



CAWP

Women's Vote Watch

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www.cawp.rutgers.edu/WomensVoteWatch/

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Women's Vote Watch: Women's Votes Could Determine Election Outcome **Women Are a Clear Majority of Voters**

Significant gender gaps in most polls this year – with women more likely than men to favor the Democratic ticket – mean a heavy turnout among women could make the difference in a close election, according to the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP). The review of voting rates since 1964 is part of Women's Vote Watch, a weekly look at the women's vote in the 2008 presidential election.

Women have voted at higher rates than men in every presidential election since 1980, and the number of women voters has exceeded the number of men voting in every presidential election since 1964, according to U.S. Bureau of the Census statistics. Women outnumber men among registered as well as actual voters.

In 2004, registered voters numbered 72.4 million women and 63.4 million men. With new voter registrations at an all time high in 2008, there are indications that women may be registering at higher rates than men in this election cycle, thereby adding to the advantage women have over men among potential voters. A May 2008 survey of state election officials by the Associated Press found that in the six states that collected voter data by gender, comparing 2008 with 2004, the registration rate for new voters was up 89 percent among women, compared with 74 percent among men.

In 2004, 8.8 million more women than men voted, according to official figures from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Based on past patterns and the data about new registrants, women voters could easily outnumber male voters by more than 9 million in the 2008 election.

“It is not surprising that the presidential campaigns are paying unprecedented attention to women voters this year,” observes Susan J. Carroll, senior scholar at the Center for American Women and Politics. “Women are a clear majority of the electorate and may play a pivotal role in the outcome of the election.”

Women outvoted men in 2004 (in terms of both turnout rates and actual numbers) in every racial and ethnic group—African American, Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, and white – and among voters under the age of 65.

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Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections				
Presidential Election Year	% of Voting Age Population Who Reported Voting		Number Who Reported Voting	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
2004	60.1	56.3	67.3 million	58.5 million
2000	56.2	53.1	59.3 million	51.5 million
1996	55.5	52.8	56.1 million	48.9 million
1992	62.3	60.2	60.6 million	53.3 million
1988	58.3	56.4	54.5 million	47.7 million
1984	60.8	59.0	54.5 million	47.4 million
1980	59.4	59.1	49.3 million	43.8 million
1976	58.8	59.6	45.6 million	41.1 million
1972	62.0	64.1	44.9 million	40.9 million
1968	66.0	69.8	41.0 million	38.0 million
1964	67.0	71.9	39.2 million	37.5 million

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, "Voting and Registration in the Election of 1964" and subsequent reports for all years through 2004.

For regularly updated polling information and analysis of the women's vote in 2008, visit www.cawp.rutgers.edu/WomensVoteWatch. New national polls released this week include:

Overall%		% for Obama		% for McCain		Gender Gap* (percentage point difference)	Source and Dates of Poll
Obama	McCain	Women	Men	Women	Men		
47	40	53	40	36	45	13 pts.	Ipsos/McClatchey (10/2-10/6)
49	43	51	46	41	46	5 pts	NBC/Wall Street Journal (10/4-10/5)
49	43	53	45	39	47	8 pts	Gallup (9/29 - 10/5)

*The gender gap shown for each poll in the table is based on the responses for the leading candidate in that poll.

This release is part of *Women's Vote Watch*, a joint effort by The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) and the Communications Consortium Media Center (CCMC) to provide a gender gap analysis of the women's vote from key polls conducted on the presidential race at the national level and in battleground states. CAWP will release the *Women's Vote Watch* every Friday at 10 a.m. until Election Day at its website www.cawp.rutgers.edu/WomensVoteWatch. Audio press briefings will also be offered as needed; the October 7 briefing can be [heard here](#).

About CAWP

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

About CCMC

The Communications Consortium Media Center (CCMC) is a public interest media center dedicated to helping nonprofit organizations use media and new technologies as tools for policy change. It seeks to influence the public debate in ways that respect and support individual rights, healthy families, cultural diversity and a sustainable environment. Its mission is to use communications strategies for policy change. CCMC is a 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization.