary ideas for why Clinton should have fared better with women than previous Democratic candidates. The first relied upon the electoral myth that women voters vote for women on the basis of shared biology. In fact, the fear of a uniquely female advantage with women voters has led male opponents to adopt **compensation strategies** to appeal to women voters that they might not have employed if running against men, including selecting women as gubernatorial and presidential running mates. But as the 2008 presidential election made clear, party trumps gender in guiding vote choice; just as Republican

women were not going to support Clinton then, Democratic women who supported Clinton in the primaries were not going to switch party allegiance on Election Day simply because the GOP nominated Sarah Palin as its vice presidential candidate. This was still the case in 2016, despite the tendency for some to assume or expect otherwise. On one hand, male and female critics **railed against** “vagina voters,” dismissing Hillary Clinton’s female supporters as blinded by their gender allegiance. On the other hand, some pundits and observers expected women voters to set aside partisan differences to elect the first woman president and appeared shocked when they voted—like men—based on party, ideology, and policy priorities. While few people expected Democratic men to vote for Donald Trump simply because they share the same chromosomes, that logic was ignored by many when anticipating or analyzing women’s voting behavior.

While research shows that partisanship is the dominant influence on vote choice, there is some evidence that gender affinity may matter in certain settings and outside of the ballot box.<sup>9</sup> One of those settings may be a primary election, where partisanship is held constant. The Democratic presidential primary provided a test—albeit imperfect—of the potential for gender preference to contribute to voter decision-making. Interestingly, gender gaps ranging from three to sixteen points were **evident** in the 27 primary states where exit polls were conducted. Clinton won the plurality of women’s votes in 22 of those 27 contests and tied with Sanders among women in Indiana. In contrast, Sanders won the plurality of men’s votes in 15 of 27 contests and tied with Clinton among men in New York. Clinton won primaries in seven of the ten states where men and women voters selected different nominees, demonstrating the power of women’s votes in swaying electoral outcomes.

But can these data prove that women were more likely to support Clinton *because she was a woman*? Without better data on voter motivations, we cannot draw this conclusion. Still, Clinton’s support among Democratic women primary voters, as well as the reluctance documented more often among Democratic men, indicates that gender was certainly at play in primary voting behavior. It was also a clear

part of Clinton’s strategy, as was evident in the woman-centered paraphernalia her campaign sold, the dominance of women surrogates on the stump, and early campaign messaging around making history and breaking through the glass ceiling of presidential politics.



*Woman-centered paraphernalia and messaging around making presidential history demonstrated how the Clinton campaign sought to capitalize on her gender, particularly in the primary election. (shop.hillaryclinton.com, Hillary Clinton/Facebook, @HillaryClinton/Twitter)*

Importantly, though, gender was just one part of a more complex puzzle. As was well-documented throughout the primary campaign, Sanders fared better among young voters—women and men—and Clinton topped Sanders among black and Latinx voters.

According to CNN's [analysis](#) of age and gender in 27 states where primary exit and entrance polls were conducted, Clinton led Sanders 61% to 37% among women. But Sanders led Clinton by an average of 37 percentage points among women aged 18 to 29, while Clinton led Sanders among women 30 and over. The few polls of millennial voters throughout the primary season, conducted by Rock the Vote in [January](#) and [March](#) 2016, showed a gender gap contrary to the overall trend, with young men actually more supportive of Clinton than young women.

Too little data was available on voter preferences at the intersection of race and gender, or race and age, to determine whether or not women's preference for Clinton persisted within racial subgroups and age cohorts. However, the limited [exit poll data for black voters](#) in 11 primary states shows mixed results, with Clinton winning the majority of black voters in all states, but with slightly larger proportions of black men in four states and slightly larger proportions of black women in seven states. Clinton won larger proportions of white women's votes than white men's votes in 12 of 13 states where primary [exit poll data](#) is available.

Beyond gender affinity effects on vote choice, some research has shown that women voters may become more engaged in elections when a woman is on the ballot.<sup>10</sup> Importantly, that enthusiasm relies on shared ideology, meaning that even a boost in women voters' energy for supporting a woman candidate—or even the potential first woman president—is unlikely to cross party lines in any significant way. For example, a [CBS/New York Times](#) poll from October 2016 showed that 80% of Democratic women and just 39% of Republican women agreed with the statement: "Regardless of how I vote, I'm glad a woman is a major party nominee for president." Beyond partisanship and gender, enthusiasm and engagement are influenced by cross-cutting campaign dynamics like the urgency for change felt by voters, the issues most salient in electoral debate, and the tone struck by presidential contenders. There was anecdotal evidence of women's gender-motivated enthusiasm to elect Hillary Clinton, from profiles of older women ready to break the presidential glass ceiling to female

supporters wearing white in solidarity with suffragists—and Clinton—on Election Day. But the variance in women's excitement across age, race, and ideology, even just among Democrats, challenges any overarching claim of a gender-based bump in excitement for the woman in the race.



*Female supporters nationwide wore white in solidarity with suffragists—and Clinton—on Election Day. (@M\_Ostrowski/Twitter, @Lauren\_Koontz/Twitter, Missouri History Museum)*

There is no evidence of so-called “vagina voters” who voted entirely based on gender in 2016, but it is also inaccurate to believe that candidate gender does not shape voters' electoral evaluation or decision-making at all. Combatting claims that any consideration of candidate gender is inappropriate or unsophisticated, Barbara Lee Family Foundation Executive Director Adrienne Kimmell provides this [reminder](#): “Arguing that gender is one of the merits on which candidates may be evaluated does not promote identity over merit; instead, it presumes there is merit in identity.”

## DID WOMEN ABANDON CLINTON?

Debunking the idea that women would or should have voted along gender lines regardless of their party allegiance or policy positions is essential to understanding that, despite claims to the contrary, Clinton **did not fail** to win women voters, nor did women voters “abandon” her in 2016. To accurately assess how Clinton and Trump fared among all voters, including women, we must break down voting data and compare results to how Democratic and Republican men fared in past contests.

As mentioned above, Clinton won nearly the same proportion of women voters as did Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012; she beat Donald Trump among women voters by 13 points, the same margin by which Obama won among women in 2008. More specifically, the majority of women cast their ballots for Hillary Clinton in 23 of the 28 states where exit polls are available. In fact, if only women had voted, Trump’s success in at least 10 battleground states (AZ, FL, GA, IA, MI, NC, OH, PA, TX, WI) would have been reversed. Still, many people put forth a narrative that women cost Clinton the election because their support for her was not widespread *enough*, arguing that *more* women should have supported Clinton than did previous Democratic candidates—either because she was a woman or because of Trump’s record with women.

Reflecting on the election results, comedian Samantha Bee saved her sharpest criticism for white women voters, who she **claimed** chose a “vial of weaponized testosterone” over the first female president. Bee was not alone in her anger, nor were her facts incorrect; 52% of white women voters cast their ballots for Donald Trump on Election Day. But targeting white women for costing Clinton the election is misleading. The majority of white women have voted for the Republican presidential candidate in every election since 2004, and they have done so in greater proportions than they did in 2016. In 2012, 56% of white women voted for Mitt Romney. John McCain earned 55% of white women’s votes in 2008, and George W. Bush won the support of 55% of white women in 2004.

Clinton actually fared slightly better among white women than Barack Obama did in 2012, earning 43% of their votes compared to the 42% Barack Obama won four years prior. In fact, Clinton outperformed Obama significantly among college-educated white women, earning 51% of their votes and besting Trump among this group by six points; in 2012, Mitt Romney held a **six-point advantage** against Obama among college-educated white women. In 2008, when Obama fared better among college-educated white women, he still earned just 52% of their votes. Moreover, Clinton won married women by two points, the first Democratic candidate to do so in 20 years.

*Clinton did not fail to win women voters, nor did women voters “abandon” her in 2016.*

The narrative of abandonment is particularly exclusive of women of color. Clinton won 94% of black women’s votes, similar to the 96% of black women who voted for Obama. In **Latino Decisions’ election eve poll**, 86% of Latinas reported supporting Clinton.<sup>11</sup> In the same poll in 2012, 77% of Latinas expressed support for President Obama. These women voters have been key to Democratic candidates’ success, and that remained true in 2016. But among black and white men, the difference in Clinton’s 2016 support and Obama’s 2012 numbers was larger; Clinton won 82% of black men’s votes in 2016 compared to Obama’s 87% in 2012, and Clinton won just 31% of white men’s votes compared to the 35% support Obama had among white men in 2012. Among Latino men, Clinton won 71% in 2016 compared to Obama’s 73% support in 2012; it is Clinton’s jump in support among Latinas by nearly ten points that differed most from other groups. To the extent that any group abandoned Clinton in comparison to previous contests, then, it was men. But the most accurate characterization of these data is that very few groups voted significantly differently in 2016 than in recent campaigns.

What is not yet known is whether or not turnout rates among particular groups of women voters changed in 2016 to help or hurt either major party candidate. In 2008 and 2012, black women voted at the highest rates of any race and gender subgroup,

proving to be a vital part of President Obama's winning coalition. A drop in turnout among this reliably Democratic cohort could have affected Clinton's success, as could a drop in turnout among the more moderate Republican women who may have stayed home in response to their dislike of either presidential contender. There is no evidence to date that significant drops in turnout among any one group of voters occurred in 2016, but U.S. Census data released later in 2017 will help to tell a more complete story about voting patterns in this election in comparison to elections past.

## REPUBLICAN WOMEN VOTERS

If election 2016 was viewed in light of historical voting trends by race, gender, and party, then, the outcomes—at least by subgroups—could have been expected. But it is understandable that few people expected the status quo when it came to women's votes in a year where the Republican nominee was not only historically unfavorable to women, but was consistently tied to his past misogynist statements and behavior. It was this unique political context that provided a second line of reasoning for why Clinton would over-perform among women, assuming that disaffected Republican women would shift their support to Clinton. While a simple look at the election results may yield the conclusion that party loyalty trumped concerns about misogyny in casting a presidential vote, it is likely not that simple.

For Republican women who were concerned about Trump's misogyny, disliking Trump didn't have to translate into voting for Clinton. Instead, a more reasonable prediction was that Trump's behavior might deter them from voting at all. A [study](#) conducted by Lynn Vavreck and John Geer in April 2016 may have foreshadowed this effect; they found that viewing a campaign advertisement documenting Trump's derisive comments toward women increased his unfavorable ratings among women voters, but did not provide any comparable boost to Clinton. While the [ad](#) they tested was from Our Principles PAC, Clinton's campaign used a similar strategy of calling out Trump's misogyny in campaign ads and speeches by Clinton and her surrogates throughout the general election. In

retrospect, the Clinton campaign may have done better to heed the warning in Vavreck and Geer's results alongside longstanding evidence of partisan loyalty in voting; characterizing Trump as anti-woman may have kept some conservative women from casting a presidential vote for him, but showed little sign of motivating cross-over votes for Clinton.

For other Republican women, Trump's behavior may not have been viewed as misogynistic at all, or it may have been at least tolerated as normal. Before the release of the *Access Hollywood* video, 83% of Republican women surveyed in a [CBS/New York Times](#) poll said that Trump respects women. Asked in a [Washington Post/ABC News](#) poll one week after the tape's release whether or not it would make a difference in their vote, 84% of all Republicans said no. That may be because 65% of Republicans in the same survey said that Trump's comments were "typical locker-room talk by men." By Election Day, 42% of Trump supporters said in [exit polls](#) that his treatment of women did not bother them, 42% of Trump supporters said it bothered them some, and just 16% said it bothered them a lot. Put differently, nearly half of Trump voters were bothered by the way he treated women, but not enough to vote against him or stay home.

Finally, the real critique underlying post-election narratives about women voting for Donald Trump seems to be that they were somehow voting against their own interests. Of course, this assumes that there is a singular set and shared prioritization of interests for all women, regardless of class, race, education, or ideology.

In the autopsy of the 2016 election, there is good reason to pay close attention to women voters, but that means doing the work to avoid homogenizing them or evaluating their behavior or beliefs without historical context. Presidential Gender Watch started that work during election 2016, but it will require continued consciousness in post-election analyses to tell a complete, and complex, story about women voters' influence in the race to put a woman in the White House.

**For sources referenced in and supplementary to this section, please visit page 38.**

## Conclusion

When Presidential Gender Watch launched in April 2015, its mission was to elevate the gender dialogue in the 2016 presidential race. In practice, that meant providing research-based analyses of the myriad ways in which gender shaped candidate behavior, voter evaluations, and campaign coverage and commentary. In our work, and in this report, Presidential Gender Watch pushed back against simplistic narratives about the ways in which gender influenced the election by emphasizing key points that often go ignored: gender doesn't equal women; gender is, and has always been, at play at various stages and sites in presidential politics; neither women nor men are monolithic in their political beliefs, policy priorities, or voting behavior; and while gender may not have been the determinative factor in the 2016 election, it should not be ignored as one piece of a complex story of what happened in last year's presidential campaign.

This report tells part of the gender story of the 2016 presidential election, highlighting key ways in which candidates, media, and voters engaged with a presidential institution that has long been dominated by masculinity and men. It reveals evidence of the maintenance of masculine dominance in presidential politics, as well as signs of institutional change that may expand our ideas of what and whom is deemed presidential.

Most important, gender has not stopped shaping presidential politics because ballots have been cast, or because Donald Trump became the 45th man to hold the office. The conversation that Presidential Gender Watch began in 2015 should continue as we evaluate the ways in which gender shapes presidential rhetoric, behavior, and priorities; citizen engagement with and evaluations of the presidency; and media commentary and coverage of the current presidential administration. In addition to the concepts and findings in this report, we hope you will refer to the many resources available at [presidentialgenderwatch.org](http://presidentialgenderwatch.org) to keep the conversation going.



## Presidential Gender Watch Resource List

**News:** From April 2015 to December 2016, Presidential Gender Watch collected over 2,000 news articles that either addressed or illuminated the role of gender in the 2016 presidential election. This searchable news feed is archived on the Presidential Gender Watch website at <http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/tracking/news/>.

**Analyses:** Presidential Gender Watch provided original analyses of gendered campaign dynamics throughout the 2016 presidential election. In over 100 posts, project experts, guest experts, and guest contributors drew upon research, scholarship, and professional expertise to provide important context for and insights into the ways in which gender shaped the presidential campaign. All of these posts are available in a searchable database on the Presidential Gender Watch website at <http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/analysis/>.

**On the Bias:** Throughout the presidential primary season, Presidential Gender Watch's analyses included a specific series of posts focused on exposing sites of gender bias in campaign coverage, commentary, or strategy. These On the Bias posts are available at <http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/analysis/on-the-bias/>.

**Polls:** From April 2015 to November 2016, Presidential Gender Watch collected all available public polling data on presidential vote choice that was reported with a breakdown by respondent gender. In this database, polls are sorted by scope (national/state) and phase (primary/general) of the campaign. The data is also sortable by poll source, candidate, party, state, gender gap, and proportion of women voters' support. Presidential Gender Watch's polling database can be found at <http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/polls/womens-vote-watch/presidential-polling-data/>.

**Research:** Presidential Gender Watch's website is home to a research section that provides a bibliography of scholarship on gender and the presidency, historical facts on women who have run for president, and research on women and candidacy. These resources are available at <http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/research/>.

**Multimedia:** Visitors to the Presidential Gender Watch website can find an interactive timeline on women's bids for the U.S. presidency, shareable graphics, and a video library of women presidential candidate's campaign announcements and speeches at <http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/multimedia/>.

**Social Media:** Presidential Gender Watch engaged in real-time analyses of presidential debates, election returns, and other campaign news via [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Using the hashtag #genderwatch2016, Presidential Gender Watch expanded the reach of its analyses and created opportunities for gender dialogue with scholars, practitioners, journalists, and followers.

**#GenderWatchSyllabus:** As the general election began, Presidential Gender Watch called on scholars of gender and politics to submit recommendations for a #GenderWatchSyllabus. This campaign gathered and shared resources to help understand gender dynamics in the 2016 presidential race. The scholars' recommendations are available at <http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/?s=%-23GenderWatchSyllabus>.

**Conference Calls:** Presidential Gender Watch conducted two conference calls over the course of the project. The first, [It's Different When Women Run: Women Who Have Run for President Share What's Changed and What it Means for 2016](#), featured former presidential candidates Carol Moseley Braun and Pat Schroeder, Republican strategist Leslie Sanchez, and Kathleen Harrington, who served as deputy campaign manager for Elizabeth Dole's race for the Republican nomination in 2000. The second conference call, [Women Voters: It's Complicated](#), featured a conversation between Glynda Carr, Christine Matthews, and Dr. Anna Sampaio about the diversity among women voters.

**Post-Election Briefing:** Presidential Gender Watch was the underwriter for The Atlantic's post-election briefing on The Politics of Gender: Women, Men, and the 2016 Election, which featured discussions between journalists, practitioners, and scholars, as well as an interview with 2016 Senate candidate Maggie Hassan (D-NH). Presidential Gender Watch summarized [key findings](#) from the briefing, and a [video](#) from the event is available via The Atlantic.

# Readings and Resources

## PUTTING 2016 IN A GENDERED HISTORICAL CONTEXT

*Man Enough: Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, and the Politics of Presidential Masculinity*

Jackson Katz (2016)

<https://www.amazon.com/Man-Enough-Politics-Presidential-Masculinity/dp/1566560837>

"Presidential Elections: Gendered Space and the Case of 2012" in *Gender and Elections: Shaping the Future of American Politics* (eds. Susan J. Carroll and Richard L. Fox)

Georgia Duerst-Lahti (2014)

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*Woman President: Confronting Postfeminist Political Culture*

Kristina Horn Sheeler and Karrin Vasby Anderson (2013)

<http://www.tamupress.com/product/Woman-President,7552.aspx>

*Women and the White House: Gender, Popular Culture, and Presidential Politics*

Justin S. Vaughn and Lilly J. Goren (2012)

[http://www.kentuckypress.com/live/title\\_detail.php?titleid=2637#.WN3p9nQrL3A](http://www.kentuckypress.com/live/title_detail.php?titleid=2637#.WN3p9nQrL3A)

"Executive Power and the Consequences of Masculinism," in *The Other Elites: Women, Politics, and Power in the Executive Branch* (eds. Mary Anne Borrelli and Janet M. Martin. Boulder)

Georgia Duerst-Lahti (1997)

[https://www.riener.com/title/The\\_Other\\_Elites\\_Women\\_Politics\\_and\\_Power\\_in\\_the\\_Executive\\_Branch](https://www.riener.com/title/The_Other_Elites_Women_Politics_and_Power_in_the_Executive_Branch)

*Gender Power, Leadership, Governance*

Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Rita Mae Kelly (1995)

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## Presidential Gender Watch Resources

*The Politics of Gender: Women, Men, and the 2016 Election*

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Event Videos: <https://www.theatlantic.com/live/events/the-politics-of-gender-2016/2016/>

*It's Different When Women Run: Women Who Have Run for President Share What's Changed and What it Means for 2016*

Conference Call with Carol Moseley Braun, Pat Schroeder, Leslie Sanchez, and Kathleen Harrington (August 21, 2015)

<http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/its-different-when-women-run-women-who-have-run-for-president-share-whats-changed-and-what-it-means-for-2016/>

*Women Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates*

<http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/research/facts/>

*Timeline of Women's Presidential History*

<http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/multimedia/timeline/>

"Hillary Clinton is Not the First Woman to Make Presidential History in Brooklyn"  
Kelly Dittmar (June 11, 2016)  
<http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/hillary-clintons-not-first-woman-make-presidential-history-brooklyn/>

"A Woman Won the Iowa Caucuses for the First Time. No Asterisk Needed."  
Kelly Dittmar (February 4, 2016)  
<http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/a-woman-won-the-iowa-caucuses-for-the-first-time-no-asterisk-needed/>

"143 Years of Women Running for President"  
Kelly Dittmar (April 11, 2015)  
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## READY FOR A WOMAN? VOTER EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER IN 2016

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Dan Cassino (2016)  
<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2016/03/24/gender-is-costing-hillary-clinton-big-among-men/>

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*Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*  
Susan Faludi (2006)  
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"Of what is that glass ceiling made? A study of attitudes about women and the Oval Office,"  
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<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1989.tb00986.x>

## Presidential Gender Watch Resources

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<http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/polls/a-woman-president/>

"Flipping the Gender Script in Election 2016"  
Kathleen Dolan (October 4, 2016)  
<http://presidentialgenderwatch.org/flipping-gender-script-election-2016/>

"Gender Bias Hurts Women Candidates Much Less than Election Year Anecdotes Would Suggest"  
Kathleen Dolan (March 24, 2016)  
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## Presidential Gender Watch Resources

"Why is Bernie Yelling at Me?"  
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"Memo to Women Candidates (Parts I, II, and III)"  
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On the Bias: "Shouting and Sexism," "Yes, we are hair again"  
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On the Bias: "Style Over Substance"  
Kelly Dittmar (May 22, 2015)  
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## UP TO STANDARDS

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"News Coverage of the 2016 Election: How the Press Failed the Voters," Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics, and Public Policy, Harvard University  
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## Endnotes

1. Banwart 2010; Kenski and Falk 2004; Eagly and Karau 2002; Dolan 1997; Huddy Terkildsen 1993; Rosenwasser and Dean 1989
2. In her 2012 book *The Politics of Authenticity in Presidential Campaigns*, Erica Seifert demonstrates the increasing centrality of authenticity among presidential candidates, arguing that candidates' personal character and accessibility has become a stronger determinant of presidential voting in the past few decades.
3. Staff data gathered from [p2016.org](http://p2016.org).
4. According to a detailed listing from [p2016.org](http://p2016.org), 136 of 253 (53.8%) national campaign team members (including some regional team leads) were women. This does not include assistants to individual staff leaders. The same source, [p2016.org](http://p2016.org), has less detailed information about the Trump campaign organization. Of the 66 national campaign leaders and advisors listed, 16 are women (24.2%). This includes Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, who had no formal titles on the campaign.
5. This counts individuals who moderated both the undercard and prime time debates twice, counting them here for each time they held the role of moderator. Additional questioners are not included in this count; when they are included, women were 30 of 73 (41%) moderators and questioners at 51 primary debates.
6. Ten individuals spoke twice, but were counted as one.
7. The gender disparities in speaking time can be accounted for, in part, by the dominance of men among the individuals who spoke the longest. While Hillary Clinton spoke for about one hour, the next four longest speeches were given by men: President Barack Obama (50 minutes), former President Bill Clinton (44 minutes), Senator Tim Kaine (33 minutes), and Senator Bernie Sanders (33 minutes).
8. Importantly, the gender gap in partisanship has grown due in part to [men's growing conservatism](#) over this period.
9. Reingold and Harrell 2010; Atkeson 2003; Sanbonmatsu 2002; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001
10. Reingold and Harrell 2010; Atkeson 2003; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001
11. This is 18 points higher than the national exit poll, which has been [criticized](#) for its methodology toward and misrepresentation of Latino voters.



## ABOUT THE BARBARA LEE FAMILY FOUNDATION (BLFF)

The Barbara Lee Family Foundation advances women's equality and representation in American politics through nonpartisan political research and strategic partnerships. The Barbara Lee Family Foundation has produced unique research on every woman's campaign for governor on both sides of the aisle since 1998, including real-time polling on voters' views and post-election interviews with candidates and campaign staff.



## ABOUT THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN WOMEN AND POLITICS (CAWP)

The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is nationally recognized as the leading source of scholarly research and current data about American women's political participation. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women's participation in politics and government and to enhance women's influence and leadership in public life.

